

**School of Economics and Finance  
Postgraduate (MRes/PhD)  
Student Staff Liaison Committee  
3 November 2021**

**Confirmed minutes**

**Staff and student members present:**

Alessandra Bonfiglioli	Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) (Chair)
Emmanuel Guerre	Deputy DGS
Sarolta Laczó	MRes Director
Alexandra Nowosiad	Research Manager
Yannis Papadakis	4th Year Representative
Laura Pérez Cervera	3rd Year Representative
Ezgi Kurt	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Representative
Gulia Tozzi	1st Year Representative
Daniel Lopes Ribeiro	MRes Representative

**Apologies for absence:**

Andrea Tesei

<b>Part 1 – Preliminary Items</b>	
<b>1(a)</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction for new members</b>
2021.024	The Committee welcomed new members
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2021.025	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
<b>1(c)</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
2021.026	AN circulated the minutes from the previous meeting ahead of this meeting, with no amendments received. The Committee approved these minutes.
<b>1(d)</b>	<b>Discussion of PRES 2021 Results</b>
2021.027	
<b>Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters</b>	
<b>2(a)</b>	<b>PRES 2021 Results: Areas for improvement</b>

2021.028	<p><b><u>Issue of remote working Space</u></b></p> <p>EK commented that this was related to the issue of not being able to purchase relevant supplies to support working from home during the pandemic, such as office furniture, a second screen.</p> <p>AB explained that this had been due to financial restrictions across the University. AN clarified that these restrictions on the research budget were no longer in place, though furniture was not something that could be purchased using the research budget, which was intended for research expenses only.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AN to check whether second screens can now be purchased using the research budget. OG to circulate updated guidelines regarding the research budget.</p> <p><b>Update 24/11/21:</b> Second screens can be purchased through the research budget if needed. An updated research budget policy has been circulated to PhD students.</p>
2021: 029	<p><b><u>Remote access to software</u></b></p> <p>AB asked students whether these issues had been mitigated by the recent return to campus following C-19 lockdowns.</p> <p>LP and EK said that they felt the problems were largely due to issues experience during lockdown.</p> <p>GT reported that the first-year students still had not received the second screens for their offices.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> OG to send an email to all PhD students asking for feedback on specific remote access issues to be raised with Donald. OG to ask Donald for an expected arrival date for the second screens.</p>
2021: 030	<p><b><u>Frequent opportunities to discuss research with staff and students</u></b></p> <p>LP observed that some groups were much more active in organising student-led activities such as reading groups, while students in some other research groups might feel more isolated. LP felt that more encouragement from faculty members would be helpful here. She also commented that PhD students have to rely on external slots that are free to present their work, e.g. due to cancellation, which is unhelpful.</p> <p>AB commented that the Research Committee was in the process of developing guidance on internal seminar organisation, which might support PhD student participation in the seminars.</p> <p>IP commented that in some cases there is not much interaction between students in the same field due to the diversity of their research interests. IP wondered whether this could be addressed through admissions; AB responded that the School tried to achieve a balance in student intake between the research groups.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> AN to provide an update to SLLC on Research Committee seminar developments when available. Update 23/02/22: These developments affect external rather than internal seminars and have been communicated to seminar organisers.</p>
2021: 031	<p>AB to ask the Graduate Studies Committee for ideas for further initiatives to encourage student-staff exchange.</p>

2021: 032	<p><b><u>Understanding the requirements and deadlines for monitoring progress and responsibilities as research students</u></b></p> <p>LP commented that Macro students were not given enough notice before the seminar slots they had to present at were allocated to them. AB responded that the requirement to present at seminars was in the handbook, which was updated annually. EK commented that students may not be aware the handbook was regularly updated.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> OG to circulate the handbook to students and signpost sources of information regarding student progress.</p> <p><b><u>Support for PhD students' teaching</u></b></p> <p>AB informed students that a document providing further information regarding TAs' rights and responsibilities would be circulated soon. LP asked if information about 4<sup>th</sup> year contracts could be circulated in advance. GT asked for clarification regarding remuneration for additional TA work and the PTA role.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AN and OG to circulate additional TA documents, information about 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year contracts; AN to clarify remuneration with Fabienne.</p> <p>LP mentioned that there were clashes sometimes between teaching and seminars. AB responded that this could be fed back to the TA Coordinator but it was very difficult to accommodate and so could not be guaranteed that seminar slots would be left free from teaching.</p> <p>GT commented that sometimes TAs experience technological issues with teaching equipment such as microphones not working; AB directed TAs to raise such issues with Rachel Male.</p> <p>EK wondered whether mixed mode education for the classes taught by TAs could be reconsidered; AB said she would discuss this with Rachel Male as Director of Education.</p>
<b>2(b)</b>	<b>ESRC Studentships- update from EG</b>
2021.033	<p>EG reported that studentship opportunities from the ESRC were open for application from MRes and 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD students with a deadline of 28 January. The School would internally select candidates to apply, taking into account midterm marks.</p> <p>GT commented that all 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD students should be given the opportunity to apply. EG responded that the scheme was highly competitive and students would need to balance the time commitment required to develop and application with the likelihood of succeeding. EG agreed to send an open call to 1<sup>st</sup> year students.</p>
<b>2(c)</b>	<b>Feedback from Course Reps</b>
	<p><b>MRes cohort: DLR</b></p> <p>DLR raised concern about insufficient office space for the current students and wondered how this would work next year with twice as many students.</p>

2021.034	<p>A Math camp before the start of the MRes was proposed, along with TA support for students and alternative assessment. Mock papers for the final exam would be helpful.</p> <p>AB responded that the School was considering possible solutions for ensuring that MRes students have access to IT facilities, including the providing students with laptops. Office space in the Graduate Centre is limited at present to what we have available. SL said the TA arrangements and a possible Math Camp could be considered for next academic year. SL noted that there would be a greater variety of assessments in year 2 of the MRes programme.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> OG to check with module organisers if mock papers can be made available.</p>
2021.035	<p>GT commented that TA/PTA payments should be more clearly set out. MRes dissertation marks were released slowly. AN clarified that results were released at fixed points in the year as they needed to be approved by the exam boards in June and October, although it would be possible to release provisional marks before this.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AN to liaise with Fabienne to clarify TA/PTA payments.</p>
2021.036	<p><b>Year 2, PhD – EK</b></p> <p>EK commented that some students are not receiving notifications relating to IT and seminar announcements.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AN to ask Jubeda and Donald to ensure they are sending emails to the econ-grads mailing list where necessary.</p> <p>EK feedback that workshops such as the session run by Simon Franklin on presenting research were very useful and that students would like to see more of these. LP commented that a session on how the editorial world works would be useful.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AB to liaise with GSC over training sessions on the academic profession to be offered to students.</p> <p>EK commented that the catering for PhD student reading groups could be improved. AN suggested this could be taken up with Jubeda, who orders the catering.</p>
2021.037	<p><b>Year 3, PhD- LP</b></p> <p>LP reported that the PhD student office had been fixed; the lights were still being looked into. The projector in GC305 was not working.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> AN to check with Derek and Shahnaz for an update on the projector being fixed.</p>
2021.038	<p><b>Year 4, PhD- YP</b></p> <p>YP asked whether there could be more communication regarding job opportunities outside of academia. EK commented that perhaps more opportunities to gain career insights from alumni speakers would be valuable.</p> <p>AB responded that support was available from the QMUL Careers Service; there was not staff resource in the School to compile suitable job opportunities for PhD students on a regular basis, but LinkedIn, which the PhD students use, is a good resource for sourcing job opportunities.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The Careers Service website includes industry guides and a job board (QM Careers Hub). Appointments can be made with Careers Consultants.</p>

	<b>Action:</b> AN to discuss organising more alumni talks with Hannah Dormor and the Careers team.
<b>Part 3 – Any Other Business</b>	
2021: 039	The Committee did not raise any other business.
<b>Part 4 – Date of the next meeting</b>	
2021.040	The next committee meeting will take place in semester B- date TBC.

## Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Resolved?
2021:028	AN to check whether second screens can now be purchased using the research budget. OG to circulate updated guidelines regarding the research budget.	AN and OG	Sem A	Complete	y
2021: 029	OG to send an email to all PhD students asking for feedback on specific remote access issues to be raised with Donald. OG to ask Donald for an expected arrival date for the second screens.	OG	Sem A	Pending	
2021: 030	AB to ask the Graduate Studies Committee for ideas for further initiatives to encourage student-staff exchange.	AB	Sem B	Pending	y
2021: 031	OG to circulate the handbook to students and signpost sources of information regarding student progress.	OG	Sem A	Complete	y
2021: 032	AN and OG to circulate additional TA documents, information about 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> year contracts; AN to clarify remuneration with Fabienne.	AN/ OG	Sem A	Complete- but students should let AN/OG know if further clarification is needed.  Documents have been emailed to students and uploaded to QMplus	y
2021: 034	OG to check with module organisers if mock papers can be made available.	OG	Sem A	Complete	Y- Module organisers have communicated

					that midterm papers will help students prepare for the exam; mock papers will not be provided and past papers are not yet available as this is the first year the modules are running
2021: 036	AB to liaise with GSC over training sessions on the academic profession to be offered to students.	AB	Sem B	In progress	
2021: 037	AN to check with Derek and Shahnaz for an update on the projector being fixed in GC305.	AN	Sem A	Complete	Y- the projector is now working
2021: 038	AN to discuss organising more alumni talks with Hannah Dormor and the Careers team.	AN	Sem B	In progress	Y- HD is available to support the initiative, but we would need a PhD student to lead on identifying which alumni/careers should be represented in the talks and to

					support with organisation. OG to raise this at next meeting
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