

**School of Physical and Chemical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
15th December 2021**

Confirmed minutes

Staff members present:

Professor Steve Thomas	Physics Senior Tutor (Co-Chair)
Dr Giorgio Chianello	Chemistry Senior Tutor (Co-Chair)
Harvey Abraham-Green	Student Support Officer (Secretary)

Student members present:

Aimee Lockhart	Physics Year 1 Rep
Despoina Dimakou	Physics Year 4 Rep
Om Gohel	Physics Year 1 Rep
Sharafina Binti Razin	SPCS School Rep
Arzoo Damania	Chemistry Year 3 Rep
Charlotte Odlin	Physics Year 2 rep
Demet Bay	Chemistry Year 3 Rep
Mona Lita	Chemistry Year 1 Rep
Nisha Nadeem	Chemistry Year 1 Rep
Peter Nguyen Minh	Physics Year 3 Rep
Shkar Shukur	Physics Year 1 Rep
Thivyah Thayaparan	Chemistry Year 1 Rep

Apologies for absence:

Mahliqa Khan	Chemistry Year 2 rep
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Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2021.001	Welcome to all new members of the first SPCS SSLC meeting
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	This meeting represented the first occurrence of the SPCS SSLC since the School of Physics and Astronomy and Department of Chemistry merged into the new School of Physical and Chemical Sciences.

1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2021.004	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following: N/A
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership
2021.005	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee for new members.
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2021.006	The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
	HAG notes that this is the first SSLC of the new school of SPCS and we encountered some difficulties in recruiting course reps for the semester. This has delayed our first SSLC meeting and also means that course rep reports and subsequent meeting structure will need to be adapted for the next 2 meetings scheduled.
2(a)	Discussion of student course rep reports
2021.007	Year 1 Chemistry report response from GC. There are some conflicting concerns that have been raised in the Y1 report about lecture delivery, some positive and some critical.
2021.008	Student have raised concerns about problems within teaching rooms. These maintenance and facility issues (like room heating) have all been raised with estates dept for urgent resolution. Students are also encouraged to express they views on module evaluations.
2021.009	Concerns about some gaps in timetable but scheduling is a challenge with the size of the school and university, difficult to create a timetable that can always suit individual preferences due to module diversity.
2021.010	Issues with length of videos and complaints about the length being too long. GC comments that some videos need to be a certain length to cover complex topics and videos allow you the opportunity to pause and take a break if you need to.
2021.011	ML raises the issue that videos are too long and then lecture is taken up by Mentimeter questions and a focus on the material that should have been

	<p>covered before the lecture. This is why a lot of students wanted to come back to campus to learn during the lectures rather than beforehand. This is raised in some of the modules, such as CHE102A.</p> <p>ML also remarks that they have still not received feedback from a CHE113 test completed earlier in the semester.</p> <p>GC – Responds that the structure of those 2-hour seminars mean that the first hour should be for discussion and the second hour is a workshop. They allow multiple opportunities for questions during that first hour but often there are not many, if any, questions.</p> <p>The new approach is for these lectures to be for practice of questions rather than focusing on new material.</p> <p>GC will investigate release of CHE113 test</p>
2021.012	<p>Reps feel that some lecturers do not pay enough attention to those students who are online. One example of a lecture yesterday where the microphone was off for the majority of the lecture and students feel like those who have to attend online are an after-thought.</p> <p>GC – These are important issues that we continue to work on to improve as lecturers adapt to this MME delivery. There have been significant improvements in the technology and delivery since the introduction of MME this year and we will continue to build on this.</p>
2021.013	<p>ST Responses to Year 1 Physics feedback.</p> <p>Issues raised with overuse of PPT in SPA4402, MO advised that in a low-level MME room and without being able to use the white boards, the MO felt that PPT was the best mode of delivery. The visualiser was experimented with but it felt quite limiting to only remain in one spot. ST accepts that exclusive use of PPT is not what we aim for and there should be a balance of use between multiple media issues.</p> <p>There are some topics covered in SPA4402 that cannot really overlap with other modules and the MO is teaching this module for the first time and will continue to adapt the course upon feedback.</p>
2021.014	<p>Issues reported about difficulties in lab report writing for SPA4103. ST did comment that lab report examples and guidance is on QMplus and lectures</p>

	<p>were run for this but there will be an effort to make lab book writing resources more visible in future.</p> <p>Some criticism that different groups have the same deadline even though they carry out experiments at different times and which means some might have a full week where others have a few days. ST comments that this is a fair point and there were extensions granted for both the main reports this year to offset this but it will be taken into consideration next year.</p> <p>Similarly, the lab scripts will need to be further reviewed over the summer to ensure they are comprehensive enough.</p> <p>SS comments that there have been some significant challenges with the robotic experiment and how there were time issues with the completion of this experiment and the page length being reduced.</p> <p>All Y1 reps have commented that they would like to see staggered deadlines for group deadlines.</p>
2021.015	<p>Some issues with MT1 and differences in notation. Reps reported that differences were confusing and ST does acknowledge that this can be an issue but this will be something that you are likely to encounter during the course of your degree and any science-based career.</p> <p>Some criticism that the MT1 marking was delayed from the week 6 test that has not been returned yet.</p> <p>ST to investigate release of test result from week 6</p>
	Year 2 Feedback
2021.016	<p>Year 2 Chemistry feedback.</p> <p>GC agrees that if CHE215 assessment in the module is unbalanced then he will raise this in the Teaching meeting in January. It could be due to issues surrounding scheduling that means that it has to be structured that way.</p>
2021.017	<p>GC states that guidance about exams and exam delivery is under review from faculty but this is not something that the school can determine. It is the desire of Chemistry to move back towards f-2-f exams. Reps were reassured that there will never be any last-minute amendments or changes to exam delivery to in-person with only a week's notice.</p>
2021.018	<p>Year 2 Physics feedback</p> <p>Student reports that week 7 was loaded with a lot of large deadlines and this will be discussed in the Teaching meetings for the departments to</p>

	<p>ensure that there is better liaison with year 2 MOs to avoid having multiple deadlines in the same week.</p> <p>Action point: GC to raise at January teaching meeting regarding competing week 7 deadlines in future semesters.</p>
2021.019	<p>Broadly positive feedback for MOs will be reported back.</p> <p>Action point: GC to report all positive feedback received to MOs.</p>
2021.020	<p>ST there should be access to past papers for all the modules but solutions will not be provided as per the school policy.</p>
2021.021	<p>CO reports that in SPA5319 QMA there is a really limited practice in exam style questions with a work through.</p>
2021.022	<p>Issues with release of lecture notes in advance for Thermodynamics and MT3. The notes on QMplus are released but the lecture notes that are created in the live session tend to be the most accurate and helpful for exams and assignments. The aforementioned lecture notes are then often uploaded upto a week later, if not longer.</p>
2021.023	<p>Number of concerns raised for SPA5666 but MO has offered to meet with group of students to discuss ways to improve this and to listen to their concerns. MO was under the impression that demonstrators were working effectively but students have reported they do not work well.</p>
2021.024	<p>MO for SPA5218 MT3 responded to feedback raised to say that the course is structured to be delivered MME and there are times when notes are created in a live session and there might be a delay before releasing them for the tutorials. There is an expectation that you should have completed the necessary preparation and watched the videos before attending the live sessions. Issues that students went straight into direct notations without proper explanation.</p>
	<p>Third year reports and feedback</p>
2021.025	<p>Y3 Chemistry feedback.</p> <p>GC comments upon the project allocation feedback that Pharmaceutical Chemistry students felt that they did not have the same freedom or level of choice as straight Chemistry students. GC reminds reps that there are not as many Pharmaceutical Chemists in the department so we cannot offer as many Pharm reports as we might like to.</p> <p>GC notes that the time frame allotted to students for project selection is normally a lot longer and this is something that will not happen again.</p>

	<p>Students will be given more time to review and make their selections before the start of the semester.</p> <p>There are plans to recruit more Pharm Chem staff into the school.</p>
2021.026	<p>Some complaints that Pharm Chem and Chemistry do not diverge enough as there are only 3 differences, it's something that will be discussed in the next teaching meeting to see whether further electives can/will be created.</p> <p>Action point: GC to discuss creation of new module and divergence between the two chemistry programmes.</p>
2021.027	<p>Issues reported for previous CHE211 exam that students felt was very challenging and stressful to conduct 5 experiments in 100 minutes.</p>
2021.028	<p>Labs module has had significant issues in the past but these have been improved upon a lot. Next year there will be further improvements to this module. A certain amount of lab attendance and completion is required as part of RSC accreditation. Reports of inconsistent marking in CHE310, different lecturers mark each individual piece of CW which can feel inconsistent for the students.</p> <p>GC reassures that the MO will have ultimate oversight and ensure that there is a consistent approach to marking for all work submitted.</p>
2021.029	<p>Y3 Physics feedback</p> <p>It was reported that students are very keen for a consistent deadline across all modules to the same time.</p> <p>ST agrees that one consistent deadline is helpful for students and he will raise this with relevant teaching meetings to suggest that it can be implemented.</p> <p>HAG suggested that midnight (or out of hours) submissions might not help those who encounter difficulties, especially if due on a Friday.</p> <p>Reps suggest that midnight deadlines help students to know that an assessment is due at the end of that day so after that time they can draw a line under it.</p> <p>Action point: ST to raise request for more consistent deadline times at next Teaching committee meeting.</p>
2021.030	<p>Students reported that regular weekly small stake pieces of assessment are detrimental as they do not have enough time to grasp the material and by third year students are already accustomed to the pace of the programme so these weekly checkpoints (that they believe are designed to</p>

	encourage engagement) are not needed and they would prefer some formative assessment.
2021.031	Some reports of SPA6328 SDA structure being challenging with not enough time to process and understand lecture content before the exercise class and sometimes exercise class taking place first.
2021.032	PNM reports that SPA6308 StG is very challenging and that students often feel behind at the pace of the lecturer. Suggestion for the first half of the module to be more exercise based to help them understand indices to better understand the theory.
	Year 4/Level 7 feedback
2021.033	Some students do not feel that 3-hour lectures work very effectively, they tend to be too long and student's struggle. Students would like to have a 2-hour lecture and then a 1-hour tutorial/exercise class. Action point: ST to discuss in next teaching meeting.
2021.034	Students are adamant that they want whiteboards used for tackling complex equations and it vastly benefits the class. ST says that we will always try to find a suitable room that can better capture white board to allow staff to use them.
2021.035	Level 7 students feel as though the lack of week 7 break is very detrimental to their ability to study and their mental health and this also leaves no break for January exams/PhD applications. Alternatively would it be possible to push exams back into May instead. ST comments that some MOs do build in a gap into the module schedule as this is within their power and discretion to do so.
2021.036	Students reports too many rooms are too cold for lectures. Graduate centre 222 and 104. Related to earlier comment, all relevant maintenance issues will continue to be raised with facilities to resolution.
2021.037	PhD mentoring scheme that's available for MSc students but doesn't seem to be available for MSci students. Action Point: ST to discuss this with Dr Russo going forward.
2(b)	Learning and teaching matters
	Folded into rep feedback reports and SSLC chair responses.
2(c)	Assessment and feedback

	Folded into rep feedback reports and SSLC chair responses.
2(d)	Academic support
	Folded into rep feedback reports and SSLC chair responses.
2(e)	Organisation and communication
	Folded into rep feedback reports and SSLC chair responses.
2(f)	Learning resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.) • QMplus • QReview • Updates from faculty E-learning forums • IT
2(g)	Student feedback (NSS/PTES/UKES/Module evaluations)
2(h)	Consideration of External Examiner reports
2021.038	<p>The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following:</p> <p>No comments were made on the external examiner reports for reps.</p>
2(i)	SEAP, SEAM or TPAP review
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
	The following items were raised under Any Other Business:
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2021.020	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on 16 th February at 1pm.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2021.018	GC to raise concerns of student at the January teaching meeting regarding competing week 7 deadlines in future semesters.	GC	Sem B where possible. Sem A for 22/23	Ongoing	
2021.026	GC to discuss creation of new modules and divergence between the two chemistry programmes. Part of larger ongoing departmental goals.	GC	Indefinite	Ongoing – Long term	
2021.029	Action point: ST to raise request for more consistent deadline times at next Teaching committee meeting.	ST	Sem B where possible. Sem A for 22/23	Ongoing	
2021.033	ST to discuss the structure of level 7 modules and timetabling requirements and investigate whether a 2+1 split can be implemented.	ST	Sem A 22/23	Ongoing – not possible until 22/23	
2021.037	Action Point: ST to discuss this with Dr Russo going forward.	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
