

**Science and Engineering Foundation
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
25/11/2021**

Confirmed 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)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2021.001	The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2021.002	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2021.003	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17/03/2021.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2021.004	<p>The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following: 2020:034 refers to a Semester B Biology module that the current Reps have not started yet.</p> <p>Action: Course Reps to monitor SEF033 content in Semester B and email FEDU before the next SSLC meeting.</p> <p>2020:043 SL shared the response from the SEF024 MO following the query about assessment mark changes.</p>
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership

2021.005	<p>The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee.</p> <p>HH asked the Reps to encourage Foundation students from other programmes to become Course Representatives.</p> <p>The Committee appointed Hashim Khan as Student Co-chair.</p> <p>Action: HH and HK to meet to discuss the role of Co-chair and amend the Terms of Reference to make them more relevant to the Foundation SSLC.</p>
2021.006	<p>AB raised the challenges in applying to become a Course Rep due to lack of promotional materials and unclear instructions. AB recommended more advertising in the future and promotion in lectures. HH suggested shout-outs from the SU in Lectures and promotion via Advisors.</p> <p>Action: SL to contact QMSU with suggestions and request advice for recruiting Course Reps next year.</p>
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2021.007	<p>The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:</p> <p>Welcome Week Survey</p> <p>SL reported results from the Welcome Week Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reported confusion over timetables and getting lost • The best thing about Welcome Week was meeting people • FEDU to work on clearer communications leading up to Welcome Week • Advisor meetings and Student Support Drop-ins were seen as helpful <p>HK agreed with the points raised and added that he was not aware of who his Advisor was until meeting with FEDU. Programme Talks provided useful information and prepared students for the programme, however there was a lack of information about Assessment.</p> <p>Action: SL to contact Module Organisers for Semester B to remind them to share Assessment information in Week 1 and, for assessment that needs to be attended, share information re arrangements and rules at least 3 weeks before an assessment. See paragraphs 3.45 and 3.46 of the Academic Regulations.</p>
2021.008	<p>AB agreed with points raised in the survey and suggested a printed supplementary Handbook or guide with the key information, an interactive map of campus was also suggested.</p> <p>Action: FEDU and Course Reps to work on a supplementary printed document to distribute to students during Welcome Week.</p>
2021.008	<p>SL clarified that the planning of Foundation Welcome Week is a collaboration between Schools and FEDU. HH asked if the Course Reps met any first year students at the Welcome Week Events. AB noted that</p>

	<p>the social events were relaxed although some were just an empty room and lacked leadership.</p> <p>AB and HK noted that the Residential Staff around campus were great at helping students navigate campus, often noticing when students were lost or by themselves.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to contact Residential Services to provide positive feedback from Welcome Week.</p>
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2021.009	<p>The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:</p> <p>1. Removing elective choices from the Mathematics with Foundation Programme. AB noted that Foundation programmes should have generalised material. HK suggested that elective modules could add additional stress to students and worry that they picked the wrong module especially when students may not be aware of their strengths and weakness. Personally, HK prefers to have set modules. HH suggested that students should trust that the University has designed a programme to provide what the student needs. As students progress through their degree, there is a greater choice in modules as you start to specialise in subjects. Too many elective choices can also cause problems in student timetables, having large gaps for example.</p> <p>2. Amending the assessment weighting for SEF026, from 70/30 to 80/20 to match the First year modules. HK opposed the change explaining that a Foundation module is different to a first year module, they do not have to match. HH agreed and noted that students from other programmes take SEF026, consistency across the Foundation year should be sought. SL explained that assessment weightings across Foundation module vary from 100% coursework to 20% coursework. Assessment weightings were reviewed in schools when assessments migrated online, many Foundation modules were changed to mirror first year modules.</p> <p>Action: SL to collate the assessment weightings for Foundation modules for comparison.</p>
2(b)	Student Feedback
2021.010	<p>The committee discussed the proposed module and programme changes and noted the following:</p> <p>1. SEF003 - Student feedback on the 'Mastering Chemistry' homework.</p>

	<p>AB conducted a student survey and reported that 92% of students were spending a significant amount of time on the Mastering Chemistry Homework, much longer than the lecturer suggested. 72% stated that the Homework had taken over 6 hours when it was estimated to only take 2 hours. There is not much time left for other independent study.</p> <p>The deadlines are also short considering the length and difficulty of the tasks. The lecturer did extend the deadlines but students feel that they are still tight. 67% of responses stated that there were too many questions in the Mastering Chemistry homework and AB suggested if these Homework tasks are used in Semester B, fewer questions would be beneficial.</p> <p>HK added that many students felt that the Homework contained content that had not been taught.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to contact SEF003 lecturers regarding Mastering Chemistry Homework.</p>
2021.011	<p>2.SEF003 - Additional support needed in the maths-based topics of chemistry and future recommendations.</p> <p>AB suggested that as SEF003 has a lot of Maths content, there should be more support. 75% of responses on the student survey stated that short optional multiple-choice quizzes at the end of each lecture would be useful to help test comprehension and consolidate knowledge. The quizzes could provide explanations of answers. Over 50% of the students said that weekly worksheet, similar to the Maths tutorial sheets would be useful as there are not many practice questions.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to provide feedback and suggestions to the SEF003 lecturers regarding additional support.</p>
2021.012	<p>3.SEF031 - Student feedback on the recent biology test and future recommendations.</p> <p>AB reported that students were frustrated after the first SEF031 Mini-test, students felt that the test content was not in the PowerPoint slides or recordings. 60% of students in a survey rated the test as 10/10 in difficulty. All students who responded to the survey felt that most or all questions did not correlate to the content taught. AB noted that the amount of reading and independent study for this module is vast. AB had not yet brought this to the attention of the SEF031 lecturers. HK agreed that there is a lot of asynchronous material for SEF031.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to provide test feedback to SEF031 lecturers and inform the SBBS Director of Education.</p>
2021.013	<p>4.SEF030 Feedback</p>

	<p>AB noted that she enjoys the flexibility given in SEF030 to choose topics but many students dislike the module due to the tight deadlines and intense project work. The module is important in preparing students for the structure of university and suggested that it would be valuable as a year-long module with skills-based work incorporated.</p> <p>AB reported that the online format of the module has made it more difficult to hold peers to account for group work and allows students to abstain from participating. AB suggested that the module would benefit from being partially or full in-person to improve collaboration. HH agreed with AB's reasoning and will work to move SEF030 on-campus next year.</p> <p>AB mentioned that students had 1-to-1 time with tutors to discuss their Case Studies which has been very helpful. Considering the scale of the independent work involved, more 1-to-1 time would help the students as the general class sessions cannot be personalised for every student.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to provide feedback to SEF030 Module Organiser.</p>
2021.014	<p>5.SEF031 - More directional approach to Biology modules to enable deeper learning.</p> <p>AB explained that Biological Sciences is very broad, and topics can be very different. Some students feel frustrated that they have to learn all aspects of Biology when they already know which area they want to progress and find it difficult to engage with topics they do not want to study in the future. Options to specialise in different areas would help motivate students, for example students set on Biomedical Sciences would go down a Human Biology route as long as these options did not prevent students from progressing to a different area. HH noted that ambitions of students need to be balanced with the workload and the way the School organises itself.</p> <p>Action: HH to approach the SBBS Director of Education about the Biology modules and suggestion of more specialised options.</p>
2(c)	<p>Learning resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.) • QMplus • QReview • Updates from faculty E-learning forums • IT
2021.015	There were no comments on Learning Resources.
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2021.016	<p>The following items were raised under Any Other Business: Skeel Lecture Theatre</p> <p>AB reported that the temperature in Skeel LT was very low, students and staff have been wearing jackets.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to report Skeel LT temperature to Estates.</p>

Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
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2021.017	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place early Semester B, date and venue to be confirmed.
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Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.004	Course Reps to monitor SEF033 content in Semester B and email FEDU before the next SSLC meeting.	AB and HK	Jan/Feb 2022	Reps have been reporting issues for SEF032, nothing for SEF033 yet (01/02/22).	Yes
2021.005	HH and HK 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 and HK	Jan/Feb 2022	Arrange a meeting within 2 weeks (HH, SL, HK)	Yes
2021.006	SL to contact QMSU with suggestions and request advice for recruiting Course Reps next year.	SL	Jan/Feb 2022	01/02/22 - Email sent to su-coursereps@qmul.ac.uk Email Jonny Otter	On-going
2021.007	FEDU to contact Module Organisers for Semester B to remind them to share Assessment information in Week 1 and, for assessment that needs to be attended, share information re arrangements and rules at least 3 weeks before an assessment. See paragraphs 3.45 and 3.46 of the Academic Regulations .	FEDU	December 17 th 2021	01/02/22 – Email reminder sent to MOs.	Reps confirmed that they have been informed of assessment deadlines for Biological Sciences. Not for Physics (SEF006/007/015/041).
2021.008	FEDU to contact Residential Services to provide positive feedback from Welcome Week.	SL and RE	ASAP	Email sent 01/12/21 Response received.	Yes

2021.009	SL to collate the assessment weightings for Foundation modules for comparison.	SL	ASAP	Sent to HH 26/11/21	Added to next FYEB Agenda
2021.010	HH to contact SEF003 lecturers regarding Mastering Chemistry Homework.	HH	ASAP	Feedback sent to SPCS DoE and DTL 30/11/21	Chemistry DTL provided response 04/12/21 (below)
2021.011	HH to provide feedback and suggestions to the SEF003 lecturers regarding additional support.	HH	ASAP	Feedback sent to SPCS DoE and DTL 30/11/21	Chemistry DTL provided response 04/12/21 (below)
2021.012	HH to provide test feedback to SEF031 lecturers and inform the SBBS Director of Education.	HH	ASAP	Feedback sent to SBBS DoE and DTL 30/11/21	SEF031 MO send response (below) 01/12/21
2021.013	HH to provide feedback to SEF030 Module Organiser.	HH	ASAP	Feedback sent to MO 30/11/21	Sharon Turner sent a response out to students via QMplus 3/12/21 (below)
2021.014	HH to approach the SBBS Director of Education about the Biology modules and suggestion of more specialised options.	HH	Jan/Feb 2022	2021.014 sent to SBBS DoE 30/11/21	HH to check response
2021.016	FEDU to report Skeel LT temperature to Estates.	SL and RE	ASAP	Reported to Estates via Helpdesk.	Yes – Helpdesk responded on 30/11/21 to say the heating on Skeel LT is now on.

Responses

Minute 2021.011 Response from Chemistry DTL and SEF003 lecturers, 04/12/21

(a) SEF003 is delivered exactly in the same way as the last year: same lecturers and approach, apart from MME and the much larger student cohort this year. The lecturers are not aware of any complaints about the HW in previous years. The average student score for the module last year was ~80%.

(b) SEF003 uses Mastering in Chemistry (MiC) has been used for many years. No changes in the HW were introduced this year. The lecturers track the time spent by students on MiC HWs and the data shows that students spent on average 1.6 h per week (the lecturers predicted they would spend 1.4 h per week). The average score for the HW submitted is 70%, which is very good, though slightly lower than last year.

(c) Chemistry is a quantitative subject but SEF003 does not require A level maths to complete it - simple knowledge of fractions and percentages and simple logarithmic operations are only needed; no maths is used in over 70% of the module. The request for maths support is therefore strange, more so because no one has approached the MO with maths-related queries and all students do a maths module as part of the Foundation programme. The lecturers are therefore especially surprised about the comments about the maths associated with this module.

(d) A number of channels exist for students to approach lecturers, including fortnightly drop-in sessions, but these are usually attended by 2-3 students only.

In response to the concerns expressed at SSLC, the MO has carried out the following actions and has communicated these to the students:

(a) A weekly drop-in support session dedicated to Maths support has been introduced (to be run by the newly appointed SPCS TF). These will be in addition to the existing drop-in sessions which are currently underutilised by students.

(b) HW4 deadline has been extended by one week; HW3 will be shortened next year; although HW5 is not very long, it is now been further reduced.

(c) The students are encouraged to continue to interact with their lecturers when they need support via the weekly 2 h workshops and the fortnightly drop-in sessions. They can also organise 1-1 meetings and ask questions via emails directly with the lecturers should they need further support, which is a channel effectively utilised by several students.

Minute 2021.012 Response from SEF031 MO Dr Gail Schofield, 01/12/21

Response to student SSLC comments

SEF031 provides a foundation on the form and function of organisms, and, as such, is designed for breadth to prepare students with a wide range of interests for a wide variety of university degree courses in the following year (including microbiology, biology, and medicine). Of note, of the 11 weeks, 9 weeks of material are directly relevant to both biology and biomed and medical students, with the 2 weeks on plants providing useful parallels and scientific approaches of relevance/application. The depth requested by the students will be provided in year 1 of their selected university degree.

Since this is a foundation course, the material taught is primarily based on a textbook (Life, The Science of Biology). In line with the QMUL college teaching strategies (flipped classroom), the learning content was imparted using both synchronous and asynchronous material. Furthermore, to facilitate interactive seminars (with live questions, Mentimeter, Padlet, activities throughout), the content of this module has already been reduced to meet these new requirements. In preparation for the live sessions, the students were required to (1) read through the corresponding sections in the textbook (parts of chapters) (30-60 min max); (2) watch short videos summarising this content, to remain in line with the current QMUL teaching strategy (30 min max videos combined); and (3) prepare an activity on one of the processes to apply their learning in the synchronous session (30 min max). The material taught/provided is the minimum required to fulfil a 15 credit teaching curriculum. Of the 150 hours, the live sessions cover 30 hours, and the asynchronous material 34 hours, leaving the student with 86 hours to allocate to assessments and independent learning.

Regarding the mini test, the change from in-class to online assessment required a change from mainly factual to mainly conceptual questions, which some students might find challenging. In order to give the students more time to revise the material in depth, we have reduced the material assessed in Mini-test 1 by half and Mini-test 2 by a third. Of the 20 questions provided in mini-test 1, 1 question could only be completed if the student had done additional reading, i.e. reading that went beyond the material/reading instructions provided to give A+ students an opportunity to stand out. 3 out of the 20 questions were based on textbook material that was not summarised in the live seminars/workshops to check the level of engagement with the core asynchronous material. The remaining questions were all based on material discussed in the live sessions. The students have experienced one mini test so far, which has given them an insight of how to prepare for it, with example questions being provided, and students being encouraged to generate their own to aid learning, and build independent learning skills in preparation for year 1 of university.

Minute 2021.013 Response from SEF030 MO Sharon Turner, 03/12/21

Dear SEF030,

Thank you all for the feedback we received from the Foundation SSLC about SEF030. I have said many times that your feedback is valuable and is taken seriously. Below I will respond to the areas that were raised:

1- Many students dislike the module due to the tight deadlines and intense project work. The module is important in preparing students for the structure of university and suggested that it would be valuable as a year-long module with skills-based work incorporated.

This is an ongoing discussion between our module and the Science and Engineering Directorate. There would be many benefits to combining this as a year long module. However, there are considerations such as staffing and how to fit this into the foundation timetable. It is definitely an area, I have and will raise with the Foundation Coordinator and our Director of the Language Centre.

2- the online format of the module has made it more difficult to hold peers to account for group work and allows students to abstain from participating. It has been suggested that the module would benefit from being partially or full in-person to improve collaboration.

We absolutely agree with you. This year the reason it is online is that through a health and safety review and ventilation issues which allows for only 12 students in our classrooms due to our small class model, it was not possible to logistically have you all in face to face. The Multi-Media Environment that you find in your lecture halls so that some people can also participate online was not at an advanced stage at the start of the term in the smaller classrooms. With these two factors it was impossible to deliver the classes as there was also no extra room availability for larger rooms. I am hoping that next year we do have this as a face to face course again.

3-students had 1-to-1 time with tutors to discuss their Case Studies which has been very helpful. Considering the scale of the independent work involved, more 1-to-1 time would help the students as the general class sessions cannot be personalized for every student.

It is great that you enjoyed the 1:1 personalization in the form of tutorials. This is something we would like to do more in terms of individual time. We have also run small group tutorials based on the feedback from last year. Therefore, we will look at this more closely and see how to add more 1:1 sessions.

Thank you again for all of your constructive feedback. It is much appreciated.

Kind regards

Sharon :)