

**Science and Engineering Foundation
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
09/02/2021**

Minutes

Staff members present:

Prof. Henri Huijberts (HH)	Deputy Dean for Education (Programmes & Portfolio)
Sarahlouse Lawrence (SL)	Foundation Officer
Rosie Enobakhare (RE)	Foundation Administrator

Student members present:

Amber Blakeman (AB)	BSc Biological Sciences with Foundation, Year 0
Hashim Khan (HK)	BSc Biological Sciences with Foundation, Year 0
Mohsin Mahmood (MM)	BSc Physics with Foundation, Year 0

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Apologies for Absence
2021.018	The meeting noted that all members were present.
1(b)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2021.019	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25/11/2022.
1(c)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2021.020	<p>The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:</p> <p>2021.005 HH and HK were to meet to discuss the role of Co-chair and to review the Terms of Reference for relevance. This meeting still needs to be arranged. Action: SL will arrange a meeting with HH, HK and herself.</p> <p>2021.006 SL emailed QMSU to seek advice about recruiting Course Reps for next year. QMSU have not yet responded. Action: SL will follow this up with QMSU again. HH suggested contacting Jonathan Otter (QMSU Education Co-ordinator).</p> <p>2021.014 HH emailed the SBBS DoE about the SBBS modules and suggestions for more specialised options. Actions: HH to check the response received from SBBS DoE and feedback to the committee at the next meeting</p>

Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery, and other matters	
2(a)	Student Feedback
2021.21	<p>The committee discussed module feedback and noted the following:</p> <p>1. Semester A - SEF003 & SEF031 quizzes</p> <p>AB reported that students only receive grades for quizzes and are not able to review their answers following the mini tests. HK added that the SEF004 MO does release the feedback and answers to students, but they disappear the day after they are released. Reps requested that the answers remain visible to students for the duration of the module to aid revision.</p> <p>Action: HH to contact the MOs and ask them to make the answers available to students after the quizzes have taken place.</p>
2021.022	<p>2. Inconsistency in Advisors</p> <p>AB reported that communications between Advisors and their students remains inconsistent. While some Advisors are helpful, others have still not met with their students. She suggested that additional training be offered to Advisors, so that they are better able to meet the needs of their students. HK added that this inconsistency is across Schools and is not just a problem within SBBS.</p> <p>SL noted that FEDU has sent out a survey to foundation students asking them for feedback about their Advisor experiences to date.</p> <p>Action: HH to send an email to all DoEs, reminding them that Foundation students are a part of the school, and they require the same assistance as students in other years.</p>
2021.023	<p>3. SEF007 Physics (Electricity and Atomic Physics) Lectures</p> <p>MM queried why all SEF007 lectures are pre-recorded rather than in person or live online. He added that as lectures get progressively harder, there is more of a need for in-person lectures. Students do have in-person tutorials but commented that this is not sufficient to cover all the complex module material. SL confirmed that teaching for this module includes, pre-recorded videos, an online drop-in session and a 2- hour exercise class on-campus.</p> <p>Action: HH to raise SEF007 lecture format with the SPCS DoE.</p>
2021.024	<p>4. SEF015 Discrete Mathematics Course Material</p> <p>MM commented that the content on the SEF015 QMPlus module page is very limited and, in some places, incomplete. Questions and tutorial sheets are not available ahead of time and students cannot see what they will be</p>

	<p>studying in future weeks. MM requested that learning material be made available earlier in the week.</p> <p>HH confirmed that certain information (i.e., assessment information) should be provided in accordance with QMUL regulations. Moreover, schools should ensure that MOs are aware there is help available to update QMPlus content.</p> <p>Action: HH to send an email to the SMS DoE about the limited module page content and earlier provision of weekly learning material.</p>
2021.025	<p>5.SEF032 Molecules to Cells Assessment</p> <p>AB commented that the timeframe given to complete essay 1 was much shorter than other deadlines given for similar assessments in other modules. Students have only been given 5 days to complete the essay, and many are struggling to meet this deadline. AB added that she had emailed the MO to try and get the deadline extended. The MO provided a written response, which SL read out to the committee.</p> <p>AB also reported that there has been some confusion over the distribution of marks provided on QMPlus and asked for clarification. HH also noted that the weighting on QMPlus is 50% exam, 50% coursework, which needs to be addressed.</p> <p>HK commented that there is inconsistency in how the SEF031 and SEF032 biology essays are being marked. He mentioned that the SEF032 marking criteria is contrary to the marking criteria provided for SEF031 (i.e., students were encouraged to use a wide range of references when writing essays for SEF031, whereas the SEF032 lecturer has advised students to use the main book '<i>Life: The Science of Biology</i>', and one other source if necessary).</p> <p>Action: HH to liaise with the SBBS DoE regarding the tight deadline for essay 1, and the assessment/exam weighting.</p>
2021.026	<p>6.SEF033 Diversity and Ecology Pace</p> <p>AB reported that she had been monitoring the SEF033 pre-reading requirement, which she has compared with SEF031. She noted that there has been a reduction in the amount of reading expected before the SEF033 lecture. However, some students feel that the lecturer goes through the slides too quickly, which makes it difficult to take notes and absorb the information.</p> <p>AB noted that this issue had been raised by SSLC reps last year, and she wanted to know if this feedback had been passed onto the lecturer. SL advised that the feedback was passed onto the lecturer. The lecturer</p>

	<p>advised that she will try to reduce the amount of content covered during the lectures.</p> <p>Action: AB to monitor SEF033 content for two weeks and inform FEDU if she has noticed a reduction in content. If not, then we will follow up with the module organiser.</p>
2021.027	<p>7.SEF004 A Closer Look at Chemistry Feedback</p> <p>HK reported that the online test taking place on 23/02/22, is only open for 2 hours, and does not provide a 24-hour window. SL responded that she has already spoken to the module organiser and the second lecturer about this test and the week 12 test. They have agreed to open both tests for 24 hours, and they will have a 2- hour duration.</p> <p>HK also noted that Dr Yao Lu's lectures are mainly based on answering workshop questions rather than teaching the content. Students have complained that they are not being taught the content first, to enable them to answer the questions. Whereas the lecturer for SEF003 taught the content first and used the questions as an aid to help solidify the content.</p> <p>HK also reported that the Mastering Chemistry homework has decreased in length, but the questions seem carelessly put together. He added that questions have been included, which do not correlate with the course content/workshop questions. HH advised that the MO needs to manage student expectations and explain the reasoning behind this.</p> <p>Action: HH to liaise with the SPCS DoE about the Mastering Chemistry homework and Dr Yao Lu's lectures.</p>
2021.028	<p>8. SEF030 Communication in Science and Technology Outstanding Marks</p> <p>HK reported that students have been waiting for their case study marks for over 6 weeks. They have not been given any guidance on when to expect them, which is causing some anxiety.</p> <p>HH noted that he could not see any information on the SEF030 QMPlus module page regarding the deadline for provision of marks. The SEF030 MO informed SL that many of the tutors are not fully contracted so do not work over Christmas or during the exam period. Further delays were caused by sickness and absence.</p> <p>HK commented that the assessment feedback was inconsistent, some students received generalise, vague comments and some more extensive. He suggested that all tutors use the same baseline to mark the work and that there should be a certain threshold for the quality of feedback that the students receive.</p>

	<p>Action: SL to contact MO to request that students are kept informed about when to expect their marks</p>
2021.029	<p>9. Assessment Submission</p> <p>AB reported that she received student feedback in semester A advising that deadlines on a Monday were inconvenient, as they could not contact the lecturer over the weekend if they had last minute questions. Therefore, she suggested that Wednesday to Friday deadlines would be more suitable for longer coursework assignments.</p> <p>Action: SL/RE to send MOs feedback about the deadline issues.</p>
2(c)	Learning resources
2021.030	<p>1. Turnitin Issues</p> <p>AB reported that previously Turnitin was taking a long time to provide students with the similarity reports, which resulted in some students having to submit their work late. HH explained that the issues we have been experiencing on QMPlus (i.e., Turnitin) are due to the new provider QMUL are now working with. He added that the Dean will be liaising with IT services shortly to discuss these issues further.</p> <p>HH added that students should not be penalised for a plagiarism score. There should always be an academic interpretation of a plagiarism score. Students who are penalised based solely on the score with no academic interpretation, should appeal.</p> <p>AB also mentioned that students have been given different plagiarism thresholds for different modules, which is confusing i.e., the plagiarism threshold for SEF030 was 40%, while it is 17% for SEF033. HK added that his SEF030 tutor advised if students received a plagiarism score over 40%, then this would be an automatic fail. He suggested that students need more clarification about what these scores mean.</p> <p>Action: HH to liaise with DoEs about the inconsistencies of plagiarism thresholds.</p>
2(c)	Student survey feedback
2021.031	<p>1. Module evaluations and responses to results</p> <p>HH asked if Reps had received feedback about the module evaluation results. Both AB & MM responded that they had not received any feedback.</p> <p>Action: HH to advise DoEs to remind Academics that they must provide feedback to students about module evaluation results.</p>

	<p>SL highlighted a few aspects of the survey. MM commented that SEF005 was a good module for students with a Physics background but was difficult for those students who did not. He added that the lectures were quite rushed. HH confirmed that this was an issue he had also identified from the written comments.</p> <p>Action: HH to raise the SEF005 Module Evaluation feedback with the SPCS DoE.</p> <p>HH suggested that some of the low scores for SEF030 were mainly because it is a module that needs to be taught in person rather than online. This was supported by some of the written comments. SL confirmed that there were numerous comments from students who expressed a preference for more face-to-face interaction with their tutor. She advised that the module will be moving to in person in future, as a result of the collective feedback from students.</p>
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
3(a)	1.Future recommendations for SEF040/41
2021.032	<p>HK suggested that Biological Sciences students do not need to cover as much Mathematical content as Physics students who they share the SEF040 module with. Much of the content is irrelevant to Biologists and just one semester of Maths would suffice. HH agreed that it is not ideal for Biologists and Physicists to share the same Maths module, however he does see a place for a two-semester maths module for all Science and Engineering foundation students.</p> <p>HK requested that students be informed as to why they are doing the maths modules and covering the content included as this may increase motivation.</p> <p>AB reported that some students have complained about having to take SEF041 if they achieved an A level at grade D or higher. The Progression Requirements are the same and so SEF041 students must work harder to achieve the same grade as students who are doing SEF040. SL explained that previously students were disengaged as SEF040 was a repeat of material they had already covered.</p> <p>AB also commented that if students have attained a higher level of maths, they have already shown good ability in the subject. Therefore, she suggested that this does not have to be a year-long module for them.</p> <p>Action: HH to liaise with SEF040/41 lecturers to highlight the issues discussed.</p>

2021.033	<p>2. Progression Selection Details</p> <p>AB advised that a number of students have applied to other universities for next year and wanted to clarify whether the progression selection process is the same for these students. SL confirmed that students are able to hold UCAS offers and select progression options at QMUL. Progression choices are reviewed in June/July, if a student meets the requirements to progress then it is assumed that they will enter into the next year of study unless the student informs the University otherwise.</p>
2021.034	<p>3. QMPlus progress bar</p> <p>AB noted that the QMPlus progress bar is available for every module except for SEF032 and SEF033. Therefore, students are unable to see if they are keeping up with the timing of the material.</p> <p>Action: SL/RE to add the progress bar to the SEF032 and SEF033 module pages</p>
2021.035	<p>4. Wednesday afternoons</p> <p>AB commented that at the beginning of the academic year, students were informed that Wednesday afternoons would be kept free of lectures so that students could attend sports clubs and society meetings. However, she advised that some students have chemistry lectures until 1pm. SL explained that in agreement with the QMSU, the cut-off time for timetabling is 1pm.</p>
2021.036	<p>5. SEF032 and SEF033 mini tests</p> <p>AB noted that there were previously issues with SEF031, as the mini tests did not correlate with the taught content. Therefore, she will monitor this for the SEF032 & SEF033 mini tests, which will take place shortly, and she will provide feedback.</p> <p>Action: AB to report back to the Committee once the SEF032 and SEF033 assessments have taken place.</p>
2021.037	<p>6. Funding for surveys</p> <p>AB tried to contact the course Rep team to ask if there is funding available to incentivise students to complete surveys. She has not received a response from the course rep team.</p> <p>Action: SL to contact Johnny Otter and ask about potential funding to help incentivise students to complete surveys.</p>
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
4(a)	The committee noted that the next meeting would be around week 8, date and venue to be confirmed.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.020.i	HH, HK & SL to meet to discuss the role of Co-chair and amend the Terms of Reference to make them more relevant to the Foundation SSLC.	HH, HK and SL	Feb/Mar 2022	Meeting 15/03/22	
2021.020.ii	SL to contact Johnny Otter in QMSU to request advice for recruiting Course Reps next year.	SL	ASAP	15/02/22 SL emailed Johnny Otter, his reply suggested working with Darcey Blackman, SEMS Rep.	
2021.020.iii	HH to check the response received from the SBBS DoE regarding feedback sent from the SSLC meeting in Nov and feedback to the committee.	HH	Feb/Mar 2022		
2021.021	HH to contact the SEF003 & SEF031 Module Organisers to ask them to make the answers for the quizzes available to students following the test and for the duration of the semester.	HH	ASAP		
2021.022	HH to send an email to all DoEs, reminding them that Foundation students are a part of the school, and they require the same assistance as students in other years.	HH	ASAP	HH reiterated this message in FYEB 11/03/22	Yes
2021.023	HH to email SPCS Director of Education regarding SEF007 lecture format.	HH	ASAP	Raised at FYEB 11/03/22 – format of teaching for 2022-23 to be reviewed.	In-progress

2021.024	HH to send an email to the SMS DoE about the limited module page content and earlier provision of weekly learning material.	HH	ASAP	16/02/22 SL & RE met with Jade Mills (Learning Technologist) who has held QMplus sessions with Dr Shamir and will help him with the module page content.	
2021.025	HH to liaise with the SBBS DoE regarding the tight deadline for essay 1, and the assessment/exam weighting.	HH	ASAP	HH raised the issues with SBBS DoE. SEF032 Assessments reviewed and changed.	Yes
2021.026	AB to monitor SEF033 content for two weeks and inform FEDU if she has noticed a reduction in content. If not, then we will follow up with the module organiser.	AB	Feb 2022	AB sent email on 26/02 -overall reduction of course content -Dr Littlefair has paused to explain concepts	Yes
2021.027	HH to liaise with the SPCS DoE about the Mastering Chemistry homework and Dr Yao Lu's lectures.	HH	ASAP		
2021.028	SL to contact MO to request that students are kept informed about when to expect their marks	SL	ASAP	18/02/22 SEF030 to be released on QMPlus, Feedback to be released when staff are available from 23/02/22	Yes
2021.029	SL/RE to send Module Organisers feedback about setting deadlines on a Monday	SL/RE	ASAP	14/03/2022 RE sent email to MO's reminding them to avoid setting assessments deadlines on a Monday.	Yes
2021.030	HH to liaise with DoEs about the inconsistencies of plagiarism thresholds.	HH	ASAP	HH raised this with DoEs and/or Foundation Co-	Yes

				ordinators at the FYEB held on 11/03/22	
2021.031.i	HH to advise the DoEs to remind Academics that they must provide feedback to students about module evaluation results.	HH	ASAP	HH raised this with DoEs/Representatives at the FYEB 11/03/22. Module Evaluation Response to be looked at across the Faculty.	On-going, triggered a review across the Faculty.
2021.031.ii	HH to raise the SEF005 Module Evaluation feedback with the SPCS DoE.	HH	ASAP	HH raised this with the DoE. The DoE also addressed this in the FYEB on 11/03/22, similar feedback was shared for the MOs UG module, he believes it is a quick fix to the MOs teaching style.	Yes
2021.032	HH to liaise with SEF040/41 lecturers to highlight the issues discussed.	HH	ASAP	In progress	
2021.034	SL/RE to add progress bar to SEF032 and SEF033 QMPlus pages	SL/RE	ASAP	w/c 14/02/22 SL added progress bars to SEF032, SEF033 and SEF004.	Yes but needs full buy-in from MOs to be more efficient.
2021.036	AB to report back to the Committee once the SEF032 and SEF033 assessments have taken place.	AB	Feb/Mar		
2021.037	SL to contact Johnny Otter in QMSU to enquire about funding for student surveys.	SL	ASAP	15/02/21 SL emailed Jonny Otter who replied with details of Officer funding for School Reps. Response was forwarded to AB.	Yes