

School of Geography

Minutes of the
Student Staff Liaison Committee held on Wednesday 2nd December 2020
at 15.30 - 16.30 via MS Teams

Staff Members present

Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Kate Heppell (KH)	Deputy Director of Education (BSc)
Regan Koch (RK)	Senior tutor from Jan 2021
Anthea Chou (AC)	Faculty library liaison for HSS
Tim Brown (TB)	Director of Education
Alastair Owens (AO)	Head of School
Shazia Sadiq (SS)	PG studies manager
Emma Shapcott (ES)	Teaching and learning manager
Kate Amis	Minuting meeting

Student members present

William Robertshaw (WR) (Co – Chair)	3 rd Year Human Geography
Aminah Ossoman (AYO)	2 nd Year Geography with Business Management
Rianno McFarlane Thomas (RT)	3 rd Year BSc Geography
Alice Mills (AM)	1st Year Physical Geography
Inayah Oosman (IO)	1st Year Environmental Science
Andrei Roman (AR)	1st Year Geography with Business Management
Billy Newman (BN)	Year abroad rep
Sara Shafique (SSh)	2 nd Year Environmental Science
Frederic Klein (FK)	2nd Year Human Geography
Marina Ponticelli (MP)	MSc Development and International Business

1. **Welcome** from WR who chaired the meeting
2. **Apologies** received from Sam Halvorsen and Martin Beeston (Anthea Chou attended in his stead)
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** were approved

4 Matters arising from the previous meeting and action			Action to date as reported Green= complete Orange= in progress and to be reported next meeting Red =Awaiting action/ roll over
2020:54	AO	Check that email re lateral flow testing on campus has been sent round to students	The principal had communicated this to students via email. AO followed up on 2/12 and confirmed that all being managed well.
2020:55	SSp	Flag up specific E Sc opportunities as they arise. SS to investigate possibility of workshop on current hiring situation or communicate in newsletter around current hiring situation	Yes-CM sent list of Envi Science students to SSp who contacted them about specific opportunities
2020:56	CM	To arrange meeting with BB and AM re social media	Yes this took place and extremely useful discussion surrounding making the Instagram account more engaging was had. CM followed up with KA and Shazia Sadiq about the possibility of implementing social media ambassadors for HG, PGES and PGT. Three ambassadors engaged to do this work
2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on Teams	Anonymous feedback place now available on qmplus as drop box Progress ongoing on this item.
2020:45	All CReps	Send 100- word bio and photo to CM for their course rep profile	CM obtained the majority from CourseReps and will look to release these on Instagram and put them on QMplus. Many thanks to those who have sent their profile in.
2020:50	CM	Circulate EC docs from Biology and business to all our students on joint degrees.	CM has now circulated this to students on joint programmes
2020:51	CM and RW	Meet to discuss and action MS Teams groups for each course/ year group.	It is looking likely this will not be implemented until SEM B but we are working closely with IT services to ensure this is set up effectively.

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Engagement and monitoring (TB)

The School of geography uses QEngage to collect data about aspects of student engagement/ attendance in activities/ lectures etc. SOG is not making maximum use of the possibilities/ data options at the current time. We should like to hear from students about any concerns you have about

- What data is collected

PW perhaps we can ask central to create a document that we can share re what data is being collected and what it is used for?

- How that data is used

KH explained that some academics have started using QMPLUS activity checkers. Was there any feedback from students on these? They are designed to help plan workload. E.g. KH uses them on her module 'environmental pollution'

MP thought the activity checkers would be useful introduction from next semester as it could be motivating to tick off the tasks as you work through the module.

- Who that data is shared with

WR asked how far up the Uni the data is shared with. CM replied that currently senior university level are only using the data at broad level and not accessing individual student engagement data

CM: Library want access to data to support students. SOG wants to be able to contact students to offer support.

- Why it is being collected

- General concerns around this issue

PW raised issue that some students may not know how to use platforms like QMPLUS and therefore would be penalised in the QEngage data

WR expressed concern that some students may download materials and store in their own files to avoid having to use QMPLUS but this way of working, limiting the use of QMPLUS over time may go against a student in terms of apparent engagement. This needs clarifying.

Action: PW and CM to clarify the types of data being collected and how it is being used and collate this into a document for sharing with students and staff in SOG

5.2 IGS/PES allocation

This item was not discussed

5.3 Discussion of feedback sent from Creps to DoEs

A document compiled by the Creps and shared with SH, TB and KH was circulated on the chat function for the whole committee to discuss. WR emphasised that the feedback was intended to summarise their findings and he acknowledged that there was a great deal of positive and appreciative feedback about how hard everyone is working to adapt teaching and assessment in a difficult situation.

Feedback	How often is it mentioned to us (course reps)	Who is affected	Possible solutions
Overwhelming workloads in preparation for online sessions.	For every meeting	All Students.	System of priority. Giving 2 priority (essential) readings amongst other further readings. Varying the resources for both BA and BSc modules. E.g., podcasts, readings and video documentaries.

Lack of participation in live sessions and webinars.	A lot at the beginning, some decrease in participation recently.	All modules and students. Particularly GEG6232 and BUS359.	Use of apps like Socrative to increase participation and engagement during live session and more questions in that format, such as the question format on blackboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent groups • More information in regard to breakout rooms, allow for preparation • Increase variety of activities in webinar sessions. • Don't do the same format e.g., presentation every week • Increased use of chat function during lectures to maintain engagement between lecturer and students
Some modules have struggled augmenting content over for online learning and therefore are teaching some material that is obsolete when it comes to assessments.	Every week	Students on GEG6203 Environmental Hazards in particular.	Re-evaluate the content taught on modules. Especially those that would have had exams, that now have been replaced by coursework. Perhaps, assignments could be made so that they encompass more lecture topics, so that the lectures relate to everyone's assignment. Ensure that modules that were meant to include lab sessions are augmented online and the assessment reflects the online learning experience, not the hoped for in person sessions.
Lengthy live classes. Students lose focus even with the odd 5min break.	Sporadically	All years	Limiting online live lectures to 2 hours, is more than enough time. An exception is computer-based classes like GEG6230 and GEG5223 that require adequate time such as the 3hr slots.
Readings /management of them.	Very often	First years	Having specific questions we need to answer for the readings, make more of a comprehensive approach Being told what we need to look out for within the readings Run a session on how to tackle readings efficiently and productively, how to go about readings was a focus in the tutorials but some students need extra help/guidance with this
Length and quantity of information within pre-recorded lectures.	Fairly often	Everyone	Look into the amount of content within the lecture to just include the relevant content needed. To have pre-recorded lectures uploaded with sufficient time to go through the lecture and any readings or activities to prepare for seminars We do not want a reduction in content or speed. Moreover, we would like a module convener to understand that for 60 minutes of lecture, roughly 90 minutes of work is being done on that recording (1.5x).
Expectations around assessments on how to succeed are not being conveyed well.	Fairly often	Everyone	Clearly display your feedback hours (QMplus side panels) to enable students to get in contact with lecturers with specific questions
Appsanywhere struggles with workloads, especially at peak times.	Recently	Students using VMware for software such as ArcMap and SPSS	Help students to install programs onto their computer e.g., ArcMap or SPSS, as it can decrease peak demand.
The expectation that students have their cameras on.	Recently	2nd Year Env. Science	Remove the expectation that students have to turn their cameras on. This does not respect the students in their current surroundings that may be at home, it is also harder to maintain a stronger internet connection whilst video is on. In the case of BB collaborate you can drop out of the call at any time on occasions.

TB thanked the Creps for their work on this. Academics would find it useful to know the positives as well as those areas that need more work. The key takeaways were

- The difficulties of transition from A Level to university style of learning
- The need to explain further around the value of extended reading

Action: TB to oversee action on these points from the CREps and report back to next meeting

KH noted that there was criticism levied at having material in modules which isn't directly required for assessment. KH reflected that it was a shame that students didn't welcome learning broader subject material. RT said that this was especially the case in the Environmental hazards module where there were now two assignments rather than an exam and so students could afford to be narrower in their focus

TB reminded that we are bound by external requirements in terms of what we teach.

CM noted that there had been feedback on office hours communications and reminded all that these were all available on QMPLUS support but she would be asking convenors to add the links to office hours to each of their module pages

Action CM to ask convenors to add office hours link to module pages

On the issue of cameras on/ off PW and TB asked for further information about the reasoning here. CM reminded the Creps that backgrounds can be blurred in MS Teams. SS commented that she didn't see the need to see peoples' faces but acknowledged that this issue was a personal one and everyone felt differently.

WR reiterated that Apps Anywhere is not working properly for GIS. TB currently in conversation with SG and ITS about this issue. PW reminded committee that any affected by technological issues as a result of things like this, have a valid claim for EC consideration.

5.4 New conduct alert process

A letter has been sent to schools regarding managing conduct in online sessions. Issues are divided into low level disruption which should be managed at school level and serious inappropriate behaviour which is to be referred to the University. The issue is where the dividing line is between the two.

PW made the point that it is not yet clear how the incidents will be reported. She suggested that we need clear guidelines for module convenors.

WR Suggested that these guidelines go into introductory lectures along with other guidelines.

TB explained that he used a holding slide at the start of his activities with a clear set of expectations laid out. We could consider developing an agreed SOG version of this for all to use.

KA reminded committee that as part of new tutorial programme across all year groups we had invested in core School values of supported, engaged and valued which are reciprocal and mutual.

6. Advising and student support

6.1 Extenuating circumstances policy

CM explained that there are two different claims, Extension requests and Late submission ECs.

Extension request EC claim

Extension requests can only be submitted up to 5 working days before the actual deadline (excluding the grace period). If you submit with less than 5 days before the deadline, then your EC claim will be declined. You will then be asked to resubmit as a late submission EC claim once your work has been handed in.

Late submission EC claim

You can submit a late submission EC claim AFTER your work has been handed in. If you submit a late submission EC claim before you hand your work in your EC claim will be declined and you will be asked to resubmit once this work has been submit.

7. Organisation and communication

7.1 Communications with Creps and cohort

See item 5.3 above.

WR raised issue on behalf of a peer regarding GEG6232/ Nature based climate solutions: This student felt that there was over dependence on learning from the presentations of students and a lack of lectures. Poor attendance meant that those who do attend are still losing out because their peers have not created presentations for them to learn from. KH explained that the content to this module is all available in pre- recorded sessions rather than live lecture. The intention was to use lecture time to reflect on the pre recorded material.

7.2 The use of Instagram/social media

CM explained that the three new ambassador social media reps would be using Instagram to communicate events and news to the SOG community from next term

7.3 Library update

AC reported that Martin Beeston has been running sessions on how to use the *Global search* function and there would be more of these running going forwards including 9/12/20 at 11am. The library would be closed completely between 24 – 28 Dec and open for shortened hours in the rest of the seasonal break

8.AOB

The committee gave thanks to Philippa for her time as co -chair of the SSLC and thanked her for making it a powerful and productive committee. RK would be talking over this role as part of his new role as senior tutor from January.

Thanks also given to TB for his contributions. The Director of Education role is passing on to KH as he is off on sabbatical from January.

Thanks also to KA for minuting meetings. KA is retiring from QMUL this December.

WR explained that he would be stepping down from his co -chair role early in 2021 and 3rd years should think about applying to take on this role.

9. Date of Next meeting: Weds 3rd February 2021 2-3pm on MS Teams

Summary of new actions from this meeting and those carried forward

2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on Teams
2020:51	CM and WR	Meet to discuss and action MS Teams groups for each course/year group.
2020: 52	PW and CM	To clarify the types of data being collected for QEngage and how it is being used and collate this into a document for sharing with students and staff in SOG.
2020:53	TB	To oversee action on these points from the CREPs and report back to next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The difficulties of transition from A Level to university style of learning•The need to explain further around the value of extended reading
2020:54	CM	To ask convenors to add Advice and Feedback hours link to module pages