

School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
8th of June 2022

Confirmed Minutes

Staff members present:

Dr Sophie Petit	Chair
Dr Stephen Buckingham	Director of Education
Professor RW Pickersgill	Head of School
Jade Theodoro	Secretary to SSLC/Student Support Advisor

Student members present:

Maha Khan	Biochemistry Year 1
Ashfeen Khokhar	Biochemistry Year 2
Salwa Awil Jama	Biology and Zoology Year 1
Talhah Bin-Islam	Biomedical Sciences Year 1
Mohamed Jamil Miah	Biomedical Sciences Year 2
Sriprasad Aditya Vikram	Biomedical Sciences Year 3
Fiza Ali	Medical Genetics Year 1
Paridhi Gupta	Medical Genetics Year 2
Yasmine Jama	Neuroscience Year 1
Maria Zareef Kahloon	Neuroscience Year 2
Parth Bhatnagar	Pharmacology and Innovative Therapeutics Year 2
Marya Alaswad	Pharmacology and Innovative Therapeutics Year 1
Olivia Best	Psychology Year 2
Nur-Khadija Kawtar	Psychology Year 1
Henriana Iyongo	Psychology Year 1

Apologies for absence:

None	
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Part 1	Preliminary Items
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2022.001	NA
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2022.002	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2022.003	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 nd of March 2022.

1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2022.004	
Part 2	Post exam feedback, final year projects and welcome week
2 (a)	Post exam feedback
2022.005	<p>The chair opens the room for feedback about how the exam process has gone this summer, and especially with online assessments. We transitioned to online exams a couple of years ago and we work very hard to minimize issues, and it seems to become more efficient process, as we as we continue with online exams.</p> <p>Henriana Kombo Nguila Iyongo: Year 1 Psychology emphasises on the cohorts desire to have a deeper feedback of where students need to improve their understanding. This would also help tailor revision and improve skills e.g. past exam papers.</p> <p>Dr Stephen Buckingham highlights that going forward the aim is to create more authentic assessments and looking at continuing to improve the kind of assessments you do to encourage a broader learning experience. It is also important to remember that what you were tested on is not the content delivered, but their learning objectives.</p> <p>Paridhi Gupta: Medical Genetics Year 2 found that in most modules there were few parts that were not particularly covered in our lectures, we were told about a topic, and we were expected to maybe look into it a bit deeper which is expected in second year. However for first years it'll be helpful if they're told that they are expected to be independent.</p> <p>Dr Stephen Buckingham says the school is aware that students can come in not really understanding what independent learning is about, and one of the work streams dedicated to improving Queen Mary education is specifically looking at how to get that message across much more clearly to first years through the library, resources and things like that.</p>

	<p>The Chair requests opinion from reps on how helpful students find having feedback workshops to discuss improvement areas based on areas the class struggled during tests.</p> <p>Nur-Khadija Kawthar: Year 1 Psychology points out that often it can be a communication issue where the feedback session may be advertised in an email or a the forums and this could get missed so putting the information in the lecture slides would be more effective as everyone will watch the lecture either face to face or online.</p> <p>Marya Alaswad: Year 1 Pharmacology and Innovative Therapeutics Proposed that one way which feedback could be helpful without releasing the answers would be to have the questions categorised then you could get as part of the results some information about which categories you did well and which need improvement so we know how to structure our learning without being given the answers.</p>
2(b)	Final Year Projects
2022.006	<p>The Chair requests feedback from students on how dissertation submissions went and also why there were so many extenuating circumstances submitted this year requesting extensions.</p> <p>Dr Stephen Buckingham furthers the point that ECs are supposed to support students who genuinely need it so they are not disadvantaged. However the increase in numbers seems to show it's being used as a wild card to have assessments pushed back and there is a concern that with the system is being flooded and this delays help for those that really need it.</p> <p>Nur-Khadija Kawthar: Year 1 Psychology believes that it's because people have realised that the EC system works but majority are still genuine claims as COVID is still affecting people's lives.</p> <p>Parth Bhatnagar: Year 2 Pharmacology and Innovative Therapeutics reflects back on a personal experience with ECs, they were not aware of time constraints with ECs and that they acquire documentation.</p>

	<p>Jade Theodoro reports that the best thing students can do is contact the SSO before it's too late so we can provide the correct guidance. In relations to the current time constraints for the applications this is because without a time restriction you will get students using 1 self-certification claim for multiple missed pieces of coursework throughout the year.</p>
2(c)	Welcome week
2022.007	<p>The chair reflects on a report from a first year rep where students really enjoyed the party at drapers lounge as it allowed them to get to know each other. Overall there seems to be a desire to make welcome week more social for students and less about information overload.</p> <p>The chair opens an invite to all the reps to come and make their presence known during welcome week, so students can ask questions and hear about their experiences.</p> <p>Paridhi Gupta: Medical Genetics Year 2 emphasizes on the need to make the cohort know who their rep is and what their duties are. Most students are perhaps not aware what the reps can do</p> <p>The Chair reports that hopefully with reps giving a welcome week talk and having some training will allow for a stronger connection between the elected reps and their cohort and encourage better communication.</p> <p>Marya Alaswad: Year 1 Pharmacology and Innovative Therapeutics Suggests a forum on Qmplus which is led by the reps could be helpful as email can seem too formal and put people off from contacting the reps and no everyone will want to be on the WhatsApp groups.</p> <p>The Chair reports that there are forums but they are currently not being utilised so perhaps we need to look at how we can advertise those forums better this year so that the students feel confident in using them.</p>

	<p>Professor RW Pickersgill puts forward that if there is interest from a large cohort to have a gathering then the reps can contact him directly and we can look at how we can put something together to improve student experience. This could be within a formal setting e.g. having a lecturer come up to talk about something or more informal where students can just share their experience and get to know each other better.</p> <p>The Chair highlights they are aware that students want more social settings and we are looking into this and how the reps can play a role in creating better communities not only in their cohort, but also within the school.</p>
Part 3	Other business
2022.08	<p>Dr Stephen Buckingham opened the room for feedback on having the possibility of students choosing their assessments. Some universities are doing this where they say you can either do an MCQ or you can do an essay. He would like students to be more involved in the assessment process.</p> <p>Maha Khan: Year 1 Biochemistry raises the point that whilst in theory that sounds like a good idea, they foresee problems in the standardization of it.</p> <p>Talhah Saad Bin-Islam: Year 1 Biomedical Sciences agrees standardising could be an issue and perhaps it should be as a vote for the whole year rather than individuals being assessed how they want.</p> <p>Paridhi Gupta: Medical Genetics Year 2 suggests it would be easier to have lower stake assessments so we are assessed through the semester without having the burden of one large assessment. In second year there was one module 100% coursework with 4 assessments every 2/3 weeks. This ensured we were all attending lectures and being involved compared to modules with exams where we leave the later content to be revised closer to exam periods.</p> <p>Professor RW Pickersgill highlights that assessments should be building knowledge as well as assessing. It could be beneficial to reduce the number of assessments and make them more useful for example you get the feedback</p>

	<p>and then if you include that feedback when you submit the next piece of coursework.</p> <p>Nur-Khadija Kawthar: Year 1 Psychology queries why the midterm exams have different conditions from the finals where in the finals students have 24h whereas during midterms they have 45 minutes</p> <p>Professor RW Pickersgill relates that the university is considering changing the current 24h exam policy for the next academic year as it was a temporary adjustment to COVID. Should the policy be changed to 3h exams the school will be able to inform the students ahead of the upcoming year.</p>
Part 4 –	Date of the next meeting
2022.09	November 2022

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2022.008	Confirm whether exam times will be changed and if so communicate that with students.	Chair and DoE			
2022.007	Students to send any further welcome week ideas to Sophie	Course reps			
2022.007	To communicate and better advertise the student forums as a key method of communication between the cohort and their reps	Chair			