

School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences
Postgraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
13 December 2021

Staff members present:

Prof Andrew Leitch	Deputy Director (PGT Programmes) and SSLC Chair
Natalie Holland	Postgraduate Administrator (SSLC Secretary)

Student members present:

Vida Svahnstrom	Course Rep - MSc Plant and Fungal Taxonomy, Diversity and Conservation
Branita Sekaran	Course Rep - MSc Psychology – Mental Health Sciences

Apologies for absence:

Samiha Tahsin	Course Rep - MSc Biomedical Science
Zoe Sturgess	Course Rep - MSc Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2021.001	The Representatives were welcomed to the meeting.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2021.002	Samiha Tahsin. Zoe Sturgess.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2021.003	N/A. This was the first meeting of the year.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2021.004	N/A.
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership
2021.005	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee. It was also mentioned that for future meetings A Course Rep was invited to Co-Chair the meeting.
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2021.006	A summary of the PGT enrolment numbers was shared.

	<p>This was the first intake for the MSc Psychology Mental Health Sciences (PMHS) programme and the numbers were very good. A target of 20 was exceeded with an intake of 27 students.</p> <p>PMHS Course Rep reported that the majority of students had been attending on-line and the small number of students (five) attending in person, were in some ways having a different experience to their online peers.</p> <p>MSc Plant and Fungal had seen a lower recruitment than anticipated. Course Rep reported that the majority of students were on-campus and the small majority joining on-line had run in to a few problems with alternative assignments for practical tasks that could no longer go ahead.</p> <p>ARL confirmed that this being the first year of Mixed-Mode Education (MME) that there had been teething problems and this was one of them and asked for further details on modules affected.</p> <p>The point was also reiterated to students to always feel that they can feed back to ARL about the course and to not see this as raising complaints. The point was made that this would help inform an ongoing process of programme development and their feedback should be encouraged.</p> <p>There were no Course Reps in attendance for the other programmes.</p>
Action:	Course Reps to inform peers that feedback is encouraged throughout the year.
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2021.007	It was reported that the MSc Biology and Conservation programme was in place for a 2022 intake and that the current MSc Aquatic Ecology, EEB, EEG and FAME programmes were being withdrawn. The new diets were similar to the programmes that are closing and by process of module selection, would force students in to one of two streams. This is to support

	<p>the long-term strategy of fewer programmes with a higher student intake, which would also enhance the student experience.</p> <p>Course Reps raised the idea of moving away from streams to a module diet with a list of optional subjects from which students can freely select from. It was explained that this idea had been considered, but in the initial intake it was decided that student numbers might not be great enough to support this programme design.</p>
2(b)	Student Feedback
2021.008	<p>Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:</p> <p>BIO771P</p> <p>It was reported that there had been no feedback for the presentation for this module and that the feedback for the essay was variable in terms of the level of content.</p> <p>ARL thanked the students for this useful feedback and said he would request this of the module MO to improve the module for future intakes.</p> <p>BIO773P</p> <p>Initially there weren't enough demonstrators to support the on-line stats practical sessions, but after first few days this was rectified. Didn't understand the coded feedback from Yannick's side of the course but in general were very happy with the module.</p> <p>BIO789P</p> <p>There was a complaint about the lack of support for those who couldn't attend in person. It felt as though alternative arrangements had not been put in place. Also there were 15 PCs in the PC Suite for 17 students. ARL apologised for these problems, which we hoped would not be an issue in future years as we exited from the influence of covid. He said he would investigate the issue of inadequate computer numbers to ensure future modules/students were not so impacted.</p>

PSY701P

The course was perhaps going faster than students feel they are able to keep up with. The presentations were scheduled at a time that seem to early in terms of project selection. There was a lot of peer-review feedback but less from lecturers. ARL said he would ask the staff on PSY701P to review the balance between academic and student based peer-review.

PSY702P

This course was very well-organised and excellent resources on-line. There was a certain amount of disconnect between the support available for those attending on-line and those on campus. This was particularly felt for the SPSS sessions. ARL said that we hoped this would not be an issue in future years as we exited from the influence of covid.

Further comments were made about the organisation of the modules and programmes.

Project selection:

MSc Plant and Fungal students queries why didn't they have project talks or hear about the potential projects sooner. As there were no talks, project selections was based on written descriptions rather than project pitches from potential supervisors. In relation to this they also queried why Plant Taxonomy and Diversity module couldn't be in Sem A as they felt it would be helpful to have completed this module, prior to making project selections.

ARL apologised that the project talks had not happened, and that this was simply an oversight. He offered these talks if the student body still needed it. [After this meeting, the student rep asked the students on the programme if they still wanted this session, and she then told ARL it was no longer necessary as most students had by then selected their project].

MSc Psychology students reported no problems with how the project selection process had been managed or how the module was going. There was a reminder though of the comment made earlier about the PSY701P module in which they are required to present on their current project

	<p>proposals and the fact that it felt very soon in the year to be able to do this authentically.</p> <p>A suggestion was made by ARL that the SSLC should perhaps be earlier in the year and this would be factored in for next year's cohort.</p>
Action:	<p>Student feedback was to be shared with Module Leads.</p> <p>The meeting for the '22-23 would be in week six.</p> <p>MSc Plant Rep to feedback if students want a project pitch session.</p>
2(c)	Learning Resources
2021.009	<p>The students reported a range of experiences with the QM+ provision.</p> <p>There was a further general comment about the fact that some module schedules only became available a few days before the course starts. They would prefer to have more notice of schedules. ARL said he would raise this issue with MOs to get module information posted much in advance of the module start date.</p> <p>Representatives reported on learning resources matters and the following points were noted:</p> <p>It isn't always clear what the difference is between the synchronous and asynchronous teaching activities. There was a results for clearer labelling of which particular activities to complete with relevant deadlines. ARL said he would raise this issue with MOs.</p> <p>It was also noted that some QM+ pages had content leftover from last year and this was often confusing. ARL said he would raise this issue with MOs to get module information posted much in advance of the module start date.</p>
Action:	Learning resources feedback was to be shared with Module Leads.
2(d)	Student Survey feedback
2021.010	ARL reported to the students the completion of module evaluations was very low and the results would be meaningless in terms of being able to use them for future planning. It was re-emphasised how important module

	<p>feedback was as the process of quality assurance of programme design was continuous and heavily influenced by student feedback.</p> <p>Course Reps were also reminded of the importance of completing the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) which opens in Spring, 2022.</p>
2(e)	Consideration of External Examiner reports
2021.011	<p>The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following:</p> <p>Course Reps were encouraged to read the reports to see the positive feedback that had been provided from the External Examiners for the existing programmes and clarified that with the MSc Psychology programme being new that there was no feedback of this nature.</p>
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2021.012	<p>The following items were raised under Any Other Business:</p> <p>There was a requirement to appoint a Co-Chair and the Student Reps were asked to consider how to appoint this role and to report back in advance of the next meeting.</p>
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2021.013	TBC

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021:006	ACTION: Course Reps to inform peers that feedback is encouraged throughout the year.	Course Reps			
2021:008	Student feedback was to be shared with Module Leads. The meeting for the '22-23 would be in week six. MSc Plant Rep to feedback if students want a project pitch session.	ARL NH Course Reps			
2021:009	Learning resources feedback was to be shared with Module Leads.	ARL			
