

SMS School Meeting
Education Update, 10 Jan 2022
S. Beheshti, Director of Education

TEACHING & ADMIN ALLOCATION, ADVISING - Updated to address areas of activity/need and to make work transparent; newest version of teaching allocation to be circulated with Sem B adjustments.

OPERATIONS RECAP – we will largely run things as we did in Sem A; please see September minutes.

Lectures

- Y1 – 5 contact hours comprised of two 2hr Lectures + 1hr (small group) Tutorials/IT Labs
- Y2/Y3 – 4 contact hours comprised of two 2hr Lectures or 2+1 hrs Lecture + 1 Seminar/IT Lab
- Y4/MSc – 3 contact hours comprised of 2 Lectures +1 Seminar/IT Lab hours

Notes:

Y1 Tutorials are not MME (online-only tutorials to catch those who aren't here yet)

Some Y2/Y3/PGT modules have exceptional structures, double taught seminars/IT Labs, etc.

Tutorials/Seminars

- Y1 – Weekly tutorials will commence in Week 2
- Y2/Y3 – Weekly seminar hour/IT Lab, starting in Week 1 (unless indicated otherwise)
In 2+2hr modules, you choose where the seminar hour goes
In 2+1+1 modules, split seminar is labelled in timetable

QMPlus

- Basics: day/time and modes of your module (physical space, MME, online only, etc.), weekly responsibilities of student (asynchronous videos, independent reading, assignments, etc.), where questions should be directed (forum vs. email), Office Hours (min 1 hr/week)
- Checklist: session links, recordings, lecture notes, readings, library resources, exercises + due dates, solutions (if relevant), feedback, exam resources, extras (as appropriate)

Assessment

- Most modules levels 4-6 (Y1-Y3) have 20% (5 x 4%) coursework + 80% final exam
- IFoA-accredited modules have special assessment pattern (already contacted by Gaik)
- Bonus if you can coordinate due dates for bigger modules in the year (esp. Y1)

STUDENT FEEDBACK: Please do try to make your lectures/tutorials/seminars as interactive as possible! Students have indicated that they appreciate when the lecturer divides their attention between those in the classroom and those online explicitly. They also appreciate modules in which we are very clear in their tasks at weekly/bi-weekly level, e.g., "Do reading X, Week N, watch video A before Tues Lecture Week N, Revise exercise sheet Week N-1, etc. By the end of week N, you should know how to ..."

FINAL EXAMINATIONS – UG/PGT have timed exams (2hr UG, 3 hr PGT) on QMPlus. Checked exams will be due middle of Week 7; detailed instructions from SEB Chairs to follow. Please note that every module needs at least 50% assessments to go to external examiners.

A (NOT SO) BRIEF WORD ON MME – Improvements have been made since last semester; anticipate IT issues to persist in some rooms; MME Stewards may be ill-equipped to help with your particular setup ("live writing" on multiple visualizers/tablets, etc.). **Please have a backup plan.**

- There is a useful QMPlus page about how to deliver MME; please see the tabs "Mixed Mode Basics" and "Mixed Mode Advanced" for more details:
<https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=16250>
- Newer staff may consider further training opportunities offered by QM Academy:
<https://esdcourses.qmul.ac.uk/userlistcourse.php>
- Please visit your teaching room to try out the equipment in advance of your first session, in case of surprises or technical problems. Regarding use of your own teaching devices, please

note that it is usually expected that staff use the computers provided in each room to project to the screen. You can then log in to a given interactive session (e.g. BlackBoard Collaborate) and share the screen on your own teaching device, rather than connect it directly. This has been a very useful workaround for common technical issues.

- We have good reason to hope that technical problems will be less severe this semester. If you encounter any, please raise tickets with IT services, but let myself and Thomas Prellberg know if things are not resolved, so that we can escalate things.

Some other links from Danielle Thibodeau at QM Academy, that might be helpful for newer staff:

* There is a table you can use to see which AV level different rooms are at:

<https://timetablingsupport.qmul.ac.uk/audiovisual/>

* The IT team also have a dedicated webpage with helpful quick guides and videos showing how the technology in different types of rooms may be used:

<https://www.its.qmul.ac.uk/support/audiovisual/>

* The E-Learning Unit also have a dedicated webpage on how to use the different technologies when conducting MME: <https://elearning.qmul.ac.uk/help-and-support/>

BEYOND OPERATIONS – A lot has been going on in the background at Programme level! A taste:

- Simplifications to UG/PGT offering
 - Final run of Coding Theory this year
 - BSc Maths, Stats, & Financial Economics dropped
 - BSc Pure Maths absorbed into BSc Maths
 - MSc Financial Computing/Financial Maths merged
- Fuller portfolio review to commence this term
- Coursera is underway, with first cohort expected in AY2022/23
- Week 7 is no longer Reading Week. Just kidding. It is. But it isn't. (Don't shoot the messenger!)

AND FINALLY – Our various Learned Societies have been organising online talks around teaching of mathematics, statistics and data science which may be of interest. Here are a few:

- Teaching and Learning Mathematics/Statistics Online (26 Jan, 29 Feb, 23 Mar, ...)
<http://talmu.uk/index.html>
- Mathematics: Inclusive of Exclusive? Putting colour, culture, and context into the curriculum (25-26 Jan) <https://www.icms.org.uk/events/workshops/MIE22>
- Supporting Postgraduates Who Teach Mathematics and Statistics (date TBA)
<https://smstc.ac.uk/symposia/supporting-postgraduates-who-teach-mathematics-and-statistics>

QMUL policy for 2021/22. Communications have been sent to all students about engaging with their studies on campus/via MME; in order to be clear about the expectation, attendance on campus has always been an academic requirement and remains so this year. This is done with the understanding that some students will be joining live MME sessions online, with the majority - both home and international - on campus for the same synchronous / live session.

So, students are expected to be on campus, in person (unless they are UNABLE, rather than unwilling, to travel to campus), meaning we shouldn't imply that students have the option to attend solely online if they prefer. If students make that choice regardless (somewhat implied by our engagement and timetabling setup), that is an issue we can try to plan around for next year. In practical terms, we know students are using our current provision more flexibly.

Please be assured that I have already pointed out that the above is entirely irrelevant if we can't/don't get the basics of our timetables and IT delivery right well earlier than 2 weeks before the term.