School of Economics and Finance
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
16th November 2021

Confirmed minutes

Staff members present:

Manolis Noikokyris	Chair/Senior Tutor
Philippa Costello	UG Programme Manager (Minutes)
Alex Williams	UG Student Support Officer
Aniol Llorente-Saguer	Undergraduate Co-Director

Student members present:

Aastha Kansara	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 2
Aleeyah Zuberi	Economics and Finance Year 3
Azmain Iftekhar	Economics and Finance Year 2 & SEF School Rep
Driss Lahlou	Economics, Finance and Management Year 3
Baldeep Sohal	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 3
Callum Sycamore	Economics Year 3
Samiksha Mishra	Economics Year 2
Tarana Kacker	Economics and International Finance Year 3
Vidhi Sureka	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 1
Muhammad Mohib	Economics and Politics Year 1
Carolina Tedesco	Economics Year 1
Saphia Rahman	Economics and International Finance Year 1
Jelizaveta Karandeja	Finance Year 2
Sonya Hofer	Economics and Politics Year 2
Mohammed Sheikh	Economics, Finance and Management Year 1
Shakif Hossain Sultan	Economics and Finance Year 1

Apologies for absence:

Eileen Tipoe	Senior Lecturer

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	**Welcome and introduction for new members**
2021.020	Manolis welcomed the committee. Prior to the meeting, Manolis sent out a call for a student co-chair. Saphia Rahman was confirmed as the SSLC student co-chair for the 2021/22 year.

1(b)	**Apologies for Absence**
2021.021	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	**Minutes of the previous meeting**
2021.022	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2021.
1(d)	**Terms of reference and membership**
2021.023	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee.
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	**Programme/module developments and amendments**
2021.024	Manolis outlined improvement to BSc Finance programme structures, nothing that Capital Markets 2 was due to be presented in Year 3. Manolis proposed that this be replaced by a Level 6 version of Big Data Applications for Finance. Jelizaveta fed back that Big Data Applications for Finance sounded as though it would be a useful module, offering students skills that are applicable in the work place. Jelizaveta noted that specific finance-focussed modules for BSc Finance students were well received.
2(b)	**Student Feedback**
2021.025	The committee discussed the exam guidance that had recently been published to students. Driss reported that some students believe the change to the exam format (multiple time slots) is unfair as this is a change to how exams have been orchestrated for the past 2 years. Azmain noted that some students didn't understand why the structure has been changed when it has been tested. Azmain noted that UK students don't think it would be fair on them to have one time slot when international students have the possibility of having different time slots. Aleeyah reported that Year 3 students were particularly unhappy. Aleeyah suggested that there was an unfair bias towards international students.

	Aleeyah reported that SEF exams were not consistent with other schools, for example, Maths. Aleeyah noted that students wanted to know why this was not consistent. Driss repeated this point at a later stage of the discussion and also provided a list of other Schools with different types of exam.
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	Aleeyah noted that some students feel uncomfortable with the rising number of Covid cases. Aleeyah felt that changing exams in this way was disruptive.
	Sonya noted that having multiple time slots was preferable to some students, for example those who have issues sleeping. Sonya noted that it would be nice to accommodate the option for people to work at a time they think is best.
	Aastha noted that everyone works different and that some students would appreciate the flexibility.
	Driss reported that some students had taken up extracurricular activities and part-time work during the working/school day because of the format that was implemented last year (2020/21).
	Manolis gave an overview of the exam strategy for 2021/22, including that students will take their exam during one time slot: 11am. Manolis clarified that international students do not have a choice of multiple timeslots, rather than will take their exam during one time slot (7pm or 4am the next day) dependent on which time is more appropriate for the time zone they are in. Manolis noted that for students who are unable to take their exam at home, for example, if they are in a loud environment or are experiencing digital poverty, they will be able to take their exam in a PC lab on campus, providing them with a device if they wish and quiet space.
	Aleeyah reported that some students were not comfortable sitting in a room with others who are unvaccinated.

	Jelizaveta asked how the School will ensure that international students who may sit the exam at a later time than 11am will not see the paper in advance of their exam time slot.
	Manolis noted that this cannot be guaranteed, but reiterated that anti-plagiarism software was used to ensure there is no verbatim plagiarism, and markers are check vigilantly for close paraphrasing. If collusion is suspected, this is reported to the Academic Registry for investigation.
	Aniol reiterated that the exam format in 2021/22 was working to ensure and maintain academic integrity of the assessment and degree title. The structure going forward should minimise the ability for some students to collude and/or cheat during their exam.
	Carolina noted that some students may become distracted by other things when taking an exam online.
	Mohammed Sheikh commented that it was not possible to police everyone's behaviour. Mohammed Sheikh suggested that one reason for collusion was that some students felt that the exams were very short and they felt under time pressure which incentivised students doing 1-2 questions each and sharing answers between one another.
	Manolis noted that exams are written to be sat in two hours, with one hour to collate your document(s) and submit. Manolis reiterated that exams aimed to test skills, knowledge, the ability to manage one's own time, and to think critically about what to prioritise in terms of writing.
	Caroline noted in a recent mid-term test (ECN115), many students submitted late due to issues with submission. Carolina noted that people with an iPad are able to write directly onto a page and create a document to submit, which is faster than writing on paper, scanning, collating and uploading to QM Plus.
	Aastha noted that she had been contacted about this by one of her Buddy Scheme mentees.

Aleeyah noted that that there were also submission issues with the ECN370 midterm.

Aleeyah suggested that some exam papers were not suitable for the timing, and there was a sense that there was more content to revise and covered in the paper but the time given to sit the exam remained the same.

Sonya noted that in some modules, exam papers in previous years had up to 10 questions, whereas more recently there were more than 10 questions.

Manolis noted that exams have been designed differently in light of the fact they are able to be taken at home, for example, they will test different skills including the ability to explain and analyse material. Manolis explained the exam paper vetting process, which includes several checks by module organisers and the paper being solved by a Teaching Assistant to check for any errors and to ensure it is solvable within the allocated time. Manolis noted that it might happen that not all students will be able to complete every question on the exam paper.

Muhammad Mohib suggested that exam format was unfair to some students who do not have access to the right technology.

Manolis noted that the technology needed to submit exam papers could be looked into to ensure we are being inclusive to all students.

Aastha noted that these issues would be greatly improved if the exam papers could comfortably be sat in 2 hours.

Carolina suggested that a mock exam that is very similar to the one you will take would be useful in terms of revision and practicing how to collate a submission.

	Aleeyah suggested that flexibility means different things to different people. Aleeyah reiterated that exams had been different in previous academic years.
2021.026	Sonya reported that some students were not aware of who their advisor was or what their role was. Driss provided some useful information about what information an advisor can provide or how they can help their advisees. Aleeyah noted that there was an opportunity to bridge the gap between students in different year groups to provide information to one another. Carolina noted that it would be useful if information was emailed multiple times in case students miss the first communication. Sonya suggested that it would be useful if lecturers would made use of the first few minutes of the lecture to remind students of useful information or upcoming events. Aastha noted that the Buddy Scheme was in place from Welcome Week and that mentors make contact with their mentees before arrival at QM.
2021.027	The committee discussed elements of teaching provision. Samiksha suggested that it would be helpful if a lecturer or teaching assistant would record a video of them solving a problem set, as sometimes it is not possible to go through all questions during a class. Samiksha noted that when the detailed solutions are posted at the end of the week, it would be appreciated if students could see how the solutions were found, how to analyse the question and apply the answer. This would be particularly helpful in ECN206 and ECN211. Sonya suggested that there as a feeling of disconnect between the content and the practical application. Sonya noted that some students understand the ideas and math, but are not confident with applying the theory.

7	Aastha commented that even when a student understands the content, they may be unsure how to solve a question.

Jelizaveta noted that office hours were insufficient to deal with this issue as some questions take 30+ minutes to solve. As such, when multiple students arrive to speak with a lecturer or TA in their office hours, they are not able to help everyone.

Driss queried why classes are not recorded and posted in the same way as lectures.

Sonya noted that not all content was covered in class.

Manolis noted that classes cannot be recorded for consent reasons.

Manolis asked the committee if they felt students were happy with the amount of recorded material, or would they prefer more face-to-face.

Sonya reported that more content and more time in class would be preferable.

Manolis asked the committee if they watched the asynchronous material on a regular basis.

A number of committee members noted that they do not regularly watch recorded lectures as they find the too similar to the material covered in the pre-recorded material and therefore do not see the value in watching them.

Samiksha noted that last year, one module used pre-recorded material to convey core concepts and the classes were used only for questions. Students felt this was very helpful and allowed students to focus on solving problem sets in class.

Azmain noted that last year in ECN121, the module organiser would use the lecture to show how to solve each question, including giving students |

the time to try to solve questions themselves, and then check their answers afterwards whilst he worked through the solution live.

Manolis asked the committee members if they felt students preferred for the core content to be delivered asynchronously.

Sonya reported that this would be a good way to deliver core information and knowledge. Sonya noted that the face to face class would be the optimal place for students to ask questions about the application of the theory.

Manolis asked if the committee members felt they would prefer for the live teaching to be more focused on application.

Driss noted that it was a good idea to have more core material recorded as it can be hard to focus for a long period of time, for example, when lectures were 2 hours long in the past. Driss noted that recorded material allowed students to repeat videos in their own time. Driss noted that when working on applied theory, it was easier to focus because the teaching and learning is more interactive.

Aastha noted that more contact hours would not be needed if there was more application throughout the teaching material. Aastha noted that if pre-recorded material prioritised covering core content and face-to-face teaching including solving questions and applying theory to real-world scenarios, this would be preferable.

Sonya noted that this model of teaching would be a more efficient use of time.

Azmain noted that this model would be less repetitive than the current format.

Muhammad Mohib noted that some students have not taken Economics A Level and felt that there was a lot of information to learn with little

9	background. Muhammad Mohib suggested that if the lectures were more interactive, this would help students to learn core concepts.

Saphia noted that mid-semester module evaluations had been conducted and all of her lecturers had provided some feedback to students on the modules based on their evaluations. Saphia noted that they had mentioned they will try to add some live solutions during the lectures.

Muhammad Mohib noted that some students are unsure how to structure long answers for exams and it would be useful to work through how to approach such questions, for example, in ECN113.

Carolina suggested that module organisers should offer more information about how to do the exam, aside from the content, i.e. how you should structure your answer, etc.

Callum noted that more examples of how to show critical thinking skills in an exam would be beneficial.

Tarana noted that ECN378 lectures are dominated by student presentations which has caused attendance to fall dramatically. Tarana noted that some students may feel as though there is little reason to attend lectures because they feel no content is being covered/delivered during the session. Tarana noted that it may be more helpful if the lecturer dedicated a little more time to the objectives of the week.

Muhammad Mohib noted that it would be beneficial for module content to be updated with more recent case studies, especially considering the impacts of Covid-19.
ECN102 was mentioned as a good example of a module using real-life applications in teaching.
Driss noted that more real work application is covered after Year 1.

Azmain noted that he found an opportunity to discuss real world application by joining the Book Club. |

10	Sonya noted that ECN115 makes use of small groups to solve problem sets. Sonya suggested that this was a good way to meet other people and work together (ungraded) and consolidate your own knowledge through explaining/helping others.
2021.028	The committee discussed their experience with mixed-mode education (MME) so far this academic year. Saphia noted that lecturer recordings were useful to go back to in case something was not understood the first time, and this made her feel less stressed. Driss agreed that lectures being recorded was a good thing as it allowed students go to back and listen when necessary. Year 2 and 3 students noted that online students do not interact in class. Saphia noted that Year 1 students do unmute themselves and use the chat function in class. Aastha noted that MME was convenient for students who were unable to come onto campus.
2021.029	**Community:** The committee members discussed how to improve the sense of community in SEF. Ideas that were mentioned were: - Parties/socials - Society events - Regular competitions - Sports leagues
2021.030	The committee members discussed their experience of careers support. Some members noted that they didn't like the use of the term 'guest lecture', as the reference to a lecture was not appealing and would not entice them to attend. Manolis noted that the school is relaunching Industry Insider events.

	The committee members agreed that this sounded like a good initiative but recommended that the name is carefully considered in order to improve attendance at such events.
	Sonya noted that careers provision felt too heavily finance related and is not applicable to students on every programme.
	Sonya noted that there was little guidance about going onto further study and this would be appreciated.
	Carolina noted that she would prefer careers events to be in person rather than online.
2(c)	**Learning resources**
2021.031	No further comments.
2(d)	**Student survey feedback**
2021.032	Manolis asked the committee members if they use feedback that is offered and how they would like feedback to be communicated.
	Aleeyah reported that in person feedback was preferable.
	Driss noted that solutions to exams would be useful to understand solutions to questions that had been answered incorrectly in order to improve marks and adapt methodology.
	Sonya reported that more and better feedback was required for written pieces of work, e.g. essays.
	Driss suggested using Turnitin's highlighter functionality to colour code good, bad, and developing points (green, red, orange). Driss suggested this offers personalised feedback without wasting the markers time, as they are already marking the assignment on Turnitin.
2(e)	**Consideration of Student Experience Action Plan**
2021.033	Nothing to note.

Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2021.034	Nothing to note.

Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2021.035	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place in Semester B of the 2021/22 academic year.