

School of Mathematical Sciences School Meeting

Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 10 January 2022

Present: David Arrowsmith (DA), Christian Beck (CB), Shabnam Beheshti (SB), Martin Benning (MB), Ginestra Bianconi (GB), Omer Bobrowski (OB), Prajmitra Bhuyan (PB), Reto Buzano (RB), David Carun (DC), Alex Clark - Chair (AC), Katy Clough (KC), Steve Coad (SC), Sarah Condron (SC1), Nic Crotch (NC), Lei Fang (LF), Matt Fayers (MF), Pau Figueras (PF), Alex Fink (AF), Felix Fischer (FF), Claudia Garetto (CG) Alexander Gnedin (AG), Mahdi Godazgar (MG), Ilya Goldsheid (IG), Jamie Griffin (JG), Rosemary Harris (RH), Kieran Hayde (KH), Oliver Jenkinson (OJ), Mark Jerrum (MJ), Robert Johnson (RJ), Wolfram Just (WJ), Boris Khoruzhenko (BK), Rainer Klages (RK), Amit Kumar Paul (AKP), Vito Latora (VL), Matthew Lewis (ML) Silvia Liverani (SL), Megan Liddle (ML1), Anna Maltsev (AM), John Moriarty (JM), Ian Morris (IM), William Ng (WN), Vincenzo Nicosia (VN), Huy The Nguyen (HN), Behrang Noohi (BN), Biplab Paul (BP) Michael Phillips (MP1), Elisa Piccaro (EP), Mihail Poplavskiy (MP2), Thomas Prellberg (TP), Felipe Rincon (FR), Bolys Sabitbek (BS), Abhishek Saha (AS), Farasat Shamir (FS), Mira Shamis (MS), Arick Shao (AS1), Shu Sasaki (SS), Andrew Shaw (AS2) Alex Shestopaloff (AS2), Primož Skraba (PS), Dudley Stark (DS), Thomas Stead (TS) Chris Sutton (CS), Ivan Tomasic (IT), Pedro Vergel (PV), Juan Valiente Kroon (JVK), Mark Walters (MW), Justin Ward (JW), Linus Wunderlich (LW), Jo Young (JY), Katerina Zahradova (KZ), Anna Zincenko (AZ)

Apologies: Bindiya Chongbang (BC), Kathrin Glau (KG), Michele Levi (ML2), Jade Mills (JM)

Secretary: Sarah Condron (SC1)

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
20.09.21 - 3.1	Staff with experience in module development or HE in China to contact AC if they are available to help.	All	ASAP	Complete
20.09.21 – 4.2	SB to circulate student enrolment numbers and student preferences for F2F versus virtual teaching	SB	ASAP	Complete
20.09.21 – 6.1	SC to liaise with JM for next meeting agenda.	SC	January 2022	Ongoing
10.01.22 – 4.1	AC to provide NC with a contact within the School to represent on the consultation process.	AC	ASAP	

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Apologies	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bindiya Chongbang (BC) • Kathrin Glau (KG) • Michèle Levi (ML) • Jade Mills (JM) 		

<p>2. New Starters and Leavers</p>	<p><u>New Staff:</u> Fatemah Parsa – Teaching Fellow Matthew Lewis – Teaching Fellow Vitaly Fain – Teaching Fellow Prajmitra Bhuyan – Lecturer in Statistics Katy Clough – STFC Research Fellow Farasat Shamir – Lecturer in Mathematics Omer Brobrowski – Senior Lecturer in Mathematical Data Science Claudia Garetto – Reader in Mathematics Lei Fang – Lecturer in Mathematics Anna Zincenko – Teaching Fellow Viresh Patel – Teaching Fellow (joining in June 2022) Bindiya Chongbang – Education Services Administrator Kieran Hayde – Marketing Communications Officer</p> <p><u>New PDRAs</u> Amit Paul Biplab Paul Xiao Han – Marie Curie Research Fellow Diego Millan Berdasco – 6 month EPSRC Vaibhav Kumar Jena – 6 month EPSRC Lorenzo Rossi – 6 month EPSRC</p> <p>Farwell to William Ng who will be leaving after over 6 years as Student Support Officer with the School of Mathematical Sciences. William will be remaining at Queen Mary in his new role and best wishes are given to him.</p>		
<p>3. Head of School Update</p>	<p><u>Grant Awards</u> <u>Royal Society Research Fellows Enhanced Research Expenses</u></p> <p>Congratulations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anna Maltsev - £85,000 (12 months) - Mahdi Godazgar - £85,000 (12 months) - Pau Figueras - £135,992 (18 months) <p><u>Promotions</u> Prior to the Christmas break there was an announcement in relation to the launch of the Promotions process. There is now a dedicated website outlining further information:</p> <p>https://hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/promotion/acadpromotion/</p> <p>All applications must be submitted to AC by 31 January 2022 – please use the subject title ‘Application for Academic Promotion 2022’.</p> <p>AC has requested that employees are interested in pursuing a promotion application to discuss it with their Head of Group and MF. If there are any questions regarding promotions, individuals are welcome to attend a drop in session or approach AC directly.</p>		

	<p><u>Sabbaticals</u> Sabbatical applications for 22/23 are now also open. However, staff should be aware that there will be a limited amount of sabbaticals approved for 22/23. The closing date for applications is 7th February 2022.</p> <p><u>Upcoming Appointments and Office Space</u> The School now has a variety of posts that have been approved with 7 academic posts currently being advertised.</p> <p>At present, every academic office is now occupied and the Senior Management Team (SMT) are discussing how best to accommodate growth in the School. If any staff member has any ideas how to rectify this, please utilise the drop in session with AC or contact AC and JY. The decisions made will not be based on seniority, but more in line with working patterns.</p> <p><u>Online MSc in Applied Data Analytics</u> The contract with Coursera has now been signed.</p> <p>Congratulations to PS and MW for their hard work putting the programme together and getting the paperwork through the approval process.</p> <p>Andrea Ward is now the dedicated project manager assigned to the development of this programme. Approval has been granted for one lecturer, one senior lecturer and one teaching fellow to aid in the construction and running of the programme. AC, JY and PS are members of the Steering Group for the project.</p>		
<p>4. Unified Communications and Collaboration</p>	<p><u>Unified Communications Project – Telephony Consultation</u> Queen Mary’s current telephony infrastructure is costly to maintain and does not suit ‘new ways of working’. The pandemic has changed telephony needs and traditional phone services are no longer being utilised. MS Teams calling is now widely being used internally at Queen Mary.</p> <p>There are three different services within MS Teams Telephony:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teams Calling (text, audio & video) – all staff are currently using this feature. - Teams Audio Conferencing (voice connection in meetings to 3rd party with phone only) – a small percentage of staff are currently using this feature. - Teams Phone (single interface with all call types) – this feature is currently not available to staff. <p>Queen Mary completed a successful 3 month trial using MS Teams Calling, Teams Audio Conferencing and Teams Phone. There was 100% positive response for MS Teams telephony, 90% of users had no impact without a phone and 95% of users would</p>		

	<p>consider relinquishing desk phones. This trial was based on 25 users.</p> <p>MS Teams Phone has proved to be expensive therefore it is envisioned that not every staff member will be allocated this service.</p> <p><u>Timeline</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University wide consultation completion with a target end date of February 2022 - Business Case to be created with target rollout date of early 2023. - Tender for suppliers will go out with a target end date of April 2022. - Rollout by early 2023. <p>Please click here to refer to NC presentation slides Telephony Pre-Consultation Presentation</p> <p>for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ descriptions of moving from the current telephony services to MS Teams Telephony. ▪ explanation of considering the user profiles and other party's communication capability. The graph shows the proposed communication technology provision depending on differing aspects of individual users' needs. <p>It is proposed that where a person's communication requirements can be fulfilled through any of the service provisions on the references graph above, physical handsets will be removed.</p> <p>If a softphone requirement remains after the consultation, it will be switched to Teams Phone, otherwise will be removed.</p> <p>Employees will receive support on installing and using MS Teams Telephony and Outlook on personal devices – employees will be encouraged to do so.</p> <p>All employees will be offered headsets upon request.</p> <p>Employees will be offered training in the use of the new technologies through a variety of convenient learning channels.</p> <p>Employees are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - express preference for the consultation process - offer to be contact points and consultation/change champions (N.B this will be actioned by AC and JY) 		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review the proposed service provision principals and provide feedback. - assist in matching staff roles and individuals to provision types - support the consultation and change <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AC to provide NC with a contact within the School to represent on the consultation process. 	AC	ASAP
<p>5. Consultancy service at QMUL</p>	<p>Consultancy is one of the ways employees at QMUL can engage with business, industry, government and non-profits. It is the provision of expert advice, <u>not</u> creation of new knowledge.</p> <p>QMUL has recently formalised its consultancy service to facilitate and support staff in undertaking consultancy.</p> <p>OB and JW within SMS are currently working with PA Consultancy and it is hoped there will be more examples across the School during 2022.</p> <p>Please refer to AS presentation slides attached for QMUL’s Consultancy Policy & Practice, Developing & Supporting Consultancy Projects, Financials & Approvals and Benefits to QMUL.</p> <p>Private consultancy is permitted however, will not be covered by institutional insurance and those consulting privately should not use QMUL facilities. Please report any private consultancy taking place to AS.</p> <p>During 2022, the Business Development team is looking to raise the profile of academic expertise and facilities at Queen Mary, support colleagues who have not yet undertaken consultancy, generate leads with companies and organisations and assist academic colleagues to manage successful delivery with colleagues in Finance and HR.</p> <p>Due to time constraints, AS has offered 1:1 discussions if required. JW requested that employees to get in touch with AS to discuss possible consultancy opportunities.</p>		
<p>6. Education Update</p>	<p>Teaching & Admin Allocation, Advising</p> <p>The teaching, admin and advising allocation looks different this year to past years. This is to simplify work being carried out and to also rectify ‘invisible’ work being done that is work that is being carried out but not accounted for on the allocations.</p> <p>Operations</p> <p>Semester B is running as Semester A – please refer to School Meeting notes from 20.09.21 for recap.</p>		

	<p>Classes are still running Mixed Mode Education (MME). This is where the class is taught in a teaching room/lecture theatre but students are able to join remotely online. It should be noted that this is always the case unless the timetable stated 'online only' or are first year tutorials which are being run by postgraduates in small rooms in small groups and are not MME.</p> <p><u>Lectures</u></p> <p>In the first year there are five contact hours which comprise of two x two hour lectures with the module organiser and one hour of tutorials/IT lab for each student. Due to the pandemic and students having two years of interrupted education, the extra hour has been allocated to provide the students with any extra time possibly needed. This will be reevaluated at the end of the year.</p> <p>In the second and third year there are four contact hours which comprise of two, two hour lectures. In the case of a large module, a split seminar would be required, 3 hours of new material and one hour of seminar/IT lab. The seminar hour is at the discretion of the lecturer and, if possible, be kept as consistent as possible week by week.</p> <p>In the fourth year/MSc there are three contact hours comprised of two one hour lectures and one hour for seminar/IT lab.</p> <p><u>Tutorials/Seminars</u></p> <p>First year weekly tutorials will commence in week two.</p> <p>Second and third year modules comprise of the two + two structure from week one. The seminar hour is at the discretion of the lecturer and, if possible, should be kept as consistent as possible week by week.</p> <p><u>QMPlus</u></p> <p>All QMPlus module pages must be revealed as soon as possible and if not already done, must be done prior to the start of term.</p> <p>Please check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Date/times/mode of module - Weekly responsibilities of the student - Where questions should be directed <p>Lecturers preferred method of contact with students should be established from the start of term to lessen various different methods being used (forum/email/teams etc).</p> <p>There is an expectation hold one office hour a week or more if the class is large or the demand is there. These office hours do not have to be face to face, can be help online.</p> <p>Students have mentioned the following are useful to have on QMPlus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session links 		
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- Recordings
- Lecture Notes
- Readings
- Library Resources
- Exercises
- Due Dates
- Solutions (if relevant)
- Feedback
- Exam Resources
- Extras (as appropriate)

Student Feedback

Students have requested that lectures/tutorials/seminars are as interactive as possible. Thank you goes to Ivan Tomasic from students from the Linear Algebra Module. The students felt they were acknowledged both in the class face to face and online.

Students have asked where possible, Lecturers provide them with a clear understanding (tasks/to do list) of what is expected from them in a given week. If the students do not manage to complete the tasks in the week, they have a reference point of what needs doing to catch up.

Assessment

Most modules assessment structures should look like a 20%/80% split between coursework, mid-term and final. If the module assessment structure does not look like the above and there are questions regarding this, please speak with SB.

Due dates should try to be coordinated for bigger modules, this will be helpful for the students to be able to plan.

Final Examinations

The main change from last year is students no longer have a full 24 hours to sit an exam. Exams now have a two/three hour window depending on whether UG or PGT.

MME

Improvements have been made since the beginning of the first term. It has been noted that the MME stewards are welcomed but in some cases, ill-equipped to help with a particular individual requests. As soon as timetables are finalised, please ensure the equipment required is set up adequately in the teaching room and in all cases, have an alternative plan as difficulties may arise.

Programmes

The Coding Theory module is being closed to simplify single and joint honours and to assist in reorganising programmes. The BSc Maths, Stats & Financial Economics module is also being dropped due to being under recruited. Financial Computing and Financial Maths PGT programmes have been merged into one module. SB will conduct a full portfolio review.

	<p>Coursera will start the beginning of the academic year 2022/2023.</p> <p>Reading Week will no longer be called Reading Week, it will be referred to as Week Seven. There will still be no lecturers or tutorials during Week Seven but this is to encourage students not to think of the time as a break for a week, thus keeping the name in line.</p> <p>Please refer to SB notes attached for several links on MME and IT support. The links for resources available are to assist with online teaching and assessment for Mathematics, Statistics and Data Science. SB has requested staff to review the links to assistance and set up a meeting with her if further guidance is required.</p> <p><u>QMUL Policy 2021/2022</u> Students should be given the option to come on to campus at any given time. SB is working towards allocating ample space/facilities to accommodate this. Some students are currently choosing to stay off campus and join classes online, but the space/facilities must be made available if they decide to come on campus.</p> <p>If there are concerns about students being unaware of the new mask policy, comms will be provided to the students and only students exempt from wearing a mask will be allowed to do so.</p>		
<p>7. PhD Studentship Allocation</p>	<p>Please refer to AF notes attached to view the sources of PhD funding available this year. The main deadline for funding applications is Sunday 30 January 2022. This deadline applied to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EPSRC Maths DTP (doctoral training programmes) - Principals studentships in Horizon Scanning - China Scholarship Council <p>The ESPRC fund many of the PhD studentships through DTP. Last year, a maths specific one was announced with two years of funding which SMS has received half of, the second half is yet to be given and there is no set time of which is can be expected. This funding, once received, will allow four studentships. If the funding is not received from ESPRC, there will be one studentship from the Minnie Brooke endowment fund.</p> <p>Interviews for studentships can start now and should be completed by 17.02.22 with the allocation committee meeting on 22.02.22. Funding from EPSRC and/or School will be confirmed shortly. Please refer to QMPlus for guidance on interviews to ensure they are standard and compliant – Interview guidance can be shared with applicants that are invited to interview.</p> <p>There are seven studentships available via the Principal’s Horizon Scanning. Please refer to AF notes attached to view successful</p>		

	<p>individuals. Please contact AF if any problems with the allocation of the cohorts.</p> <p>Available to apply for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are sixteen projects approved for the China Scholarship Council (CSC), this number is significantly less than last year. If there are any students interested in working on the CSC, please contact AF. - Nothing has been approved as yet for the Conacyt (Mexico) & Colombia schemes but is subject to negotiation. Again, please contact AF if any students may be interested. - Please contact AF if you have students that may be interested in Islamic Development Bank and HEC Pakistan schemes, there are no restrictions for these schemes. - The two Faculty BAME studentships are subject to the Sunday 30 January 2022 deadline. If there are any strong BAME students within Masters or third year modules, please encourage to apply for the studentships. There is a BAME undergraduate internship research scheme, if there are any second year students or third year MSc in this category, please inform them of the opportunity for a summer research project and or contact AF for more information. - There are available Faculty 50% match-funded PhD studentships. The deadlines for these studentship applications are on a rolling deadline. Please make AF aware if any interest is shown for this. 		
<p>8. Any other business</p>	<p>No further business was raised.</p>		
<p>9. Date of next meeting</p>	<p>28 March 2022</p>		