

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Voice Committee
29th November 2022**

Confirmed Minutes

Staff members present:

Name	Role
Weini Huang (WH)	Chair and Director of Student Experience
Shabnam Beheshti (JW)	Director of Education
Alex Clark (AC)	Head of School
Simon Rawstron (SR)	Education Services Manager
Maria Patsou (MP)	Secretary and Education Services Administrator

Student members present:

Name	Programme name and level
Yasir Barlas (YB)	Co-chair and Mathematical Sciences (Single Honours) Year 3
Muniar Hussain (MH)	VP Science and Engineering
Athisha Sivabalan (AS)	Computer Science and Mathematics Year 1
Omar Sawalha (OS)	Computer Science and Mathematics Year 1
Aashta Kansara (AK)	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 3
Omar Ismail (OI)	Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 1
Samitaa Pakeerathan (SP)	Mathematical Sciences (Single Honours) Year 2
Nasteexa Ahmed (NA)	Mathematics with Management Year 1
Lady Angel Mae Navarra (LN)	Actuarial Science Year 2

Apologies for absence:

Name	Role or Programme name and level
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Sebastian del Bano Rollin (SdBR)	Deputy Director of Education
Hamida Begum (HB)	Student Support Officer
Jade Mills (JM)	E-learning Technologist
Bindiya Chongbang (BC)	Education Services Administrator
Dale Breame (DB)	Education Services Officer
Andrea Pinner (AP)	Careers Consultant (School of Mathematical Sciences)
James Soderman (JS)	Faculty Liaison Librarian
Syed Haider (SH)	Mathematical Sciences (Single Honours) Year 2
Rujul Godghate (RG)	Mathematical Sciences Joint Honours Year 1 Rep
Maryfaith Azogu (MA)	Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 1

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2022.039	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2022.040	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2022.041	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 th October 2022 with no amendments noted.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2022.042	<p>2022.006a: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.006b: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.013: This action is complete. SB noted that if students continue to experience issues, they can let the module organiser know and the school will try to support the students to navigate these issues.</p> <p>2022.014a: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.014b: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.016: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.018: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.024: This action is complete.</p> <p>2022.029: This action is complete.</p>

1(e)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2022.043	The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following:
2022.044	Nothing to report
Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2022.045	The committee reviewed proposed programme/module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:
2022.046	SB noted that there is a plan to separate big modules for single and joint honours students in order to reduce lecture class numbers for a better student experience and tailor the modules more to their respective programmes. SR asked student reps what it felt like being in big groups for lectures. 1 st Year reps noted that there was not much room for interaction. 2 nd Year reps noted that they did not find problems with it but that there was a lot of independent learning involved.
2022.047	SB noted that there was a plan to introduce more compulsory modules in Year 2 that students will need to have as a background, enabling them to select from a bigger pool of modules in Year 3.
2022.048	SB explained that QMUL School of Mathematical Sciences has traded Analysis modules in Year 1 for a 30 credits worth of Probability and Statistics Modules across the year.
2(b)	Student feedback Learning and teaching matters Assessment and feedback Academic support Organisation and communication
2022.049	Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:
2022.050	3 rd Year reps noted that, for various reasons, there is a drop in attendance after week 7, but that was not necessarily the case for all modules. The reps brought examples of two modules to illustrate engagement: MTH6141 Random Processes and MTH6154 Financial Mathematics I. For the latter, student reps noted that if the majority of the material was available online

	<p>and there is no new information during lectures, then students did not see the point in coming in every week to attend, especially because exams will also be online as well. Conversely, MTH6141 lectures were more engaging and there were points during the lecture where students break to work on activities which was something they benefited from if they attend on campus. WH queried if there are any suggestions that reps can make to improve engagement. Reps noted that it is likely that engagement will increase by not uploading notes in advance of lectures and making classes more interactive. SR queried about what counts as interactive, and reps replied that mini-tasks, for example, would improve understanding of the material and engagement.</p>
2022.051	Representatives reported on assessment and feedback and the following points were noted:
2022.052	1 st Year reps noted that they would prefer the MTH4*13 Numbers, Sets and Functions exam to be online. There was also exam mode feedback noted in the post meeting notes. YB advised that the PASS Scheme can offer support to Year 1 students.
2022.053	<p>2nd Year reps noted that MTH5*12 Applied Linear Algebra/Linear Algebra I, MTH5123 Differential Equations and MTH5129 Probability and Statistics II all fall on the same day within a 7-hour period. SB noted that timetables are reviewed every semester and they will make sure to keep in mind occurrences like this one. SR also noted that the timetabling team has a very challenging task of fitting 16 hours of teaching in 3 and a half days, as timetabling aims to keep a day open with no classes and there is a slot between 1 and 2 on Fridays for prayer. SR noted that teaching one module within a day can be useful, but it would also be very intense, that was why it was preferred to split activities across different days. Other ways to support students were discussed such as having more breaks during classes.</p> <p>ACTION: WH to discuss with module organisers to offer more breaks during classes for days that have back-to-back teaching.</p>
2022.054	MH noted that he has been approached by Year 2 students about the ongoing discussion of online and on-campus exams. MH noted that he had several emails directed to him with students asking for clarification on what is due to happen in the January examination period. SB noted that there are no more than two exams online/in person for students and that, despite the School's best efforts to send out information, a lot of disinformation

	circulated with the student cohort. SR noted that the School had tried to clarify the arrangements several times but students did not appear willing to read the correct information which, in turn, increased the levels of stress among them. SR committed to continue to send clear messages out to the students. With regards to the reasons behind starting campus exams again, SB noted that it would be unethical to send Year 2 students into Year 3 without the experience of in-person exams. MH asked the School to consider what should follow after the mock exams if, for example, students do not do well in them.
2022.055	Year 3 reps brought up the issue of the exams timetable, as it is very busy for some students within a few days. SR noted that some adjustments can be made to exam timetables but then they mess other timetabled exams up.
2022.056	Representatives reported on academic support and the following points were noted:
2022.057	Year 1 reps noted that they would prefer tutorials for MTH4*100 Calculus I and MTH4*13 Numbers, Sets and Functions to be recorded. ACTION: WH to discuss the recording of tutorials with the lecturers of MTH4*100 Calculus I and MTH4*13 Numbers, Sets and Functions.
2022.058	Representatives reported on organisation and communication and the following points were noted:
2022.059	Nothing to report
2(c)	Learning resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.) • QMplus • QReview • Updates from faculty E-learning forums • IT
2022.060	Representatives reported on Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.), and the following points were noted:
2022.061	Nothing to report-Please see post-meeting notes
2022.062	Representatives reported on QMPlus, QReview, Updates from faculty E-learning forums and IT, and the following points were noted:
2022.063	AK queried whether there was a QMPlus page for joint students' announcements or a Teams group as Joint Honours students are sometimes left out of maths announcements. ACTION: SB to investigate the

	possibility of putting a Teams group or QMPlus page together for joint Honours students.
2(d)	Student feedback NSS PTES UKES
2022.064	The committee discussed responses to NSS, PTES and UKES and noted the following:
2022.065	SB explained what the document that was circulated to the student reps about the NSS results was about. She noted that the School tries to catalogue a huge amount of activity. SB also noted that the 'neutral' response that is available gives no information to the School about what this response reflects. SB asked reps to let the School know if they see something in the action list of the document that they were not aware was happening.
2022.066	WH also asked that student reps and students use the Student Voice email for feedback and that the School will discuss including a dedicated part about feedback in the Maths Newsletter. ACTION: WH to discuss with the marketing how the Maths Newsletter can be utilised to offer a space for student feedback.
2022.067	SR noted that students will now have had emails about module evaluations and asked reps to help with spreading the word about filling in module evaluations. SB noted that staff care about improving teaching and about delivering good teaching and so feedback matters to them. ACTION: All reps to encourage students to complete module evaluations.
2(e)	Consideration of Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP), Student Experience Action Matrix (SEAM) or Taught Programme Action Plans (TPAP)
2022.068	The committee discussed responses to Consideration of Student Experience Action Plan and noted the following:
2022.069	Nothing to report
2 (f)	Consideration of External Examiner reports
2022.070	The committee discussed responses to the Consideration of External Examiner reports and noted the following:
2022.071	The reports will be reviewed and discussed in the next meeting

Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2022.072	The following items were raised under Any Other Business:
2022.073	Nothing to report
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2022.074	The next meeting is set to take place on 7 th February 2023, at 12 noon
Post Meeting Notes (received via email)	
<u>Staff Announcements</u>	
<p>Due to absence, JS and AP announced the following:</p> <p><i>Careers</i></p> <p>In relation to point 2022.24 of the previous minutes (25.10.2022), AP wanted to let students know that she has put together a document for advisors with useful information to give to students who are considering further study oat MSc and PhD level.</p> <p><i>Library</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The re-opening of the 2nd floor of the Mile End Library has been delayed until mid-December. • There will be Library spaces open throughout the holiday break on the Mile End campus. As Libraries are closing for some of the days, students are advised to look at the website before they travel but, for example, the Canalside will remain open 24/7 during the whole period. More information can be found on the library website. https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/ • Next week the library is inviting everyone to a session called “An hour of code”. For more information: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/hourofcode. It will give participants an opportunity to play around with a new coding language. <p><u>Student Rep Feedback</u></p> <p>YB noted the following feedback from 3rd Year students:</p> <p><i>Module Feedback</i></p> <p>MTH6107 Chaos and Fractals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much material covered (at least in first half of semester) • No typeset lecture notes available • Examples are too basic and some of the terms used are not defined by the lecturer • Not very clear about what the exam will be about (likely due to lack of material) <p>MTH6106 Group Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer needs to engage with audience more <p>SB noted that earlier in the term she made a general reminder to staff to ensure their lectures are engaging.</p> <p>MTH6140 Linear Algebra II</p>	

- Lack of examples when defining and using abstract objects

MTH6151 Partial Differential Equations

- Lecturer difficult to understand, some people resort to the archive
- Preferable if coursework length is a lot more similar to other modules, about 20 questions for a single coursework, rather than a few questions in a different module

MTH6154 Financial Mathematics I

- Same feedback as before, difficult to understand and not very engaging

SB noted that she contacted the lecturer earlier in the term and he responded that he has added exam-style examples and questions to lectures and seminars. SB also noted that earlier in the term she made a general reminder to staff to ensure their lectures are engaging.

General Feedback

- An advisor did not reply to a student for several weeks, and after following up the advisor said they could not help. SB noted that it is not possible to take action for this matter unless we are aware of who the advisor is. At this stage it is advised that if this problem persists, it should be taken up with WH or the Year's Tutor.
- Exams were difficult in the past few years, and students are worried that the same would happen in their most important year. SB noted that online examinations are typically written in a different format and fashion to those past papers which students may be using to revise, as the open-notes format means the School needs to be able to test students' reasoning skills in a different manner than a face-to-face setting.
- There were some complaints about not having a 24-hour window like last year to sit exams. SB noted that we had timed exams in a 24-hour window last year to support students who had to remain overseas due to Covid. This year, students are expected to be on campus/present in the UK for their degrees, and subject to recommendations from our external examiners and accreditation bodies, we have returned to a fixed exam window. The School has, however added 2 additional hours to each 2-hour exam to allow ample time for all students.
- Overall people are happy with exams in the maths school being online, but people sitting level 5 modules and those on joint programmes would have liked those exams to be online too. Following changes in the timetable SB noted that Level 5 modules in January are fully online, however there are a combination of online and face-to-face examinations for Level 5 modules in May as we transition back to on-campus examinations.

RG noted the following feedback from 1st year students via email shortly after the meeting:

A couple students in the mathematics Year 1 cohort have some concerns with the way we will be examined this year and I was hoping I could've raised them in the meeting this week. Is there anyone I could talk to about this immediately, since the exams will be happening in January?

SR noted the following feedback via email: In general terms, the way each year is being assessed, now that there are no Covid restrictions in place where we had no choice but to assess online, are being reviewed on a year-by-year basis, to determine the most appropriate method of assessment taking account of students' experience over the last 4

years. Going forward, students will be assessed in a combination of different ways, both online and on Campus. Year by year, there isn't a 'one size fits all' method of assessment that account for the different student experiences over the last 4 years, and for our current level 4 MTH modules, 1 is online and 3 are on Campus.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2022.054	Discuss with module organisers to offer more breaks during classes for days that have back-to-back teaching.	WH	ASAP	Open	
2022.058	Discuss the recording of tutorials with the lecturers of MTH4*100 Calculus I and MTH4*13 Numbers, Sets and Functions.	WH	ASAP	Open	
2022.062	Investigate the possibility of putting a Teams group or QMPlus page together for joint Honours students.	SB	ASAP	Open	
2022.065	Discuss with the marketing how the Maths Newsletter can be utilised to offer a space for student feedback.	WH	ASAP	Open	
2022.066	All reps to encourage students to complete module evaluations.	All Reps	ASAP	Open	

Post-Meeting notes (ACTION 1)	For MTH6107-Chaos and Fractals, ask the lecturer to add a section for revision on the final exam in which some details on the format, suggested exercises, additional resources are listed.	WH	ASAP	Open	
Post-Meeting notes (ACTION 2)	For MTH6140-Linear Algebra II, ask the lecturer to signpost some examples in a notes few additional resources for students to use when revising for the exam.	WH	ASAP	Open	
Post-Meeting notes (ACTION 3)	For MTH6151-Partial Differential Equations, follow up with Lecturer on adjusting coursework for future semesters.	SB	ASAP	Open	