

**Science and Engineering Foundation
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
21/03/2022**

Minutes

Staff members present:

Prof Henri Huijberts (HH)	Deputy Dean for Education (Programmes & Portfolio)
Sarahlouise 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

Apologies for absence:

Mohsin Mahmood (MM)	BSc Physics with Foundation, Year 0
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Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Apologies for Absence
2021.038	The meeting noted the apologies for absence as noted above.
1(b)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2021.039	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 09/02/2022.
1(c)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2021.040	<p>The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:</p> <p>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. This action has not been possible for Biology modules, the module organisers have raised valid concerns over sharing the MCQ answers.</p> <p>2021.036 AB to report back to the Committee once the SEF032 and SEF033 assessments have taken place. AB reported that the recent SEF032 assessment did contain information from the lectures with some information that could be found in the recommended reading textbook. The SEF033 assessment generally covered the lecture content but the some of the questions were very long</p>

	<p>and required multiple steps and took more time to complete. AB recommended increasing the time limit for these type of questions to 90 minutes.</p> <p>Action: SL to send SEF033 MCQ feedback and increased duration suggestion to Module Organiser.</p>
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery, and other matters	
2(a)	Student Feedback
2021.41	<p>SEF040 – Content too extensive for Biologists</p> <p>HK commented that the SEF040 depth of content is too extensive for Biologists and that there is no direct application of this level of Mathematics in the Biology or Chemistry modules. AB noted that Trigonometry is featured heavily whereas Statistics would be more beneficial.</p>
2021.042	<p>SEF040 - Extending length of maths tutorials in future years</p> <p>HK explained that the worksheets used in tutorials take a long time to get through and typically only the harder questions are focussed on. HK suggested increasing the attendance to 90 or 120 minutes. SL commented that the poor attendance for the tutorials would make it difficult to support extending the duration. AB added that some students do not understand the easier questions so when the tutorial is dedicated to the harder questions it is difficult for them to learn and consolidate. To prevent rushing the content of the tutorial, an extended duration would help those students who are stuck on the initial questions.</p> <p>HH suggested a different format to the module:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour asynchronous (pre-recorded) Lecture - 1 hour Exercise Lecture (application with lecturer) - 1 hour Tutorial <p>Action: HH to suggest alternative format to SEF040/SEF041 lecturers.</p>
2021.043	<p>SEF032 – Reduced workload</p> <p>HK confirmed that the workload for SEF032 had reduced, including the removal of an Essay to ease the assessment load.</p>
2021.044	<p>SEF004 – Module feedback</p> <p>HK reported a reduction in Mastering Chemistry Homeworks which has made the workload more manageable for students. Overall the teaching and content of SEF004 has been good.</p>
2021.045	<p>General – Widening options for essay topics</p> <p>HK suggested an option of two essay titles where students can choose a preferred topic. AB added that this would be useful for students to tailor their assessments towards the subject area they intend to progress into.</p>

	<p>For each essay set there could be a title relevant to Biomedical Sciences and a title more relevant to Biology.</p> <p>Action: SL to forward suggestion for multiple essay titles to Biology Module Organisers.</p>
2(b)	Learning resources
2021.046	<p>QMplus Issues</p> <p>HK noted the multiple QMplus issues that have occurred in the last few weeks, it has been very unstable.</p>
2(c)	Student survey feedback
2021.047	<p>SEF032 - Lack of engaging asynchronous materials (before reading week only)</p> <p>AB shared that 1/3 of survey respondents indicated that they were unhappy with the amount of asynchronous material in SEF032. Only the lecture slides were released and the students would have preferred to see engaging worksheets or videos too.</p>
2021.048	<p>SEF032 – Fast pace of lectures (before reading week only)</p> <p>AB reported that 44% of the survey respondents indicated that Prof Draviam’s lectures were fast-paced and found it difficult to keep up. This could also relate to the previous point, if students had more material to prepare them before the lecture then they may have been able to keep up.</p> <p>AB added that the pace has improved since Dr Dennis has taken over teaching, she also provides short videos before the lectures which are more engaging and help students prepare.</p>
2021.049	<p>SEF032 – Struggle to complete practical worksheets & lack of feedback</p> <p>AB noted that 56% of the survey respondents found the Practical Worksheets difficult and 0% found it easy. The students had not had any experience in completing Practical Worksheets before, there were no clear instructions on what was expected. In addition to this, the students did not receive feedback from the first worksheet before completing the second.</p>
2021.050	<p>SEF033 – Confusing instructions for Lay article</p> <p>AB explained that students struggled with the Lay article assessment, at the start of the article the students were taught how to write a scientific article and the different instructions were not detailed enough.</p>
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
3(a)	Feedback for Dr Jayne Dennis
2021.051	<p>AB shared positive feedback from the cohort about Dr Jayne Dennis, noting her teaching style using practice quiz questions to break up the lectures, the clear explanations of difficult concepts and her passion for the subject. Dr Dennis is happy to answer any questions from students before,</p>

	during or after the lectures and makes good use of Mentimeter to enable students to ask questions anonymously.
2021.052	<p>Student Survey Subscription</p> <p>AB commented on the difficulty of running surveys as a Course Rep, it took a lot of time to find a free survey provider that was suitable. AB suggested that QMUL could subscribe to a survey provider and share this account with the Course Representatives to make creating surveys easier. HH thought that there might already be a subscription in place.</p> <p>Action: SL to find out if QMUL already has a subscription with a survey provider.</p>
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
4(a)	The committee noted that the next meeting would be around week 12, date and venue to be confirmed.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.040	SL to send SEF033 MCQ feedback and increased duration suggestion to Module Organiser.	SL	ASAP	Response received from MO 28/03/22 (see below), the duration will not be extended.	Action complete but not the outcome intended.
2021.042	HH to suggest alternative format to SEF040/SEF041 lecturers.	HH	By August QA deadline		
2021.045	SL to forward suggestion for multiple essay titles to Biology Module Organisers.	SL	ASAP	SEF032 lecturers are considering multiple essay titles for next year.	Yes
2021.021	SL to find out if QMUL already has a subscription with a survey provider.	SL	ASAP	QMUL have a licence for Online Surveys (Formerly BoS). https://www.its.qmul.ac.uk/services/service-catalogue-items/teaching-and-learning/surveys/	Yes

2021-040 **SL** to send SEF033 MCQ feedback and increased duration suggestion to Module Organiser.

Response from MO:

I will try and make the Lay article workshop more explicit, but I did notice that the whole class were not in attendance at the 2 workshops I gave meaning they would have found this challenging. In terms of marks - these get released within 15 working days (3 weeks) of the assignment being submitted. After this time, the students are welcome to email the MO or person responsible for the assignment, this is standard across all (SBBS) modules for all years. *** I am not aware of any MCQs that required multiple steps, but the 60 minute session is a standard I believe and prepares them for their exams. If this is incorrect then please let me know.

Responses from SEF032 Module Organiser Prof. Viji Draviam:

2021.047	<p>SEF032 - Lack of engaging asynchronous materials (before reading week only)</p> <p>AB shared that 1/3 of survey respondents indicated that they were unhappy with the amount of asynchronous material in SEF032. Only the lecture slides were released and the students would have preferred to see engaging worksheets or videos too.</p> <p>VMD response: Several of the asynchronous materials were removed this year since students in the previous year felt them a little bit overwhelming. The first half of the course covers a large chunk of biochemistry which in general is a difficult topic for foundation students. So, students wanted to see as asynchronous material only those slides that will be considered for exams. We can reintroduce videos and worksheets for next year and include a questionnaire in week-3 to see student response.</p>
2021.048	<p>SEF032 – Fast pace of lectures (before reading week only)</p> <p>AB reported that 44% of the survey respondents indicated that Prof Draviam’s lectures were fast-paced and found it difficult to keep up. This could also relate to the previous point, if students had more material to prepare them before the lecture then they may have been able to keep up.</p> <p>AB added that the pace has improved since Dr Dennis has taken over teaching, she also provides short videos before the lectures which are more engaging and help students prepare.</p> <p>VMD response: Usually SEF032 students have a split feel for biochemistry - the material covered before reading week: Students with chemistry background find the classes too easy and boring, while those with no chemistry background find the classes too hard. I had an online poll in class and found that students felt the pace was fine during the lecture per se. If revision of lectures is not managed well, this can be a difficult topic to cope for those new to biochemistry. Weekly revision worksheets will be provided to help students revise regularly. Short videos were removed as students found them unnecessary for memorising the structures, but these can be reintroduced.</p>
2021.049	<p>SEF032 – Struggle to complete practical worksheets & lack of feedback</p> <p>AB noted that 56% of the survey respondents found the Practical Worksheets difficult and 0% found it easy. The students had not had any experience in completing Practical Worksheets before, there were no clear instructions on what was expected. In addition to this, the students did not receive feedback from the first worksheet before completing the second.</p> <p>VMD response: Due to COVID (following graduate student poster sessions) many of the demonstrators were off sick and so there was a delay in providing feedback. Students were provided two rounds of information on how to complete answer sheets (one on video and another in person). Those who could attend the session in person had plenty of time with demonstrators to discuss their answers. Those who did not attend the session in person had to rely on information on the video which worked well last year (all-remote sessions) but could have been different this year</p>

due to blended sessions. If blended practicals continue, we will try to provide demonstrator-discussion time online for those who are unable to attend in person.