School of Mathematical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
1st December 2021

Confirmed Minutes

Staff members present:

Name	Role
Justin Ward (JW)	Chair and Director of Student Experience
Sebastian del Bano Rollin (SdBR)	Deputy Director of Education
Alex Clark (AC)	Head of School
Simon Rawstron (SR)	Education Services Manager
William Ng (WN)	Student Support Officer
Dale Breame (DB)	Education Services Officer
Maria Patsou (MP)	Secretary (Education Services Administrator)
Bindiya Chongbang (BC)	Education Services Administrator
James Soderman (JSo)	Faculty Liaison Librarian: Science and Engineering

Student members present:

Name	Programme name and level
Mimi Zhao (MZ)	Mathematical Sciences Joint Honours Year 1 Rep
Gaurav Mehta (GM)	Mathematical Sciences Joint Honours Year 2 Rep
Victoria Tsaneva (VT)	Mathematical Sciences Single Honours Year 2 Rep

Apologies for absence:

Name	Role or Programme name and level
Shabnam Beheshti (SB)	Director of Education
Jon Strathdee (JSt)	Employer Engagement and Internships Coordinator

Stefan Couch (SC)	Careers Consultant, Science and Engineering
Olumide Popoola (OP)	Education and Learning Advisor
Nitya Mahajan (NM)	Mathematical Sciences Single Honours Year 2 Rep
Maggie Jiang (MJ)	Mathematical Sciences Single Honours Year 3 Rep
Aastha Kansara (AK)	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 2 Rep

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	**Welcome and introduction for new members**
2021.075	JW welcomed everyone to the second UG SSLC meeting.
1(b)	**Apologies for Absence**
2021.076	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	**Minutes of the previous meeting**
2021.077	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2021 with no amendments noted.
1(d)	**Report on matters arising and actions taken**
2021.078	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:
2021.079	2021.013: This item is complete. WN noted that it will be quite difficult in terms of election timelines for training to be delivered that early in the academic year. VT queried about meeting with previous years' course reps at the beginning of the academic year. WN noted that this is feasible in principle, but that VT would need to contact the student union. WN also noted that VT would not be able to meet 3rd year student reps as they will have graduated by the beginning of the academic year. 2021.016: This item is complete. Registry confirmed their how-to guides will be updated and ready for next year. 2021.017: This item is complete. Feedback has been passed on to the Fees Office, Registry and Student Enquiry Centre and has been taken on board that full payment needs to be made more visible. 2021.018: This item is complete. WN noted that registry was trialling something at the time, and resulted in the portal error. This should not happen next year.

3	2021.021: This item is complete. 2021.025: This item is still in progress. Relevant items are have been discussed in the TLC (now Education Committee). 2021.027: This item is complete. SB confirmed via JW that she contacted the MTH5129 lecturer to suggest increasing interactivity in the lecture hall for the 2nd half of module. 2021.031: This item is still in progress. JW is to discuss with the module organiser. 2021.032: This item is complete. This item has been moved to the next Education Committee meeting for discussion. SB noted via JW that the Education Committee will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of 2+2 timetabling blocks. 2021.033: This item is complete. This item has been moved to the Education Committee for discussion. SB noted via JW that it is unlikely this can be approved to take place from Semester B, but that other targeted measures will be considered. 2021.038: This item is complete. Emails will be re-worded to focus on School matters and any engagement matters will be linked to the QMUL Absence Policy. The next emails will go out next week. 2021.039: This item is complete. The wording of Absence Policy emails coming from QMUL cannot be changed. 2021.045: This item is complete, however this is not possible. JW noted that there may be opportunities for peer study groups but with clear guidelines. 2021.048: This item is complete. An email on Covid policy was sent to all staff and the statement suggested by Course Reps encouraging staff to engage with coughing students was explicitly covered at the Education Committee. More emails will go out shortly with updated government Omicron variant guidance. 2021.049: This item is complete. Emails are due to be sent shortly. 2021.050: This item is complete. VT noted that there was no notable feedback on face coverings, either way. 2021.059: This item is in progress. 2021.060: This item is complete. WN noted that the e-learning technologist confirmed this is not possible but that there may be a plug-in available. 2021.061: This item is complete. JW confirmed that SB spoke to the lecturer and an extension was granted and communicated to all students. WN noted

	that if more outages take place, they would have to be treated on a case-by-case basis.
1(e)	**Terms of reference and membership**
2021.080	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee.
1(f)	**Admissions, induction and enrolment**
2021.081	The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:
2021.082	Nothing to report
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	**Programme/module developments and amendments**
2021.083	The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:
2021.084	Education Committee Matters (by SB via JW) In the recent Education Committee meeting the following was discussed and/or agreed:
2021.085	Reading Week will now be called Week 7.
2021.086	The Foundation Programme Diet for Maths was adjusted to include all 8 compulsory modules, which was already the case for the Foundation Year in all other Schools.
2021.087	Education Committee agrees strongly with the following general statement. Year 1 students should take 8 level 4 modules, Year 2 students should take 8 level 5 modules and Year 3 students should take 8 level 6 modules. SdBR noted that in trying to cater for various years, modules end up being less tailored and sophisticated for the year they are originally made to be taught in. Making year-specific modules will help remove some of these issues. The idea is to create material that is pertinent to the specific year. Reps were called for feedback on this item. VT noted that if this goes ahead and certain modules are removed, alternatives should be created so that there are no gaps in pathways, to which JW agreed. SdBR noted that students would still

	be able to choose out of pathway modules exceptionally via the intercollegiate route.
2021.088	SB queried via JW whether Pathways can be set up earlier in the degree, for example, Semester 3/4. The purpose for doing this is not just to improve timetables, but also to encourage us to think about what we are getting out of the given collection of modules and use existing modules which already serve as prerequisites for others in a more intentional way. By not having more compulsory modules in Year 5, electives are taught in Year 6 to students across multiple pathways, which also means we cannot set very many prerequisites and get to the really interesting and applicable aspects, which is what student feedback indicates is desirable. VT noted that this would and would not be helpful as students would still need to take the time to trial modules and pathways. If it was to be done then Semester 4 would be the most suitable time to do so.
2021.089	It was agreed at the Education Committee that MTH6108 Coding Theory would be dropped from the list of possible Year 3 electives, as it is an outlier in all Pathways. Year 2 students interested in topics covered in the module can select the Third-Year Project, so the option of learning this specific material is not lost for the current Year 2 cohort, and there is still always the option of choosing an intercollegiate module if nothing else appeals.
2021.090	JW noted that all students should feel supported in programmes that are due to be discontinued, i.e. Mathematics Statistics and Financial Economics (LG11) and Pure Mathematics (G110).
2(b)	**Learning and teaching matters**
2021.091	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2021.092	Nothing to report
2(c)	**Assessment and feedback**
2021.093	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2021.094	VT and GM noted various concerns regarding the length of the upcoming exams (switching from a 24-hour period to 3 hours for a 2-hour exam). More specifically that the exams last year were impossible to complete in 2 hours. Additionally, feedback was requested as to why the School decided to fall in

line with other Russell Group universities considering many are still following 24-hour window exams. Finally, it was raised that many students may not be able to have interrupted time to complete the exam in a 3-hour window due to various responsibilities and potential disruption. VT's feedback from the students was discussed with the Exam Board Chair prior to the meeting and the following was communicated via JW:

1) The School had a responsibility to take external examiners' comments about inflated marks seriously. In doing so, the decision was made for 3-hour window exams, as the 24-hour window exams were not helping to assess students properly, nor were they always reflecting the students' abilities.

2) Cheating became out of control, to the point that it has overloaded the relevant university teams who are currently still dealing with May Examinations misconduct cases.

3) Other Russell Group universities were conducting 3-hour exams last year, and are now returning to in-person exams.

4) 24-hour exams are regressive in their own way, in that they exacerbate unequal conditions. So, for example a student with caring responsibilities may have just 3 hours to work on an exam whereas another student without caring responsibilities may have 16 hours or more to work on an exam.

JW noted that it should be expected that marks will drop with the 3-hour window exams considering the inflation of marks last year, and also that academics need to feel confident when they are writing a recommendation that students' marks reflect their ability.

In terms of actions taken to ensure that issues do not arise with 3-hour exams:

1) The internal scrutiny committee has specifically instructed module organisers to ensure exam papers fit the 2-hour length purpose. JW and SR also explained the process of scrutinising a paper and the extent to which advice on paper length has been emphasised. SR noted that this should be a 2-hour paper, to be completed in a 3-hour window, and that all academics have taken the experience of the last

	18-months on board. VT queried about whether the number of questions has been reduced and JW responded that this would be down to the module organiser. SR also noted that there has to be a level of trust in the expertise of module organisers and exam board chairs. 2) In the event of a national lockdown, then we will reconsider our position, but we cannot base our decision on other countries possible lockdowns. 3) SR and WN noted that if issues arise during the exams they will be dealt with as deemed appropriate. 4) WN noted that the Education Services Team will contact students to come forward for support and advice if they already know they will have issues during the exams period. To that end, students will be able to book the PC lab during the examination period if they need to.
2(d)	**Academic support**
2021.095	Representatives reported on academic support matters and the following points were noted:
2021.096	Nothing to report
2(e)	**Organisation and communication**
2021.097	Representatives reported on organisation and communication matters and the following points were noted:
2021.098	Nothing to report
2(f)	**Learning resources** • **Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.)** • **QMplus** • **QReview** • **Updates from faculty E-learning forums** • **IT**
2021.099	Representatives reported on learning resources matters and the following points were noted:
2021.100	JS noted that the library will be open over the winter holiday, but that students should consult with the library website about opening hours. There are bookable study spaces and rooms with computers. JS also noted that face coverings are now mandatory under revised government guidance

	when walking through the library, but not when sitting. Finally, he noted that the refurbishment of the 2nd floor will start shortly. VT noted that when booking a space, she could not actually see which floor she was booking in. JS said that the codes can be slightly difficult to decipher, however students can consult with the library reception about the whereabouts of their booking. <mark>ACTION: JS to feed back to the library team on lack of clarity in booking space location and discuss for the application of clearer guidance and/or a code guide.</mark>
2021.101	VT noted that students were receiving too many Careers emails. <mark>ACTION: WN to discuss with JSt about how manage the volume of emails going into students' inboxes.</mark> <mark>ACTION: All reps to collate information about the kind of emails they are receiving (and referring to) from Careers.</mark>
2021.102	VT noted that she has been receiving Careers emails through her personal as well as her QM email. She is unsure whether this is something that happens to other students. <mark>ACTION: WN to double-check with Careers whether emails should go to both personal and student QM email.</mark>
2(g)	**Student feedback (NSS/PTES/UKES/Module evaluations)**
2021.103	The committee discussed responses to NSS and UKES and noted the following:
2021.104	Nothing to report
2(h)	**Consideration of External Examiner reports**
2021.105	The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following:
2021.106	No comments made as the full set of reports has not yet been received and so the reports will be discussed in the next SSLC meeting.
2(i)	**SEAP review**
2021.107	The committee discussed responses to SEAP review and noted the following:
2021.108	Nothing to report
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2021.109	The following items were raised under Any Other Business:

2021.110	JW highlighted the Social Mobility Report, as an achievement of QMUL and the School of Mathematical Sciences in which the university and School came first respectively, in alumni achieving high salaries from low-income backgrounds.
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2021.111	The committee noted that the next meeting would likely take place in Week 3 of Semester B. More details TBC.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.025	SB to provide some questions and/or parameters for all Course Reps so that all Course Reps can collate student feedback on current modules and pathways.	SB	ASAP	In progress; see TLC update and specific question for Course Reps on modules/pathways	
2021.031	JW will discuss with Gaik Ng (as the Actuarial Professional Development module organiser and Actuarial Science Programme Director) to look at ways to see if engagement can be improved or methods to ensure student interaction even with low engagement numbers during in-person teaching activities.	JW	ASAP	In progress	

2021.059	WN to explore if a QMplus form can be created for students to submit absence requests.	WN	Next Semester	In progress	
2021.100	Feed back to the library team on lack of clarity in booking space location and discuss for the application of clearer guidance and/or a code guide.	JSo	ASAP	In progress	
2021.101a	Discuss with JSt about how manage the volume of emails going into students' inboxes.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.101b	Collate information about the kind of emails they are receiving (and referring to) from Careers.	All reps	ASAP	In progress	
2021.102	Double-check with Careers whether emails should go to both personal and student QM email.	WN	ASAP	In progress	