

**School of Mathematical Sciences  
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 13:00 in MB502 Committee Room**

**Draft minutes**

**Staff members present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Dr Justin Ward (JW)	Chair and Director of Student Experience
William Ng (WN)	Secretary and Student Support Officer
Dr Shabnam Beheshti (SB)	Director of Education
Simon Rawstron (SR)	Education Services Manager
Dr Alex Clark (AC)	Head of School
Dale Breame (DB)	Education Services Officer
Maria Patsou (MP)	Education Services Administrator
James Soderman (JSo)	Faculty Liaison Librarian: Science and Engineering

**Student members present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Programme name and level</b>
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
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

**Apologies for absence:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role or Programme name and level</b>
Jonathan Strathdee (JSt)	Employer Engagement and Internships Coordinator
Stefan Couch (SC)	Careers Consultant, Science and Engineering
Olumide Popoola	Education and Learning Advisor

<b>Part 1 - Preliminary Items</b>	
<b>1(a)</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction for new members</b>
2021.001	JW welcomed everyone to the first UG SSLC meeting and everyone introduced themselves and their role. JW noted that the purpose of these meetings is to build a two-way channel for students and staff to communicate any feedback or concerns

	they may have regarding teaching/modules. This is with the intention of listening to the student voice, improving services and teaching towards students while working in partnership with students to improve the overall student experience.
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2021.002	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
<b>1(c)</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
2021.003	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 with no amendments noted.
<b>1(d)</b>	<b>Report on matters arising and actions taken</b>
2021.004	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:
2021.005	JW reported that all actions had been actioned and completed. It was noted that there were no reports of matters arising from last year's actions.
2021.006	<b>2020.101.</b> WN reported that this was completed and all academics were sent a 'how to guide' on how to create anonymised student forums on QMplus.
2021.007	<b>2020.111.</b> JW reported that he contacted the previous MTH6154 lecturer about uploading notes prior to the lecture and this was actioned and completed.
2021.008	<b>2020.112.</b> JW reported that he contacted the previous MTH6134 lecturer about slowing down the delivery speed in lectures and this was actioned and completed.
<b>1(e)</b>	<b>Terms of reference and membership</b>
2021.009	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee
2021.010	JW shared the 'terms of reference and membership' of the SSLC. JW outlined the remit of the SSLC and how Course Reps can share and send student feedback back to the committee.

2021.011	JW highlighted that Course Reps can send student feedback at any time and don't need to wait until the next SSLC meeting.
2021.012	JW highlighted that basic feedback on teaching should go directly to lecturers via students. For example, the handwriting is too small or the lecturer is speaking too fast. These can be resolved quickly and outside of the SSLC.
2021.013	All Course Reps reported that training sessions are still on-going and not everyone has completed the required training yet. <b>ACTION: WN to check with QMSU to see if training sessions can be delivered earlier or more frequently in the first couple of weeks after the Course Rep elections.</b>
<b>1(f)</b>	<b>Admissions, induction and enrolment</b>
2021.014	The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:
2021.015	SB reported that the School of Mathematical Sciences welcomed its largest 1 <sup>st</sup> year cohort this academic year so some lectures for 1 <sup>st</sup> year modules may be in some of the larger teaching spaces like the Peoples Palace: Great Hall but the School will still be running small sized tutorials for all 1 <sup>st</sup> year modules.
2021.016	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that the instructions provided to students on how to complete the re-enrolment process was very brief and not very clear. It was noted that a 'how to' video guide would have been extremely helpful. <b>ACTION: WN to check with Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to see if re-enrolment students can be sent a 'how to' video guide on completing the re-enrolment process and more detailed instructions.</b>
2021.017	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that it was not made clear to students that all fees had to be paid in full before being allowed to re-enrol. <b>ACTION: WN to contact Fees Office, Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to see if a note can be added to the re-enrolment screen highlighting this.</b>
2021.018	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year Course Reps reported that communication about the re-enrolment process could be improved especially regarding on when the re-enrolment portal opens. For the first few weeks, the re-enrolment portal opened for a week and then

	closed for a week before being open for another week. It was communicated later that the portal was being tested and should not have opened until the date on the original email but this caused a lot of confusion among students at the time. <b>ACTION:</b> WN to feedback to Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to make sure communication is clearer and communicated to students in a time efficient manner to avoid confusion and distress to students.
2021.019	It was noted that there were no issues with admissions and induction reported to the committee.
<b>Part 2 - Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters</b>	
<b>2(a)</b>	<b>Programme/module developments and amendments</b>
2021.020	The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:
2021.021	SB stated that the School of Mathematical Sciences is still committed to having student representation on all School working groups like the Equality and Diversity Working group but there has been a change to how students will be represented at TLC (Teaching and Learning Committee). After some feedback from last year, it was agreed that it would be better to add a TLC agenda item onto the SSLC agenda and any student feedback provided in this agenda item can be taken back to the TLC for discussion. <b>ACTION:</b> WN to add a TLC agenda item onto future SSLC agenda's and WN to ensure that any student feedback on the TLC agenda item will be discussed in future TLC meetings.
2021.022	SB reported that there has been change to the timetabling structure for modules this year following student feedback from last year. The School now timetables in 2 + 2 timetabling blocks which helps to consolidate the teaching days for all modules to make the timetables more student friendly.
2021.023	SB reported that the School of Mathematical Sciences is currently looking at closing two of its current UG programmes, BSc Pure Mathematics and BSc Mathematics, Statistics and Financial Economics. Both programmes currently have a low number of registered students enrolled on each programme. There will still

	be a 'pure mathematics' stream within the BSc Mathematics programme so this will not affect any students who would like to follow a 'pure mathematics' stream and is purely an artificial name change of the programme. The BSc Mathematics, Statistics and Financial Economics programme will be consolidated with the current BSc Economics, Statistics and Mathematics programme which is run by the School of Economics and Finance.
2021.024	SB reported that the School of Mathematical Sciences has changed the assessment structure and weighting for most UG modules. Most UG modules now have an assessment structure consisting of an 80% examination and usually 5 courseworks with a total weighting of 20%.
2021.025	It was noted that student feedback on the current pathways and modules would be beneficial for the upcoming internal review. <b>ACTION: 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.</b>
<b>2(b)</b>	<b>Learning and teaching matters</b>
2021.026	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2021.027	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that students do not feel there is an added value or reason for attending the in-person lectures for MTH5129 Probability and Statistics II. As the lecture is taught via MME the lecturer stands at the front of the room and teaches from their laptop via MS Teams and has no interaction with the class in the lecture room. Students feel there is no reason to attend this lecture in-person because you get the same teaching experience if you just engaged online via MME. <b>ACTION: SB and JW to discuss with MTH5129 Probability and Statistics II lecturer about increasing interactivity during in-person lectures.</b>
2021.028	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reiterated that the lecturer for MTH5129 Probability and Statistics II is great but just wanted an increase of interactivity during in-person lectures for this module.
2021.029	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that students are enjoying the MTH5104 Convergence and Continuity in-person lectures as the

	lecturer interacts with the students who attend in-person. The lecturer is great and students enjoy attending the lectures.
2021.030	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that students are enjoying the MTH5112 Linear Algebra I and MTH5212 Applied Linear Algebra in-person lectures as the lecturer interacts with the students who attend in-person. The lecturer is great and students enjoy attending the lectures.
2021.031	NM reported that there is a problem with low engagement within some modules which are specifically taken by students on the BSc Mathematics with Actuarial Science programme. As these modules are relatively small (usually 20 to 30 students) the low engagement affects the quality of the teaching. Some lecturers do get frustrated as sometimes only three students turn up which means there is little interaction and no one answering questions or contributing to the lecture or tutorials. <b>ACTION: SB and JW will discuss this with Gaik Ng 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.</b>
2021.032	VT reported a lack of small group tutorials for all 2 <sup>nd</sup> year modules which is different from current 1 <sup>st</sup> year modules and wanted to ask the reason for this. SB stated that after student and staff feedback from previous years, the School decided to give an hour back to each 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year module organiser and allow the module organiser to decide on the most appropriate and effective way to use this hour within their respective modules. Previously, these one hour small group tutorials were not well attended and it was identified as a bad use of student and staff time. SB and JW noted that this is a pilot and trial for this academic year. <b>ACTION: SB and JW to brainstorm ideas on how to use the non-lecture hour and evaluate the effectiveness of the current 2 + 2 timetabling blocks, e.g., at what class size does this provide good support to 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year students etc.</b>
2021.033	SB and JW stated that the School has tried one hour drop-in sessions last year but the engagement in the drop-ins were low. <b>ACTION: SB and JW to explore whether and extra hour long office</b>

	hour can be held for all 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year modules by the 2 <sup>nd</sup> examiner for each module at the next TLC meeting.
<b>2(c)</b>	<b>Assessment and feedback</b>
2021.034	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2021.035	VT asked if the format of the recent student feedback via Google Forms was okay and if this was the best program to use going forward to collate student feedback for SSLC meetings. SB, JW and WN stated that the format of the feedback was good and the School is happy for Course Reps to use Google Forms to collate student feedback for SSLC meetings.
<b>2(d)</b>	<b>Academic support</b>
2021.036	Representatives reported on academic support matters and the following points were noted:
2021.037	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Course Reps raised some concerns about the recent engagement email sent to students as they felt some of the language and wording was very formal, which provided a negative feeling to students and that students would be monitored regularly. Course Reps stated that students are adults so students should be given the freedom to decide on how they engage with their programme of study based on how they learn best and personal circumstances e.g. work etc.
2021.038	WN, SB and JW explained to all Course Reps that no punitive action will be taken and the engagement framework is used as a support mechanism. The framework uses a number of different engagement indicators and attendance is only one of many indicators used. <b>ACTION: WN will look into the wording used for future engagement emails sent.</b>
2021.039	SB explained that sometimes the School has to convey certain policies and formal wording has to be used e.g. the University Absence Policy. <b>ACTION: WN will see if the wording of the University Absence Policy can be changed to make it less formal and more student friendly.</b>

2021.040	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Course Reps asked if students can view their own engagement data. WN stated that the system is currently being tested and will be launched after the January 2022 exam period where students will be able to view their own engagement data. The system is currently in its testing phase. WN stated that the School offers full transparency so if students would like to know their engagement score in semester A they just need to email <a href="mailto:maths@qmul.ac.uk">maths@qmul.ac.uk</a> to request their information.
2021.041	SB reiterated to all Course Reps that the engagement framework is a rough tool to identify which students may require support and is only being used as a way to support students and no punitive action will be taken.
2021.042	All 1 <sup>st</sup> year Course Reps reported that 1 <sup>st</sup> year students did not see the engagement email sent to students negatively and found it had a positive effect. It reminded students to engage and acted as a little nudge so students don't get lazy.
2021.043	All Course Reps asked why students are not allowed to engage with online learning via MME (Mixed Mode Education). WN and SR noted that the University has a provided specific criteria and guidelines on which students can currently engage online via MME. SB noted that this is University policy but the School does have the option to apply flexibility on a case by case basis.
2021.044	It was noted that the School did not see the negative tone in the engagement email but agreed it was a formal email. SB wanted to thank the students on the feedback provided regarding this.
2021.045	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year Course Reps asked if there is a possibility for current PASS (Peer Assisted Study Support) sessions to be made available to current 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year students. WN stated that PASS is a student run initiative and is currently only available to Foundation and 1 <sup>st</sup> year students. <b>ACTION: WN to ask the current Student PASS Coordinator to consider opening PASS sessions beyond Foundation and 1<sup>st</sup> year students.</b>
2021.046	WN noted that students could create study groups if this was something students would be interested in. If students are



	interested the School are able to support the set up (if this is required).
<b>2(e)</b>	<b>Organisation and communication</b>
2021.047	Representatives reported on organisation and communication matters and the following points were noted:
2021.048	VT reported that some students have been attending lectures while coughing continuously and in her personal opinion clearing unwell. VT asked if academics can ask students who are coughing continuously to leave lectures. SB reported that some staff members within the School has also raised a similar question. SB highlighted the current Government guidelines on Covid-19 and it states that anyone who is showing symptoms of Covid-19 (this includes a continuous cough) are required to self-isolate and take a PCR test until a negative test is confirmed. Based on these guidelines, staff do have the option to ask students who are showing symptoms to leave the lecture and get a PCR test but noted that this is often very difficult to do. <b>ACTION: SB and AC to highlight the Covid-19 policy to staff and the option to ask students who are displaying symptoms of Covid-19 to leave in-person taught activities and get a test.</b>
2021.049	All Course Reps asked if it would be possible for the School to send information regarding recommended lateral flow testing for staff and students coming onto campus, walk-in vaccinations and information on the University Covid-19 guidelines. It was noted that students usually read the School's emails instead of the University wide emails. <b>ACTION: WN to collate the relevant Covid-19 information and send this to all students.</b>
2021.050	All Course Reps asked about the current mask wearing policy and specifically during in-person lectures. WN stated that the University's current guidelines regarding face masks is that students and staff are encouraged to continue wearing face coverings when moving around inside buildings on campus if they become crowded. Staff and students who prefer to wear a face covering are welcome to do so but wearing face coverings is no longer mandated by the Government. SB noted that if there was

	a unified approach and collective agreement between the majority of staff and students, this can be taken to the Faculty for discussion regarding the University's current guidelines on face coverings. <b>ACTION: SB has asked Course Reps to collate student feedback on face coverings and/or face masks and feedback at the next SSLC meeting.</b>
2021.051	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that the MTH5112 Linear Algebra I and MTH5212 Applied Linear Algebra lecturer does ask all students attending the in-person lectures to wear a face covering (except for students who are exempt). However, there is a still large number of students who don't wear a face covering.
<b>2(f)</b>	<b>Learning resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.)</b></li> <li>• <b>QMplus</b></li> <li>• <b>QReview</b></li> <li>• <b>Updates from faculty E-learning forums</b></li> <li>• <b>IT</b></li> </ul>
2021.052	Representatives reported on learning resources matters and the following points were noted:
2021.053	JSo reported that part of the improvement works in the Mile End Library has been completed and more spaces are available now. This includes the new refurbished Flexible Group Study Area which provides access to group study tables, individual study PCs, and printing.
2021.054	JSo reported that Group Study Rooms are currently being refurbished and will be open as soon as possible.
2021.055	JSo reported that a Quiet Study Room is being developed and further announcements will be made in due course.
2021.056	JSo reported that the Library is currently running a number of workshops and information can be found on the Library website along with a calendar showing the dates of the workshops. All Course Reps confirmed they have seen these workshops advertised via recent emails from the School.
2021.057	JSo reminded all Course Reps that the Mile End Library is open 24/7 now.

2021.058	All Course Reps reported that student feedback has been positive regarding the Library and the recent refurbishment.
2021.059	All Course Reps asked if there was a possibility to create a QMplus form where students can report absences instead of sending these to <a href="mailto:maths@qmul.ac.uk">maths@qmul.ac.uk</a> . <b>ACTION:</b> WN to explore if a QMplus form can be created for students to submit absence requests.
2021.060	All Course Reps asked if the School has any contingency plans in place for major IT issues and sever issues. JW noted that major IT issues and sever issues are very rare but if these occur the School will deal with these on a case by case basis. <b>ACTION:</b> WN to ask if it's possible to download exams and work on the courseworks offline.
2021.061	All 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Course Reps reported that there was a University wide server outage recently which meant students could not work on their MTH5123 Differential Equations assessed quiz 2 and asked if an extension could be considered by the School as this affected all students. <b>ACTION:</b> SB will speak with the MTH5123 Differential Equations lecturer to see if an extension can be provided to all students on the module for assessed quiz 2.
<b>2(g)</b>	<b>Student feedback (NSS/PTES/UKES/Module evaluations)</b>
2021.062	The committee discussed responses to NSS and UKES and noted the following:
2021.063	SB stated that the School is currently reviewing the data and feedback from last year's NSS and UKES and identifying which areas the School will focus on with an overall aim of improving the student experience and journey.
2021.064	The committee discussed the results of the module evaluations and noted the following:
2021.065	No comments were made as module evaluations have not yet taken place.
<b>2(h)</b>	<b>Consideration of External Examiner reports</b>

2021.066	The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following:
2021.067	No comments made and will be discussed in the next SSLC meeting.
<b>2(i)</b>	<b>SEAP, SEAM or TPAP review</b>
2021.068	The committee received the school/institute SEAP / SEAM / TPAP and noted the following:
2021.069	SB noted that there is only the SEAP (Student Experience Action Plan) and this will be discussed in more detail at the next SSLC meeting. SB provided a brief overview of the SEAP and reported that Course Reps will be required to provide student feedback within the SEAP.
<b>2(j)</b>	<b>Periodic Review (delete if not applicable)</b>
2021.070	The committee received the self-evaluation document for the upcoming Periodic Review and noted the following: Or The committee received the report of the Periodic Review panel and commendations and recommendations and noted the following: Or The committee received the action plan / 12 month progress report on the action plan and noted the following:
2021.071	It was noted that there is no Periodic Review so nothing to report. This item will be deleted in future SSLC agenda's for this academic year as this item is not applicable.
<b>Part 3 - Any Other Business</b>	
2021.072	The following items were raised under Any Other Business:
2021.073	It was noted that no comments were raised or no further items were reported.
<b>Part 4 - Date of the next meeting</b>	

2021.074	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place provisionally in Week 10 - Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> December at 1pm.

## Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.013	WN to check with QMSU to see if training sessions can be delivered earlier or more frequently in the first couple of weeks after the Course Rep elections.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.016	WN to check with Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to see if re-enrolment students can be sent a 'how to' video guide on completing the re-enrolment process and more detailed instructions.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.017	WN to contact Fees Office, Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to see if a note can be added to the re-enrolment screen highlighting this.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.018	WN to feedback to Registry and Student Enquiry Centre to make sure communication is clearer and communicated to students in a time efficient manner to avoid	WN	ASAP	In progress	

	confusion and distress to students.				
2021.021	WN to add a TLC agenda item onto future SSLC agenda's and WN to ensure that any student feedback on the TLC agenda item will be discussed in future TLC meetings.	WN	ASAP	Completed	Yes
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	
2021.038	WN will look into the wording used for future engagement emails sent.	WN, SB, JW and SR	Next email	In progress	
2021.027	SB and JW to discuss with MTH5129 Probability and Statistics II lecturer about increasing interactivity during in-person lectures.	SB and JW	ASAP	Completed - SB has contacted MTH5129 lecturer Wed 03 Nov to suggest increasing interactivity in lecture hall for 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of module.	
2021.031	SB and JW will discuss this with Gaik Ng to look at ways to see if engagement can be improved or methods to ensure student interaction even with low	SB and JW	ASAP	In progress	

	engagement numbers during in-person teaching activities.				
2021.032	SB and JW to brainstorm ideas on how to use the non-lecture hour and evaluate the effectiveness of the current 2 + 2 timetabling blocks, e.g., at what class size does this provide good support to 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> year students etc.	SB and JW	Semester B or 2022/2023 AY	Completed – taken to TLC	Yes – taken to TLC
2021.033	SB and JW to explore whether and extra hour long office hour can be held for all 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year modules by the 2 <sup>nd</sup> examiner for each module at the next TLC meeting.	SB and JW	Semester B or 2022/2023 AY	Completed – on next TLC agenda	Yes – on next TLC agenda
2021.039	WN will see if the wording of the University Absence Policy can be changed to make it less formal and more student friendly.	WN	ASAP	Completed	Yes
2021.045	WN to ask the current Student PASS Coordinator to consider opening PASS sessions beyond Foundation and 1 <sup>st</sup> year students.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.048	SB and AC to highlight the Covid-19 policy to staff and the option to ask students who are displaying symptoms of Covid-19	SB and AC	ASAP	In progress	



	to leave in-person taught activities and get a test.				
2021.049	WN to collate the relevant Covid-19 information and send this to all students.	WN	ASAP	In progress	
2021.050	SB has asked Course Reps to collate student feedback on face coverings and/or face masks and feedback at the next SSLC meeting.	CR	Next SSLC	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	
2021.060	WN to ask if it's possible to download exams and work on the courseworks offline.	WN	ASAP	Completed	Yes
2021.061	SB will speak with the MTH5123 Differential Equations lecturer to see if an extension can be provided to all students on the module for assessed quiz 2.	SB	ASAP	Completed – SB spoke with lecturer and extension was granted and communicated to all students.	Yes