



**School of Biological and Chemical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
Tuesday 9th March 2021**

Confirmed

Staff members present:

Dr Caroline Brennan	Director of Student Experience (Chair)
Dr Ewan Main	Deputy Director of Student Experience
Dr Chris Bray	Director of Education
Professor Richard Pickersgill	Head of School
James Soderman	Faculty Liaison Librarian
Pooja Kanani	Teaching Services Manager
Kawtar Serroukh	Receptionist and Student Support Assistant (Secretary)

Student members present:

Shreya Suresh	Genetics and Medical Genetics Year 3
Jyoti Singh	Pharmaceutical Chemistry Year 4
Foteini Bifsa	Biochemistry Year 4
Simranjeet Duhra	Chemistry Year 4
Upkaar Rajend Ramlall	Biochemistry Year 3
Zainab Zarnab	Biochemistry Year 1
Aisha Najeeb Qadi	Psychology Year 1
Sara Mostafa	Psychology Year 1
Zena Thair	Genetics and Medical Genetics Year 2
Polen Bareke	Neuroscience Year 2
Ushna Zaineb	Biomedical Sciences Year 3
Aimen Durrani	Biomedical Sciences Year 1
Maria Kahloon	Neuroscience Year 1
Abidur Rahman	Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry Year 1
Oya Avcin	Chemistry Year 2
Sanjay Babu	Biomedical Sciences Year 2

Apologies for absence:

Ramesh Wilson	School of Biological and Chemical Sciences Rep
Olumide Popoola	Academic Skills Coordinator (Library Services)
Richard Grose	Professor of Cancer Cell Biology

Part 1 – Preliminary Items		Led by
1(a)	Welcome	Chair
2020.027		
1(b)	Apologies for Absence	Chair
2020.028	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.	
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting	Chair
2020.029	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held in November	
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken	Chair
2020.030	2020:007 Course Reps to encourage students to join subject specific societies available within QMSU. To be actioned for the next meeting (Carried over from previous meeting). 2020.010 This has been actioned; Dr Caroline Brennan will be circulating the most recent summary of student voice meetings. 2020:011 It was agreed at TLC academics should provide an hour (maximum) of asynchronous material. MO's were advised to identify materials which are essential and formative.	
2020:014	ACTION: 2020:014 Course reps to identify individuals within their cohort who have not been contacted by their academic advisor for a meeting.	
2020:019	ACTION: 2020:019 Dr Caroline Brennan will circulate External Examiners report after the SSLC meeting.	
2020:022	ACTION: 2020:022 Professor Richard Pickersgill has approved the purchase of the Snapgene licence. Dr Ewan Main to raise discussions with Fiona Marsh. 2020:024 Aisha Najee (Psychology Year 1) and Sara Othman (Biology and Zoology Year 3) were nominated as co-chairs	
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters		
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments	
2020.031	Dr Chris Bray – CHE310 has had minor amendments related to its assessments due to a reaccreditation visit. The Chemistry department are awaiting the results.	

<p>2020:032</p>	<p>Part 1 application forms (agreement in principle) was submitted for BSc Neuroscience with Year in Industry and Biomedical Sciences with Year in Industry.</p> <p>Programmes currently under development and to be discussed at TLC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc Biodiversity and Conservation • MSc Biomedical Science <p>In theory both these courses are due to launch in September 2021.</p> <p>MSc Psychology in Mental Health Sciences has had a final approval and will begin in September 2021.</p> <p>ACTION: Dr Chris Bray to discuss with Lorna Adair the opportunity for undergraduate students to sit in the seminar talks during the lectureship recruitment process and provide feedback.</p>	
<p>2(b)</p> <p>2020.033</p> <p>2020.034</p> <p>2020:035</p> <p>2020:036</p>	<p>Student feedback:</p> <p>Learning and teaching matters:</p> <p>Polen Bereke: Neuroscience Year 2 – The majority of modules have reduced asynchronous and synchronous material however, Basic Immunology (BMD251), has increased both the synchronous and asynchronous material. Neuroscience have not had a town hall meeting and so this was raised directly to the MO, who advised the module is very content heavy and it would be difficult to reduce the asynchronous material.</p> <p>ACTION: Dr Caroline Brennan – Joanna Riddoch-Contreras will be contacted and advised to raise concerns regarding the increased asynchronous and synchronous material for BMD251 with the module organiser.</p> <p>Polen Bereke: Neuroscience Year 2 – Students are concerned with how Brexit will affect their tuition fees.</p> <p>Dr Chris Bray – Once students start a course with QMUL their fee status will not change.</p> <p>ACTION: Dr Caroline Brennan – To request clarity from Fiona Marsh on fee status for continuing EU students who are accepted onto an MSc or PhD programme following a completion of a BSc programme within QMUL.</p> <p>Assessment and feedback:</p> <p>Polen Bereke Neuroscience Year 2 – Students within her cohort are concerned about transitioning from alternative assessments to proctored exams. She thinks that we do not need to return to proctored exams.</p>	

2020:037

Dr Chris Bray – QMUL have until the 31st July to make a final decision on how assessments will be conducted. Do we want to return back to proctored exams or could alternative assessments continue post the pandemic? Can we take anything positive from the alternative assessments?

ACTION: Course reps to seek student opinions (recording the number of student feedback) from their prospective cohort on the following question:

In the absence of any covid-19 restrictions do we need to return to proctored exams or could online assessments in some form continue in the future?

Foteini Bifsa Biochemistry Year 4 – As she has taken proctored exams followed by alternative assessments, she thinks the alternative assessments should remain as this method is:

- a) less stressful
- b) Allows students to have a better understanding of their answers, opposed to just memorising slides
- c) More accommodating for students

Professor Richard Pickersgill – There has been an increase in the number of cases of plagiarism and proctored exams mitigates this risk. Viva's are a great method to assess students outside of proctored exams and should combine this method with alternative assessments.

Foteini Bifsa Biochemistry Year 4 and Polen Bereke Neuroscience Year 2 – Both agree oral viva's should be incorporated into the alternative assessment as this is a great method for assessing students' knowledge and understanding of topics within modules.

Polen Bereke Neuroscience Year 2 – Post the pandemic, an open book online MCQ where once students begin, they are given a limited time e.g. 1 hour to complete the assessment. This is currently in place for medical students and thinks it is a great way to assess students.

Zainab Zarnab Biochemistry Year 1 – Can we ask our student cohorts of their opinions about blended learning?

Dr Chris Bray - Blended learning was part of the 2030 strategy; this was accelerated due to the pandemic and is likely to remain. Post the pandemic, we expect the synchronous sessions to be face-to-face with the remaining aspect of blended learning to stay.

Zena Thairer Genetics and Medical Genetics Year 2 – Blended learning should remain as it is flexible for those who are overseas in September accessing live webinars

Dr Chris Bray – A hybrid mode of delivery may be technically possible with Q-Review now able to live cast; in theory, if set up correctly, students attending online will also be able to contact and ask questions during the lecture.

	<p>Zainab Zarnab Biochemistry Year 1 – Can lecturers ensure material is uploaded in good time prior to the delivery of the lecture?</p> <p>Aisha Najee Psychology Year 1 – Agrees with Zainab, most of the Psychology modules, material is uploaded at short notice; this is partly due to the technical difficulties with QMplus.</p> <p>Dr Chris Bray – Academics are expected to upload the material at least 1 week prior to the delivery of the lecture. This time frame should extend further in September 2021.</p> <p>Dr Caroline Brennan – Whilst updates of some slides may happen at short notice, the material should be uploaded well in advance of the lecture.</p> <p>Professor Richard Pickersgill – We will pass your feedback relating to assessments to try and influence the outcome, however this is ultimately a decision made by the quality assurance central team and is then cascaded to schools.</p> <p>Dr Caroline Brennan – Feedback should also be passed onto Ramesh Wilson (School of Biological and Chemical Sciences Rep) and Aphrodite Liddington (Vice President Science and Engineering)</p>	
2(c)	<p>Learning resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online teaching and learning • Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.) • QMplus • QReview • Updates from faculty E-learning forums • IT 	
2020:038	<p>James Soderman – The library is scheduled to have refurbishments in the summer but will remain open. If students have any comments or feedback, please email library-sande@qmul.ac.uk</p> <p>Polen Bereke Neuroscience Year 2 – Some Biomedical Pharmacology e-books have not been available to students.</p> <p>James Soderman – Any e-books which students do not have access to, students can fill in a form titled ‘More Books’ for library services to check whether the publisher’s policies have changes.</p>	
2020:039	<p>Dr Chris Bray – Qmplus major outage was due to a contractor who cut through the network cable. They installed a temporary repair, whilst carrying out the final repairs they sliced through the temporary measure.</p>	
2(d)	<p>Student survey feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSS 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKES • Module evaluations and responses to results 	
2020:40	Dr Caroline Brennan – 42.9% of students have completed the NSS survey. This time last year SBCS had a 60% completion rate.	
2020:041	ACTION: Course reps to encourage their respective cohorts to complete the NSS survey.	
2(e)	Consideration of Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP), Student Experience Action Matrix (SEAM) or Taught Programme Action Plans (TPAP)	
2020:042	Dr Chris Bray – SEAPS has been split into 4 pillars: education, learning environment, employability and engagement. We plan to have subgroups with student representation for each pillar mirroring procedures at college level. Students will be provided with regular updates on this.	
Part 3 – Any Other Business		
3(a)	Polen Bereke Neuroscience Year 2 – During the pandemic, many students have faced financial difficulty; is there any support for overseas students to help those struggling to pay for their tuition fees? Who should students contact to seek advice regarding financial assistance and support?	
2020:043	Professor Richard Pickersgill – The School has raised concerns regarding this and the university centrally has advised that they will look at each case on an individual basis. Dr Caroline Brennan – Students can seek advice and help from the Advice and Counselling team for guidance. Dr Chris Bray – The financial assistant fund is also available for students in financial difficulty, however this cannot contribute towards paying tuition fees.	
2020:044	Ushna Zaineb Biomedical Sciences Year 3 – Students are concerned they are unable to receive feedback from the alternative assessments held in January. Some staff do not respond to emails. Dr Ewan Main – Student will receive feedback from their academic advisor. Results were released to staff and students simultaneously.	

<p>2020:045</p> <p>2020:046</p> <p>2020:047</p>	<p>Procedure of how students will receive feedback for January 2021 alternative assessments will be discussed at TLC.</p> <p>Dr Caroline Brennan – Course reps should inform Dr Caroline Brennan and Dr Ewan Main of individuals who do not respond to emails; we should also encourage students to check their college email to ensure they do not miss any important communications.</p> <p>Ushna Zaineb Biomedical Sciences Year 3 – Where can students seek support surrounding EC's?</p> <p>Dr Ewan Main – Any student who seek support from their advisor and do not get the response they need should contact Dr Ewan Main. There is also a Student Support Officer (Shaheda Batha) who can provide advice to students. She can be reached using the following shared inbox: sbcs-student-support@qmul.ac.uk</p> <p>Zainab Zarnab Biochemistry Year 1 – Some modules use forum pages on QMplus to communicate with staff and ask questions however, it appears there may be some technical issues as staff do not respond in a timely manner.</p> <p>Dr Ewan Main – Sometimes QMplus forum pages can be set up which provides notifications only once every 1 or 2 weeks, resulting in a delayed response.</p> <p>ACTION: Dr Chris Bray and Dr Ewan Main to discuss with Imran Islam how we can amend the setup of QMplus forum notifications, reducing the timeframe between notifications and rolling this over to the next academic year.</p>	
<p>Part 4 – Date of the next meeting</p>		
<p>4(a)</p>	<p>TBC</p>	

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2020:014	Course reps to identify individuals within their cohort who have not been contacted by their academic advisor for a meeting.	Course Reps	Next Meeting	In progress	Pending
2020:019	Dr Caroline Brennan will circulate External Examiners report after the SSLC meeting.	Dr Caroline Brennan	Next Meeting	Completed	NA
2020:022	Professor Richard Pickersgill has approved the purchase of the Snapgene licence. Dr Ewan Main to raise discussions with Fiona Marsh.	Dr Ewan Main	Next Meeting	NA	Pending
2020:032	Dr Chris Bray to discuss with Lorna Adair the opportunity for undergraduate students to sit in the seminar talks during the lectureship recruitment process and provide feedback.	Dr Chris Bray	Next Meeting	Completed	NA
2020:034	Dr Caroline Brennan to contact Joanna Riddoch-Contreras to raise concerns regarding the increased asynchronous and synchronous material for BMD251 with the module organiser.	Dr Caroline Brennan	Next Meeting	Completed	YES
2020:035	Dr Caroline Brennan to request clarity from Fiona Marsh on fee status for continuing EU students who are accepted onto an MSc or PhD programme following a completion of a BSc programme within QMUL.	Dr Caroline Brennan	Next Meeting	Completed	NA
2020:037	Course reps to seek student opinions (recording the number of student feedback) from their prospective cohort on the following question: <i>In the absence of any covid-19 restrictions do we need to return to proctored exams or could online assessments in some form continue in the future?</i>	Course Reps	Next Meeting	Completed	NA
2020:041	Course reps to encourage their respective cohorts to complete the NSS survey.	Course Reps	Next Meeting	Completed	NA
2020:047	Dr Chris Bray and Dr Ewan Main to discuss with Imran Islam how we can amend the setup of QMplus forum notifications, reducing the timeframe between notifications and rolling this over to the next academic year.	Dr Chris Bray and Dr Ewan Main	Summer 2021	Pending	Pending