

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
8th April 2020, 13:00 – 14:30 via Microsoft Teams**

Minutes

Staff members present:

Name	Role
Justin Ward (JW)	Chair
Mark Walters (MW)	Director of Education
Shabnam Beheshti (SB)	Deputy Director of Education
William NG (WN)	Student Support Officer
Nadia Hussain (NH)	Secretary
Simon Rawstron (SR)	Education Services Manager
Robert Johnson (RJ)	Director of Undergraduate Operations
James Soderman (JS)	Faculty Liaison Librarian: Science and Engineering

Student members present:

Name	Programme name and level
Denis Mih (DM)	BSc Mathematics – 1 st Year (Joint Honours)
Nirusiya Sriskantharajah (NS)	BSc Mathematics – 1 st Year (Single Honours)
Temi Familusi (TF)	Bsc Mathematics – 1 st Year (Joint Honours)
Pinali Vijaicant (PV)	BSc Mathematics - 2 nd Year (Joint Honours)
Isaiah-Daniel Grillo (IDG)	BSc Mathematics – 2 nd Year (Single Honours)
Jordan Marajh (JM)	BSc Mathematics – 2 nd Year (Single Honours)
Shahin Hussain (SH)	BSc Mathematics –3 rd Year (Single Honours)
Raghad Zuraiki (RZ)	BSc Mathematics –3 rd Year (Single Honours)

Apologies for absence:

Name	Programme name and level
Sameen Khan (SK)	BSc Mathematics – 3 rd Year (Joint Honours)
Safiya Amodi (SA)	BSc Mathematics – 2 nd Year (Single Honours)
Claire Ozee (CO)	BSc Mathematics – 1 st Year (Single Honours)
Steve Coad (SC)	Senior Tutor

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2020.126	JW welcomed all members and all members introduced themselves.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2020.127	NH noted the apologies from members as recorded above and informed SSLC that RJ and JS would leave early due to other commitments.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2020.128	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 th January with no amendments.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:
2020.129	No comments were made about this item.
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership
2020.130	No comments were made about this item.
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2020.131	WN mentioned that given the current pandemic, there are no updates at this stage.
Part 2 – Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2020.132	The committee reviewed proposed programme/module developments and amendments. The following was discussed:
2020.133	MW reported there has been some staff fluctuations; School of Maths are unable to offer Professional Skills with Data Analysis with SAS (MTH5002) in the second year module diet and has been replaced with Actuarial Maths I(MTH5124).
2(b)	Learning and teaching matters
2020.134	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2020.135	2 nd Year Representative asked whether there have been any updates for those progressing to placement in 2020/21. MW response was it will be difficult to comment on those that will be studying abroad as given COVID-19 it is unpredictable whether international borders will open. Similarly, for those going onto placement, it depends on whether the employer is willing to have students work from home or employers may delay or cancel work arrangements. No definitive answer can be given, SR to contact Gaik about what is happening from QMUL's point of view.

2(c)	Assessment and feedback
2020.136	Representatives reported on assessment and feedback processes and the following points were noted:
2020.137	<p>1st Year Representative had posed the following:</p> <p>What style of question would be presented for formal assessments on QMplus and/or MyMath Lab?</p> <p>How is first year going to be weighted, would 10% of its weighting contribute towards the overall degree?</p> <p>MW noted that for Calculus 2, MyMath Lab will follow a similar style to the mid-term test and the other modules are likely to be either Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) or Short Answer Questions, though the style of questions has not been imposed on lecturers.</p> <p>1st year students will be able to view the question paper on QMplus, note their answers to MCQs on paper and log back in to enter the answer. For 2nd and 3rd year students the question paper will be a PDF document which students view on screen or print and write their answers on paper, take a photograph and upload onto QMplus. Students were reassured that extra support will be provided about uploading documents before exams take place and as a 'backup' measure, if QMplus stops responding, students are able to send the scripts to maths@qmul.ac.uk for their answers to be marked.</p> <p>MW further informed students that the weightings for individual modules will remain the same, however, the first year average will be based on the best 6 modules (90 credits), the remaining 2 modules (30 credits) will be discounted when final marks are calculated. The weighted average over the 3 years to calculate degree classification will take the best outcome for each student based on using or not using 1st year or 2nd year marks. The weightings that will be applied will therefore be; current first years either 1:3:6 or 0:3:6. For current 2nd year students the weighting will be either 1:3:6 or 1:0:6.</p>
2020.138	2 nd Year Representative asked whether the weighting will change for individuals. MW reminded students that for each individual student, the final classification will be based on the best outcome for students [as in point 2020.137].

2020.139	<p>2nd Year Representative queried how progression from years 2 to 3 is going to be taken into account with the disruptions this year.</p> <p>MW noted that all first and second year student will progress regardless of what happens in the exam this year. In an unlikely case, if a student fails all 8 modules it will not be in their best interest to continue nor will they have sufficient number of modules to graduate, unless they take resit or first sits. But as usual, students can progress to the next year of their course and the same applies to those on MSci and Foundation programmes.</p> <p>For clarity JW added that all students can progress, but if a student fails a considerable number of modules consideration about whether they should/can continue will be dealt with on a case by case basis. A meeting will be arranged with the student in concern to discuss avenues to re-sit. MW further reminded that students can submit an EC claim without supporting evidence, if the student is expecting to receive a '0' then he/she can apply for an EC for that exam.</p>
2020.140	<p>2nd Year Representative asked whether exemptions will be effected for Actuarial Science which is accredited by another board, given that only the highest from 6 modules (90 credits) will be calculated towards the grade at the end of the year.</p> <p>MW reported that a definitive conclusion has not been reached but the current position is that IFoA is adamant that all students must sit a 3-hour exam (2 hours for the paper and an additional hour has been granted for difficulties being online) at the same time. The exam will start at 9:00 or 10:00 (UK Time TBC) and if students want exemptions they must submit a version of solutions by 3 hours after the start of the exam (submit responses at 12:00 or 13:00). Students will be able to submit a different version later, if they choose, but this will only count towards the QM mark and not towards the IFoA exemptions, so students that do not want an accreditation can complete a take home 24-hour exam like other modules. MW noted that there are 6 accredited courses across two years that account towards the exemption and must be completed in line with IFoA time basis:</p> <p>2nd Year - Statistical Modelling (MTH5120), Statistics for Insurance (MTH5126) and Actuarial Science (MTH5124)</p>

	<p>3rd Year – Actuarial Financial Engineering (MTH6112), Mathematical Tools for Asset Management (MTH6113) and Time Series (MTH6139).</p> <p>The reason for 9:00am and 10:00am (TBC) start time is to ensure students that reside in China or Malaysia can follow a suitable UK start time.</p>
2020.141	<p>2nd year Rep asked whether the take home exams are going to follow the same format as previous summer exams.</p> <p>MW noted that the intent is to mirror previous years, but there will be minor differences. For example, questions such as ‘Stage a particular theorem/formula’ will be removed or will be assigned a lower number of marks. Also to introduce randomness and minimise plagiarism, another change will be to include the last number of a student’s ID in a formula/function.</p>
2020.142	<p>3rd Year Representative asked how the grading procedure varies for 3rd year students from 2nd and 3rd years.</p> <p>MW clarified that the 3rd year weighting will still be 60%, 1:3:6, but the 3rd year grade will only account for the best 90 credits, 6 modules will be averaged to produce the final grade. If students fail two of the eight modules and receives a ‘0’ for both, they will be discounted from the average of the third year module. Student will need to pass 270 credits (18 modules) to graduate.</p> <p>SR also clarified 3rd Year Reps misunderstanding of the adverse consequences of failing a level 6 module, that irrespective of this, if graduation requirements are met students will graduate with an honours degree.</p>
2020.143	<p>3rd Year Representative also asked whether there will be new sample papers available.</p> <p>MW reported that the style of paper will remain the same as previous years but the distribution of marks per question will change. JW also added that only 20% of content from weeks 9 – 12 will be assessed and questions that previously required explanation will be modified to discourage cheating, especially now that the exams are open book.</p> <p>SB re-iterated that final exam would not look too different from previous experience, the questions will be in-line with coursework and worksheets. The papers have already been written and have undergone a rigorous process, so lecturers will be re-distributing marks. For instance, an explanation question</p>

	that was worth 10 marks will now be 5 marks. Students were reassured that all judgments calls regarding assessment will be made to benefits the students.
2020.144	<p>WN informed students that on their transcripts all modules will be listed and a mark will have to appear. If a student does not sit the exam, and the module is 100% exam based and there are no ECs, the mark will appear as '0', regardless of whether it will be counted towards to overall mark at the end of the year.</p> <p>SR asked if we should speak to registry to see if there are any caveats on the back of transcripts that this an exceptional year. MW reassured all that in practice in employers will not worry about the transcript more than two or three years, the focus will be on the degree classification and work experience. Everyone will remember the pandemic for a several more years.</p>
2(d)	Academic support
2020.145	Representatives reported on academic support matters and the following points were noted:
2020.146	<p>1st Year Representative reported that online engagement for Calculus 2 (MTH4*02) has been very good, there are weekly tutorials and office hours allowing for open communication between students and lecturers. However, the same does not apply for Vectors and Matrices (MTH4*15) and Probability and Statistics (MTH4*16).</p> <p>SB asked what could be done to rectify modules that have little communication. The reps replied that online revision lectures that summarise key topics/syllabus and lecturers to hold office hours would be most helpful. MW prompted that office hours on forums or via email would be the most manageable platforms as zoom or teams will be difficult to cater for large cohorts.</p>
2020.147	<p>JW reported that he had arranged an online office hour but only two students appeared, there may issues surrounding engagements on forums so preferred route for communication is via email and online tutorials.</p> <p>2nd Year Reps reported that students enjoy tutorials and feedback via emails for Linear Programming and Games (MTH5114). Module organisers that have online office hours or blackboard provide structure and students feel more invested in studying. Likewise, Introduction to Computer programming (MTH5001) has 3 hours office hours every day that are very useful.</p>

	<p>2nd Year Reps also reported that Complex Variable (MTH5103) and Differential Geometry (MTH5113) have high engagement levels. Dr Arick Shao has added voice overs to his slides, which is conducive to remote learning as the explanations are in-depth which allows for better understanding of content, considered more useful than Q-Reviews.</p> <p>It was suggested that MTH5125 would benefit from voice overs, as to solely rely on slides that are difficult to self-explain without typeset notes makes the content challenging to understand. It was however emphasised that the lecturer has a unique teaching style which makes learning easy to follow when lectures are live. Subsequently 2nd year reported they had proposed to the lecturer that holding tutorials via Zoom would be beneficial, but due to lack of response from students this didn't happen.</p> <p>SB asked whether office hours available to the run up of revision week would be helpful and which platform would be preferred.</p> <p>2nd year reps responded that revision lectures to consolidate knowledge would be appreciated, particularly for modules that are not active online, as for Ring Theory, old recordings have been uploaded which is difficult to follow. It was also proposed that students should be able to arrange Zoom meetings with lecturers, as all office hours are fixed.</p> <p>3rd Year Rep added that live revision lectures would be useful for all years, some lecturers have a created a channel via Slack (similar to QMplus/blackboard) to discuss coursework questions and answer quizzes. This is keeping engagement levels high amongst some 3rd year students.</p>
2020.148	<p>1st Year Rep asked why MHT5001 is now a compulsory module.</p> <p>RJ informed students that the general philosophy to slightly reduce the number modules available gives some advantages for better timetable and coherent collection of modules and it is considered that MTH5001 holds valuable skills for the programming in its own rights; the way in which it encourages one to think and that it will be helpful to have for future time at QMUL and employability.</p>

2020.149	<p>MW and SR clarified 1st Year Reps understanding of previous years' next year's study guide concerning compulsory modules that either Professional Skills with SAS or Introduction to Computer Programming had to be taken. SR to replace this year's study guides on QMplus with next year's study guide.</p>
2020.150	<p>1st Year rep queried why other programmes do not follow varied pathways similar to G100 and G102.</p> <p>MW informed students that a change has been introduced to third year students that, although students are to choose the same number of modules they cannot take an unusual collection, it has to fit into 3 pathways: General Pathway, Pure Pathway and Financial Statics Pathway. All other programmes naturally fit into one of these programmes.</p> <p>MW further added that for non-pathway modules students will need to speak their advisor and seek permission from the School, bearing in mind that a non-pathway module may have a timetable clash with maths modules and student will have to select another module in September.</p>
2020.151	<p>SB asked reps of all years how academic staff can support students from now till revision. Although revision lectures will be arranged SB asked how drop in hours, live tutorial with tutor PHD students would be received by students.</p> <p>1st Year Rep would like MTH4*15 and MTH4*16 to provide drop-in session run up to revision week. MTH4*02 tutorial times with each tutor is listed on QMplus and forum is available for communication with lecturer and tutors.</p> <p>2nd Year Reps mentioned that for MTH5001, 3-hour office hours are provided every day: 4 of the office hours are run by PHD students 1 day by the lecturer. All the students appreciate the time provided and would like other modules to follow suit.</p> <p>For Ring Theory (MTH5101) and Differential Integral Analysis (MTH5105) there should be a revision lectures or extra tutorials run up to revision week.</p>

	<p>3rd Year Rep reported that many students are feeling disengaged, lacking motivation and are considering interrupting their studies. It draws upon the call for all MOs to arrange online tutorials and drop in hour run-up to exams to ensure final year students can push through the finish line.</p> <p>SB to contact MO's to facilitate tutorials/officer hours similar to MH4*01 and arrange drop- ins run up to revision week.</p>
2020.152	<p>SB asked whether students would prefer an April Study plan (work schedule) with revision lectures and tutorials or a single revision lecture at the end of the month.</p> <p>2nd Year Rep reported that a study plan would focus revision and students would be prepared in time of the revision lecture, to consolidate knowledge, ensure they have absorbed all things necessary to learn and iron out any doubts.</p> <p>2nd Year Rep further questioned whether MOs that uploaded previous year's revision lectures will create a new revision document.</p> <p>SB reassured students that due to possible differences from last year's content and industrial action they are working with MOs to provide new revision lectures for all modules.</p>
2020.153	<p>MW reminded everyone that of the differences between interrupting and EC: Interruption will require one to be out of studies for an entire year and students cannot take exams till the next academic year, while submitting an EC, which students can now self-certify gives them the opportunity to sit exams in August or early September.</p> <p>SR stressed the implication on fees if choosing to interrupt and how that the EC route is now flexible bearing in mind the circumstances, and that it may be more of a preference at this stage than interruption.</p> <p>WN further added that the deadline to interrupting studies is 1st of May and students should look at interruption if circumstances are long-term and EC concerning short-term issues.</p>
2(f)	<p>Learning resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.) • QMplus

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QReview • Updates from faculty E-learning forums • IT
2020.154	Representatives reported on learning resources matters and the following points were noted:
2020.155	JS informed everyone that the Library is closed as a physical form and the resources that were previously online are still there.
2020.156	In response to 2 nd year representative comment that renewal dates have been extended, JS informed that all books have been automatically renewed till May, however students will need to continually renew resources after this date, till the library is opened again. JS also mentioned that students are unable to reserve books and as expected due to COVID-19 physical returns are not possible, any queries should directed to library@qmul.ac.uk . SB added that staff should receive an update on available resources for teaching that are not online. JS reminded that all library updates, and changes to usual procedures can be found online.
2(g)	Consideration of External Examiner reports
2020.157	There we no reports to consider.
2(h)	Student feedback (NSS/PTES/QMSS/Module evaluations)
2020.158	The committee discussed responses to NSS/PTES and QMSS and noted the following:
2020.159	JW had only received 15 responses from 230 students and asked why response was low. MW reported that module evaluation took place in week 9 and due to industrial action there have not been many responses. 2 nd Year Reps had asked emphasised the importance of providing feedback to their cohort, but only a handful had completed the evaluations.
2(i)	Taught Programme Action Plans (TPAP)
2020.160	There was nothing to report.
2(j)	Periodic Review

2020.161	The committee received the self-evaluation document for the upcoming Periodic Review and noted the following:
2020.162	There were no comments.
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2020.163	The following items were raised under Any Other Business:
	<p>JW informed committee that Student Union had proposed UG SSLC meetings are to be held every 2 weeks. MW suggested that as revision week is to run w/c 27th April and exam period is to begin w/c 4th May (there are no Maths exams for the first two weeks, however students on joint-programmes will have either business and/or economics exams), it's up to the students if they would like a meeting to be arranged during revision week. SB echoed the same and mentioned that SSLC meeting are for students to share their thoughts as much as it is for staff to action changes.</p> <p>2nd Year Reps are welcome to email Justin if they have any queries, but if they do receive many questions from their cohort a meeting will be preferred.</p> <p>JW and NH had tentatively set the next UG SSLC meeting for 29th April, so students experience a couple of revision lectures and if they do have any feedback, they are able to discuss it in the meeting and subsequent changes/improvements can be made for the following revision lectures, ahead of exams.</p>
2020.164	Raghat has won contribution gold award from student's union for her work as a representative.
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2020.165	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 29 th April at 13:00 via Microsoft Teams.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Completed?
2020.135	Contact Gaik about placement year / year abroad	Simon	ASAP		Complete
2020.149	Replace 2019/20 study guides with 2020/21 study guides on QMPlus	Simon	ASAP		Complete
2020.146 and 2020.151	MTH4*15 & MTH4*16 to adopt MTH4*101 teaching practices (live tutorials/forums) and office hours with lectures or tutors	Shabnam	ASAP		Complete – Message sent out to all MOs with a concrete checklist for their modules, including the Course Rep Requests some were requirements (e.g. Office Hours) others options (e.g. study plans)
2020.151	Tutors / PHD students to be available from now till the run up of revision week via online tutorials or forums (Modules to follow suit of Introduction to Programming)	Shabnam	ASAP		Complete – 9-5 Virtual Drop-in hours being arranged for W/C 4 th May

2020.151	MTH5101 and MTH5105 to have tutorials run up to revision week and have revision lectures organised.	Shabnam	ASAP		Complete – MTH501 & MTH5105 Revision lectures arranged (additional lectures were not made possible)
2020.151	Drop-in sessions to be available for 3 rd year students run up to revision week to boost motivation and confidence	Shabnam	ASAP	In Progress	Complete – Student voice email for finalists sent by Senior Tutors (to all) and Third Year Champion Revision Lecture Planned.
2020.152	Contact MOs to organise revision lectures for W/C April 27 th – remove previous years revision lecture slides	Shabnam/ Mark	Mid April		Complete