

School of Physical and Chemical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee

SSLC Minutes - 16th February 2022

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
Peter Nguyen Minh	Physics Year 3 Rep
Shkar Shukur	Physics Year 1 Rep
Mona Lita	Chemistry Year 1 Rep
Mahliqa Khan	Chemistry Year 2 Rep

Apologies for absence:

Nisha Nadeem	Chemistry Year 1 rep
Demet Bay	Chemistry Year 3 Rep
Thivyah Thayaparan	Chemistry Year 1 Rep

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
	Welcome for the second SSLC of the 21/22 academic year.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
	The committee provisionally approved the minutes from last SSLC meeting.

1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following: As there were only a small number of action points from the first SSLC for SPCS a number were completed and open actions point will remain ongoing targets and long term goals.
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership
	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee for new members.
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
	The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2(b)	Learning and teaching matters
2022.001	SS: Students are unhappy at mixed teaching method, constant technical issues are impacting the experience for those who are on campus. ST: Talks about the challenges he has faced during teaching MME. GC: It's can be difficult to fully present to both an online and in-person audience and this is proving to be very challenging. Action point: To be raised at Senior Exec meetings with issues for MME and student feedback.
2022.002	SS: Significant issue with no use of whiteboards, visualiser is not as effective. Cameras at back of room tend to not be high enough quality.
2022.003	MK: Some modules are providing handouts for teaching but quite a lot of students now prefer videos instead.
2022.004	CO: General module teaching has gone well this semester but there were significant issues in SPA5222 EWO at the start of the semester. Only one in-person tutorial session and an online lecture. Was not possible to join tutorial online. There have now been changes to the teaching structure of SPA5222, and the lecture will be on campus and tutorial possible to join online.

	<p>Tutorial sessions are scheduled to run back-to-back for 3 hours, students reported big inconsistencies between the experience in the first session compared to the last session. Last session also tended to be late starting which means students are late to attend labs. Last session students feel as though there's no guidance or structure in this session.</p> <p>Action point: ST to meet with MO to discuss tutorial structure and experiences.</p>
2022.005	<p>CO: Some teaching suggestions for SPA5228 CMA for more worked examples.</p> <p>Some students in SPA5201 P Labs have reported that they do not have enough time to complete their lab book in the allotted time. Students encouraged to discuss with their relevant lab supervisor.</p>
2022.006	<p>Offices hours for SPA5304 Physical Dynamics are currently scheduled for Thursday but majority of cohort have the Thursday lab session so are unable to attend every week.</p> <p>Action Point: ST to discuss with MO about offering a different slot to meet with students.</p>
2022.007	<p>AD: Raises issues with the teaching of CHE309 for MME delivery, reports that students online often feel ignored and disadvantaged compared to those who are able to attend on campus.</p>
2022.008	<p>AD: Overall in CHE305 and CHE306 students would like to see more focus on practice and exam style questions for help with exam rather than MCQs. More time to be spent on questions in CHE305 versus theory explanation.</p>
2022.009	<p>PNM: Overall students feel as though there was an improvement in the teaching structure of modules this semester compared to last semester.</p>
2022.010	<p>PNM: Students would like useful numbers/equations included in the exercise sheets to help save time when working through these. Students would benefit from a central list of useful numbers in one place on QMplus.</p> <p>Action Point: ST to talk about this provision for EPP.</p>
2022.011	<p>PNM: SPA6403 S.P lectures are engaging and very interesting but students struggle significantly to follow his handwriting when doing fast-paced derivations etc. He acknowledged that students have previously complained but if writing is illegible then this is problematic.</p> <p>Action Point: ST to speak to MO about the pace of delivery.</p> <p>GC also suggested a possible workaround on the tablet in rooms.</p>

2022.012	<p>ML: Some reports that online students are not properly engaged with and often ignored. Even something as simple as the microphone is switched off.</p> <p>SBR: This is also reported as being a problem in Y2 Physics modules.</p> <p>Chairs will continue to remind MOs to engage with online participants.</p>
2022.013	<p>ML: In the workshops, the lecturers take time out to help students individually to tackle their questions properly. This was something most students were satisfied with, and they benefitted from the workshops before exams. Students would prefer if the lecturer prepared some questions for workshops, as it's been a great help.</p>
2022.014	<p>DD: Students feel as though there is a general lack of CCMP and PP modules offered by the school at the 4th year.</p> <p>ST says that this is an area that the school will continue to build upon and expand but there are also relevant modules available within the intercollegiate programme.</p>
2(c)	Assessment and feedback
2022.015	<p>All reps: Sense of guilt amongst some students for taking longer than the expected 2-3 hours in the exam. The larger issue is that exams are continuing to take a lot longer than 3 hours, on average many students feel as though they take over 10 hours to complete the exam. All reps are in agreement exams are taking longer than 3 hours. Feedback from Y2 students that no one reported completing an exam within 3 hours.</p> <p>Students argue that by comparing past papers to current papers it shows that the paper difficulty has significantly increased.</p> <p>Action Point: SSLC Chair to raise this at Teaching Executive meeting for discussion.</p>
2022.016	<p>CO: There is some anxiety for students who are worrying about exams changing back to in-person and how this could be very difficult in their third year having had no in-person experience since GCSE.</p>
2022.017	<p>Some reports of anxiety during QMplus crashes.</p> <p>SSLC/Senior Exec aware and will raise this as significant issue for further investigation. SBR to feedback to IT SU meeting.</p>
2022.018	<p>MT1 mid-term and end of term class tests were not returned until February 2022.</p> <p>Future MT1 assessments to be returned before the exam. Some SPA4103 reports were returned inconsistently. Last year there were similar issues with MT1 not being returned until after the exam.</p>

	<p>Issues with missing submission area for MT2 HW area for submission. No details for deadline and no submission box. Raised with MO and submission area set up.</p>
2022.019	<p>MK: CHE203 was the hardest exam, average time spent on this was 12-15 hours. Students are therefore concerned that if the time period is reduced they are worried that they will run out of time. GC: Exams have had to be adapted to an online/open book format, this has built in contingencies to mitigate that they are open book and to reduce incidents of plagiarism.</p>
2022.020	<p>MK: CHE211 issues with structure of exam and expected time limit, students felt as though it took them half the time to understand the task itself.</p>
2022.021	<p>AD: CHE302 issues with exam papers taking a significant amount of time and more complicated than previous papers. They also felt that there was an unfair mark distribution in CHE302 with 2x 20 mark questions. Action Points: To raise with MO for CHE302 mark breakdown.</p>
2022.022	<p>AD: Students would prefer to have exam available in both word and PDF for easier editing the paper. This is usually restricted due to compatibility issues and guidance is given on converting documents into PDF.</p>
2022.023	<p>AD: Students unhappy at group project component of CHE306 as it can be very challenging to organise meeting times with so many module differences and research project workloads.</p>
2022.024	<p>PNM: Students felt as though first set of online exams in 19-20 were perhaps too simplistic, in the following year they adapted but became too hard, this year they feel in line with expected difficulty. Despite that, consensus is that on average students took longer than 2.5 hours to complete it.</p>
2022.025	<p>PNM: Issues with SPA6328 Section A quiz, disliked in concept but more importantly there were issues with the quiz displaying answers upon completion until quickly rectified.</p>
2022.026	<p>PNM: Students have reported disparities with module coursework assessments. In SPA6403 the CW is 20% but consists of quizzes, HW and mid-term compared to SPA6306 EPP which has a similar level but 50%. Action point: ST to raise DoE with inconsistencies</p>

2022.027	<p>PNM: Complaints about MME and technical issues and room issues. UG1 for SPA6325 QMS, microphone noise emits very loudly from the speakers in the room which is unbearable for the class.</p> <p>ST is MO and agrees with feedback and has requested a room change already which should be in place next week.</p>
2022.028	<p>ML: CHE113 students reported that they did not receive their results for their December exam results. No recordings were put on QMplus and students felt this impacted their ability to prepare for January exams. This was eventually resolved by Dr Sheriff.</p> <p>Students also would like more workshops in CHE113 to help with exam preparation and practice.</p>
2022.029	<p>ML: Students unhappy that there were MCQs on QMplus for in-semester and January exams that prevented them from being able to return to previous questions, like they would be able to in any actual physical exam.</p> <p>GC argues that this has been deliberately implemented for exams to reduce the possibility of plagiarism and collusion. This prevents students from colluded on questions because they are denied the opportunity to go back.</p>
2022.030	<p>DD: Significant issue with SPA7024 exam paper and typo prevented the majority from answering the question. MO is aware and it is possible that there will be SEB resolution to account for this issue. Students also felt as though they would have benefitted from more tutorials and it also might help to have this module run in second semester, as it was previously.</p> <p>Already raised with SEB Chair and MO who will investigate if further action is needed at SEB.</p>
2(d)	Academic support
2022.031	<p>Issues raised about lack of revision classes in the build-up to exams, DPA students would like drop-in classes scheduled ahead of January exams.</p> <p>ST: This is possible but limited by short period of availability between end of semester and start of exam period.</p>
2022.032	<p>ML: The organic and spectroscopy lecturers reply to emails quickly and any questions students have, are answered thoroughly and clearly, so many people have greatly benefitted from that.</p> <p>GC to report all positive feedback.</p>
2(e)	Organisation and communication

2022.033	<p>SS: Would like some help to engage with students and increase their engagement in giving feedback.</p> <p>Action point: Emails from staff and SSLC about importance of feedback.</p> <p>Introduce new Student Voice meeting in Physics in future academic years.</p>
2022.034	<p>GC: Comments that improvements have been made to the project abstracts and organisation following feedback from last SSLC. More time will be given to make the choices and more options for students across both programmes.</p>
2022.035	<p>ML: Has requested that students be notified by email when results are released on QMplus but GC does argue that we would like students regularly checking QMplus and this could discourage this and also add to an increase in email traffic.</p>
2022.036	<p>DD: Issues with structure and schedule of semester B starting immediately after January exams or even during them.</p> <p>ST: This is unfortunately part of the impact of taking intercollegiate modules and the overlaps of different institutions.</p>
2(f)	<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
2022.037	<p>All reps have criticised the MME capabilities of rooms that are in use. Camera set up prevents the use of whiteboards which is crucial for learning in S+E subject.</p>
2022.038	<p>Qreview has been inconsistent and students have faced issues in accessing content and recorded lectures.</p> <p>This is largely due to location and position of recording cameras in relation to boards that are used.</p>
2022.039	<p>DPA Y1 reps: Every advised textbook in every module should feature in the teaching session of the library. Every single textbook in the teaching section should have a solution manual (purchased by the university), that is available for the students to reference from the library.</p>

	Every effort is made to stock each textbook listed and examples of missing books have been requested by SSLC.
2(g)	Student feedback (NSS/PTES/UKES/Module evaluations)
2(h)	Consideration of External Examiner reports
2022.040	The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following: No comments were made on the external examiner reports for reps.
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	
2022.041	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on 16 th February at 1pm.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee – 16/02/2022

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	Completed	Raised at Senior Exec and sustained efforts will be made to avoid overlapping deadlines.
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	Continues to be developed and expanded.
2021.029	ST to raise request for more consistent deadline times at next Teaching committee meeting.	ST	Sem B where possible. Sem A for 22/23	Completed	ST raised with Sem B MOs, examples of many MOs adopting 23:59 deadlines where possible.
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	ST to discuss this with Dr Russo going forward.	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.001	Chairs to raise issues with MME and negative student feedback at next Senior Exec meeting.	GC/ST	Next Senior Exec meeting Sem B.	Ongoing	
2022.004	ST to meet with MO to discuss tutorial structure and experiences.	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.006	ST to discuss with MO about offering a different slot to meet with students.	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	

2022.010	ST to talk about the provision on a centralised number/equation sheet for EPP	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.011	ST to speak to MO about the pace of delivery in SPA6403	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.015	To discuss the feedback from students that exams are more difficult compared to past papers and taking significantly longer than 3 hours.	ST/GC	Next Senior Exec meeting	Ongoing	
2022.017	Report student concerns about QMplus outages during exam period and anxiety caused.	ST/GC	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.021	GC to discuss with MO regarding the CHE302 mark breakdown in exam, which some felt to be disproportionate.	GC	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.026	ST to raise DoE with inconsistencies in coursework assessments across all modules but especially level 6.	ST	As soon as possible	Ongoing	
2022.033	Increase in comms from staff and reps about importance of feedback and module evaluations. With introduction of new Student Voice meeting in Physics in future academic years.	ST/DTL	AY 2022/23	Ongoing	