

## Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

The minutes from meeting on Monday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020,

Time: 5pm

Location: NCU JP conference room 301

### Staff Members present:

Dr. Maconochie Chair (QM)

Dr. Zhijun Luo Co-Chair (NCU)

Ms. Jane Qu Administrator (QM)

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator (QM)

### Student Members Present:

Name	Class	NCU ID
Han, Zheng	201	421712009
Wang, Yilu	202	4217120037
Liang, Hanlin	203	4217120185
Liu, Yuxin	204	4217120077
Xu, Jingyao	191	4217119033
Liang, Dingfa	191	4202118026
Lv, Zhaoru	195	4217119180
Yu, Zhengyi	196	4217119226
Tang, Gan	181	4217118022
Zhai, Yujia	183	4217118118
Ling, Yuanyi	186	4217118221

### Apologies:

Ms. Yi Yang Vice Dean (NCU)

### Part 1: Preliminary Items

#### 1. Welcome

The Chair Dr. Maconochie and Co-Chair Dr. Luo welcomed members to the meeting of the Nanchang JP SSLC on December 14th, 2020. Student representatives introduced themselves to other members.

#### 2. Brief updates on the minutes from the previous meeting Wednesday July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020

Dr. Maconochie briefly updated on some key questions from the previous meeting.

- a) On question 1, *“Extend exam duration to 2 weeks for Y3”*. Exams could be spread out but losing revision week, or exams can take place every other day with a short revision week: student reps from year 3 need to discuss with classmates and decide which option they prefer.
- b) On question 2, *“MCQ’ coverage was limited to the first few lectures”*: has been addressed as this was not agreed.
- c) On question 3 *“Immunology problems with slides consisting of animations only and is the only module without QQ support”* These issues were

currently being looked into.

- d) On question 4, "*Instances of poor recording quality last year*": this year's recording quality should show marked improvement because we used a different system to record, lectures live. If this is not the case let Dr. Maconochie know as soon as possible in order to remedy any particular cases.
- e) On question 8: students confirmed last year's courseware is available online. Dr. Maconochie noted he would try to get semester B's historic courseware uploaded before the start of the Spring festival.

Then, the committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting 1st July, 2020 as an accurate record of proceedings.

## **Part 2: Programme Delivery and other Matters raised**

Student representatives reported the following issues related to learning and teaching matters:

1. A) A year 3 student Tang, gan raised a question on whether the deadline for turning in project SNU301's lab book and presentation can be extended. Some labs take much longer than others to establish the animal model, which reduces time available to put all of the required data in the lab book for presentation purposes.

Dr. Maconochie noted that SNU301 students have been provided sufficient experimental days to finish their project. Students should not be used as technical help for research labs but conduct supported small projects. In order to increase the deadline for handing in completed lab books, Dr Maconochie will consult with the SNU301 module organisers.  
helpers for tech.

Dr. Luo commented that students should work with their supervisor to make arrangements to identify an appropriate duration for the lab, because the purpose of the project is to give students basic training, not training to be a researcher.

B) The same student (year 3) also questioned the curriculum change for year 2 students. Some modules for the current year 2 students are very different from what previous years used in the past, and the student questioned why such changes need to be made in the middle of their study, and wondered if they've lost an opportunity to learn.

Dr. Maconochie explained that the new curriculum is being introduced and is designed in part to avoid too much duplication with NCU content for year 2 students.

2. A) A year 3 student Zhai, Yujia raised a question on teaching schedule for the semester. The student requested whether schedules can be given at the beginning of the semester for each module, including rough dates for

each assessment, practical and detailed timeline to submit project work.

Dr. Maconochie noted that these dates should be available on QMplusb at the start of each semester, and will check with module organizers to make sure dates are added online for each module. He was surprised that these dates were not in place and will check.

B) The same student also raised a question on lecturers' standards on providing feedback, and how they vary. For example, some UK lecturers help to correct grammar mistakes within the introductions, while other lecturers do not bother to correct such mistakes. The student asked whether a uniform standard can be set.

Dr. Maconochie noted the feedback procedure changed in the last week before submission of introductions, and agreed that the extent of feedback needs to be same for everyone. He personally is not happy with different levels of feedback and will ensure this is discussed and agreed amongst staff. He stated that this would change next year, and will be more uniform in extent.

3. A) A year 3 student raised a question on arrangements for project SNU301, and asked whether there are, between December 7<sup>th</sup>-Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, any requirements for how often students should go to the lab or how long they should stay in the lab.

Dr. Maconochie noted that the independent project lasts 32 days, from Dec 7<sup>th</sup> to Jan 8<sup>th</sup> of next year, including weekends. Some students have already started the lab before it officially commenced. Students need to demonstrate 32 days of lab activity. How often you need to go in the lab during the noted time period depends on how often you've already gone to the lab. The same amount of research project days ensures a fair and balanced project output for all students undertaking this module.

B) The same student also asked what happens if one doesn't get good results during this time?

Dr. Maconochie noted that the objective is not to produce award winning research results, but rather be trained in different aspects of undertaking a research project. It is entirely normal if you don't have wonderful data when the project is over, as long as you kept going in everyday to provide evidence of experimental attempts and engagement.

Dr. Luo stated that students need to tell their supervisors to let them finish the experiment in 32 days. As long as students can demonstrate and apply their analytical skills, it would be fine. If students switch labs, they will need to submit an EC for approval. Dr. Luo mentioned he would email all of the Chinese supervisors to remind them.

C) The student also asked what to do if some students have not started their labs because the lab room is under construction?

Dr. Luo noted that those students will need to report the issue directly to him and he will make alternative arrangements.

4. A year 2 student Liang, Dingfa raised a concern on microphone usage during classes. He pointed out that handheld microphones are always passed to the same person(s), which may be unfair to other students who also wanted to try answering questions.

Dr. Maconochie noted that staff struggle to find a perfect way to let all students be involved in remote teaching sessions. Some staff have been using seat numbers to randomly call on students, but not all students like to be called randomly, especially when they do not know the answer. And lecturers do want the questions to be answered and want to encourage students to engage but also are aware at not imposing on students who do not know the answers. For those students who feel there's unfairness as they cannot get to ask or answer questions, they are encouraged to go to office hours that run every day to ask any questions they have.

5. A year 2 student Xu, Jingyao raised a question on a module change. She said many students noticed SNU213 has changed a lot compared to last year, and wondered if the final exam would be harder.

Dr. Maconochie noted that in terms of the exam, it will be of a similar difficulty as in previous years. In terms of the change of module due to the roll out of our new curriculum, course content needs to be updated every other year or so to reflect advances in modern science. Beside the content change for this module, credits for SNU213 also increased from 7.5 to 15 on the QM scale. Therefore whilst it will be no more difficult as previous years, the exam will reflect the different course content of the module.

6. A) A year 2 student Lv, Zhaoru raised a question on whether advance notice can be provided before curriculum change. Some students would like to purchase module materials from the print shop and spend time during break to review. If changes are not announced with ample lead time, they would waste time reviewing irrelevant material. For example, SNU212 and SNU213 have changed a lot, and students did not know until the beginning of the semester.

Dr. Maconochie noted that there is no wasted knowledge. Students are advised not to go to the print shop to buy module materials as they could be more than 2 years old. It is best for students to wait until the start of the new semester to download and print out the freely available courseware.

B) The same student also raised a question on current curriculum arrangements for Human Anatomy between NCU and QM. Human Anatomy is very important to clinical students as it is a foundational course. Therefore, if students can take NCU's version first, then it would be extremely helpful in getting them up to speed on the terminology, before attempting the QM version in English.

Dr. Maconochie promised to talk to Dr. Luo and together they will consider carefully the timing of the two modules within the overall curriculum again.

7. A) A year 2 student Yu, Zhengyi requested feedback from the practical for SNU209 neurobiology, and SNU212 basic and applied pharmacology.

Dr. Maconochie explained that because students don't do the different module practicals all at the same time, feedback cannot be provided until all students have undertaken all the practicals. Otherwise, feedback provided to earlier students could potentially lead to later students gaining an unfair advantage in their assessments.

B) The same student also raised an issue for the SNU212 practical. Students were supposed to have the same sample/data, which did not happen, and the lecturers did not provide detailed explanation for the result.

Dr. Maconochie noted the issue and he will check with staff involved to see if they know what went wrong.

Dr. Luo noted this may be an issue with lab demonstrators, and students may not have been told how to prepare for the lab and how to collect the data in advance.

8. A year 1 student Han, Zheng raised a question on whether any practice questions can be provided after each class, so students can remember the key points of each lecture.

Dr. Maconochie noted that the most important thing during learning is for students to understand the material, not memorizing points or question answers as it will not help with the more difficult questions. Hopefully, PDP classes can prepare students better to become more self-sufficient independent learners.

9. A) A year 1 student Wang, Yilu raised a question on PDF courseware available after each module.

Dr. Maconochie noted that even though we may make small changes every year, all courseware from last year are available online at the start of the semester and there's no need to buy outdated courseware from the print shop. Students are invited to print this courseware from QMplus for the previous years teaching of the module. In addition, once each lecture is delivered, the current lecture PDF is uploaded onto QMPlus as the latest version and is available for students to study within a matter of hours.

B) Student asked if there is sample of exam format to share, so students can better prepare for exams.

Dr. Maconochie noted such examples of past questions are already available on QMplus. At the end of this week, sample MCQs and short answer questions will be gone through in class in addition.

10. A) A year 1 student Liang, Hanlin raised a question on whether more practice topics can be provided during office hours.

Dr. Maconochie noted that office hours are predominantly targeted for students to talk about anything they don't understand, and not for giving practice questions as training towards memorization of exam questions/answers. In response to the request to sending out questions discussed during office hour, Dr Maconochie reiterated he did not intend to do so as some practice questions were often included in these sessions to offer an inducement to attend office hours.

B) The same student also asked for advice on how to grasp some key points of the courseware when reviewing.

Dr. Maconochie noted that at this stage, students need to focus on understanding what they are learning. If they feel a gap in their understanding, they should go to office hours to utilize this learning opportunity.

C) The student also raised an issue with using the QM library, claiming that they are not able to use the library smoothly sometimes.

Dr. Maconochie noted that if student can provide the specific website or resource they had an issue with, he can take the issue to library staff for a resolution.

11. A) A year 1 student Liu, Yuxin raised a question on how to prepare to apply for postgraduate study in the UK in the future.

Dr. Maconochie noted that QM is trying to broadcast the postgraduate programs availability as much as possible. Students are very welcome to attend sessions that are being arranged, but should also remember that they are Year 1 semester A students. At this stage, students should focus on their learning, and thereby be in a strong position when applying later to PG programmes, including those at QMUL.

B) The same student also asked for advice on studying at home during vacation.

Dr. Maconochie mentioned that the first priority is take some rest. He subsequently added that he realizes some students like to prepare in advance for the upcoming semester. In such cases, students can go to QMplus and read up the courseware on Human Anatomy, but keeping in mind that there may be small changes in content in order to improve the material next semester.

On Item 7 listed on the agenda, regarding using translation device during the classes, the answer is No. No electronic device may be used during classes unless instructed otherwise.

**Minutes submitted by Jane Qu**