

School of Mathematical Sciences
School Meeting

Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 20 September 2021

Present: David Arrowsmith (DA), Oscar Bandtlow (OB), Christian Beck (CB), Shabnam Beheshti (SB), Martin Benning (MB), Ginestra Bianconi (GB), Dale Breame (DB), Ron Chan (RC), Alex Clark - Chair (AC), Steve Coad (SC), Sarah Condron (SC1), Luke Cridland (LC), Sebastian Del Bano Rollin (SDBR), Domagoj Demeterfi (DD), Matt Fayers (MF), Pau Figueras (PF), Felix Fischer (FF), Kathrin Glau (KG), Alexander Gnedin (AG), Mahdi Godazgar (MG), Ilya Goldsheid (IG), Jamie Griffin (JG), Arthur Guillaumin (AG1), Rosemary Harris (RH), Oliver Jenkinson (OJ), Mark Jerrum (MJ), Robert Johnson (RJ), Wolfram Just (MJ), Rainer Klages (RK), Vito Latora (VL), Lucas Lacasa (LL), Silvia Liverani (SL), Megan Liddle (ML), Shahn Majid (SM), Anna Maltsev (AM), Hugo Maruri-Aguilar (HMA), John Moriarty (JM), Ian Morris (IM), William Ng (WN), Gaik Ng (GN), Huy The Nguyen (HN), Behrang Noohi (BN), Maria Patsou (MP), Michael Phillips (MP1), Elisa Piccaro (EP), Mihail Poplavskyi (MP2), Thomas Prellberg (TP), Simon Rawstron (SR), Felipe Rincon (FR), Bolys Sabitbek (BS), Abhishek Saha (AS), Arick Shao (AS1), Shu Sasaki (SS), Alex Shestopaloff (AS2), Dudley Stark (DS), Chris Sutton (CS), Ivan Tomasic (IT), Pedro Vergel (PV), Juan Valiente Kroon (JVK), Mark Walters (MW), Justin Ward (JW), Linus Wunderlich (LW), Andrea Young (AY), Jo Young (JY),

Apologies: Vincenzo Nicosia (VN), Stefan Couch (SC), Alex Fink (AF), Primoz Skraba (PS), Nina Otter (NO), Michèle Levi (ML1)

Secretary: Sarah Condron

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	
20.09.21 – 4.2	SB to circulate student enrolment numbers and student preferences for F2F versus virtual teaching	SB	ASAP	
20.09.21 – 6.1	SC to liaise with JM for next meeting agenda.	SC	January 2022	

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Apologies	<p>Apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vincenzo Nicosia (VN) Stefan Couch (SC) Alex Fink (AF) Primoz Skraba (PS) Nina Otter (NO) Michèle Levi (ML) 		

<p>2. New Starters and Leavers</p>	<p>AC confirmed the following new starters had joined the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nina Otter – Lecturer in Mathematical Data Science – started 01 July 2021 • Ron Chan – Lecturer in Mathematics – started 02 August 2021 • Arthur Guillaumin – Lecturer in Mathematical Data Science – started 01 September 2021 • Michèle Levi – STFC Ernest Rutherford Research Fellow – started 01 September 2021 • Tara Fife – Postdoctoral Research Assistant – started 01 June 2021 • Lewin Strauss – EPSRC Funded Research Associate- started 09 August 2021 <p>AC noted the following recruitment campaigns are currently ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Fellows x 4 – offer stage • Lecturer Mathematics T&S (FTC) – shortlisting stage • Education Services Administrator – shortlisting stage <p>AC noted the upcoming vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer in Optimisation – to be re-advertised • Lecturer in Statistics – to be advertised • Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Mathematics T&S – to be advertised 		
<p>3. Head of School Update</p>	<p><u>Student numbers</u></p> <p>There has been over-recruitment by a third across the Faculty with Maths recruiting 20% above target.</p> <p>Wen Wang (WW) and the Principal have provided temporary immediate funding to allow School’s to recruit additional staff to help support the increased student numbers in Semester A.</p> <p>The School has requested and been granted funding for four additional Teaching Fellows (TF) to be appointed until August 2022. Rationale for recruiting TFs over Teaching Associates (TAs) is that as these are higher grade, this gives the School greater flexibility of how they can be used, e.g. delivering lectures and marking exams. Ten candidates have been interviewed by SB, JVK and SDBR. It is anticipated that a number of them will be in place for Semester A.</p> <p>Once there is more clarity on the income stream from student recruitment decisions on permanent posts will be made.</p> <p><u>Transnational Education</u></p> <p>The School may become directly involved with the development and delivery of a Transnational Educational Programme due to launch next academic year in Hainan, China.</p> <p>AC asked anyone with experience in developing modules or Higher Education in China who would like to be involved to inform him ASAP and noted tight deadlines are in place (as early as next month).</p>		

	<p>➤ ACTION: Staff with experience in module development or HE in China to contact AC if they are available to help.</p> <p><u>Coursera</u> The business case for the ‘Applied Data Analytics’ MSc programme will be presented to the Queen Mary ‘Distance Learning & Commercial Generation Programme’ board on 28 September 2021. It is expected that the contract with Coursera will follow shortly. There are still some issues that need to be settled to make this as favourable to the School as possible.</p> <p>There is a significant grant available (with no expectation of repayment) to ensure the project is executed well and also loans to enable sufficient resources to better develop the MSc.</p> <p>The launch of the programme is anticipated for September 2022, in line with the start of the next academic year.</p> <p><u>Grant Income</u> At the end of every financial year the Faculty Executive carry out an analysis of grant income by School.</p> <p>SMS has not only maintained but increased the level of income from the previous year. SMS are above the average for Russell Group which is important for Faculty Executive and Senior Management. AC congratulated staff on their success in securing grant income.</p> <p><u>Return to Campus</u> The BBQ was a successful event – AC thanked to JY, ML and SC1 for organising.</p> <p>Due to the expansion of the School and staff numbers, there will soon be more academic staff than offices, which is currently being worked on but is an issue.</p> <p>There has recently been scrutiny on the use of the space in the Maths building with it being noted that much of the space is not being used. This has been noted by Faculty and Estates. Other Schools are stretched more tightly in terms of office space. Good use of our building is critical to ensure the building remains exclusive for Maths.</p>	All	ASAP
4. Education Update	<p><u>Admin Allocation</u> The Admin Allocation sent in July 2021 showed a restructure of undergraduate operations with a number of new roles created. This has been re- worked to address areas of activity.</p> <p>New roles introduced include a Director of Student Experience, a Director of Learning Environment and a Director of Graduate Opportunities and Outcomes.</p>		

	<p><u>Advising</u> The advising allocation has been restructured to be more streamlined.</p> <p><u>Lectures</u></p> <p><i>4.1 First year lecturers</i></p> <p>There are five contact hours for the student, four lecture hours allocated to the lecturer and one hour of small group tutorials of which the lecturer will not be conducting. The small group tutorials are not mixed mode or recorded and will be manned by TAs (mostly our Postgraduates) and newly appointed TFs. The additional contact hour with the lecturer is to provide flexibility in ascertaining the initial level of Maths the students arrive with.</p> <p>The excel module runs IT labs and does not have the same small group tutorial structure.</p> <p><i>4.2 Year Two & Three</i></p> <p>There are four contact hours and seminars have replaced tutorials for second and third year students.</p> <p>If the module is small, there are two, two hour blocks and no seminar listed, therefore three hours of new material and one hour of seminar style work is required. SB expressed that the one hour should be arranged at the individual lecturer’s discretion, but should be kept consistent.</p> <p>If the module is larger the seminar will be split into two smaller groups. The three hours of lecturers and the seminar hour will be listed on the timetable – splitting the cohort into two groups. Therefore, the seminar will only be done twice.</p> <p>SB is hopeful to source people to help with the seminar hour to allow for interactive seminars.</p> <p><i>4.3 Fourth Year</i></p> <p>In fourth year, students generally had 3 contact hours, 2 hour lectures and 1 hour seminar, however after review with the programme director it was decided that three hour blocks would be challenging for the online students. Most seminars are not MME, some modules will have a solely online tutorial to capture those not on campus. As with year three and four, if the module/seminar is large, it will be split.</p> <p><u>IT Labs</u> IT labs proved to best run split, there may be an online only IT lab and/or a campus based IT lab.</p> <p>No lectures will start this year after 6pm and there will be no double teaching lectures when only allocated a single lecture.</p> <p><u>Tutorials & Seminars</u></p>		
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	<p>Tutorials will be held weekly and this also applies to all year one modules that have them.</p> <p>Year two and three, the seminars fall in the two + two hour weekly blocks and are set on the timetable, starting week one.</p> <p>First year modules are showing as starting in week one but the tutorials will commence in week two. SR is making these changes. The tutorial allocation is not finalised yet as it is dependent on Teaching Fellow appointments.</p> <p>Maths have been given lecture space from Faculty to be able to have large lecture theatre style lectures. If lecture classes are large, it is urged to make them as interactive as possible, as this is the basis on which the space has been allocated.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Most modules (level 4-6) have 20% coursework and 80% finals. It was noted this is different from last year and staff were asked to update their records to reflect this change.</p> <p>There are new level 6 modules with IFoA accreditation – GN has already provided the required information to staff.</p> <p>Finals</p> <p>Final exams need to be written and submitted by the middle of Reading Week in time to be checked internally and externally. Resits papers are required to be in at the same time. Staff were advised to speak to SB in case of any queries.</p> <p>SB reminded staff to let her know if they expect to be unavailable during any point in the year.</p> <p>SMS will revert to timed exams. There will be two hour exams for undergraduates and three hour exams for postgraduates. An hour will be added for the window of submission. Exams be online, not on campus in Spring and January.</p> <p>QMPlus</p> <p>The blended learning with QMPlus proved popular with the students last year.</p> <p>Staff were reminded to indicate on module page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly responsibilities of the student - Where questions should be directed - The days, times and modes of office hours - Basic Checklist: Session links, recordings, lecture notes, readings, library resources, exercises and due dates, solutions, feedback, exam resources, extras (as appropriate). <p>MME</p> <p>Tickets are being raised for rooms where equipment is not working as it should and concerns have been escalated to Dean of Education.</p> <p>There will be an all staff email across the university clarifying start and finish times to reduce classes over-running.</p>		
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SB suggested staff try various methods for MME set up in classrooms:

1. Log into machine in lecture hall, open BBCollab/Zoom/Teams on your QMPlus page and use tablet/stylus via screenshare to deliver lecture using OneNote.
2. Log into machine in lecture hall, open BBCollab/Zoom/Teams on your QMPlus page and use the visualiser/document camera to deliver lecture.
3. Bring a laptop + tablet/stylus to connect to the lecture all rig (check if you need connectors), open BBCollab/Zoom/Teams on your QMPlus page and deliver lecture as remote.

Ad-Hoc

The Office for Students (OfS) is auditing all Universities to ensure all students receive at least 50% of their education in 2021/2022 face to face. Where this is not the case, there will be financial consequences. The University has requested students indicate if they are unable to be on campus as opposed to unwilling.

Guidance states staff should avoid using ‘blended learning’ as a term, and use ‘mixed mode education (MME)’ as a replacement as students perceive ‘blended’ as online education and may affect engagement and student satisfaction.

PGT students will be required to be on campus by 07 February 2022 and UG level should be here now.

Enrolment & Student Intentions

SB stated she would circulate student enrolment numbers and preferences for face to face versus online teaching. WJ raised a question about the first year cohort and lecture rooms possibly being too small. SB stated the rooms assigned (The Great Hall) have capacity to fit 100%. In other instances, a few modules in Semester A have swapped to two hours purely online so the cohort could be split to get in rooms with enough space.

AS noted that on final exams, every module is now required to send 50% of their assessments to externals. There is no change for UG modules.

GB asked if there were tutorial/guidelines for the delivery of MME. SB suggested she peak with TP and also stated IT Services has recorded small videos which SB will circulate to staff.

IT queried the Covid Safety measures in place and whether they are adequate. SB stated sanitising equipment will be replenished regularly. Ventilation is being assessed across campus and improved where required. The University is following government guidelines. Students and staff are encouraged to wear masks and get vaccinated. Staff are not able to stop students coming into class without a mask. JY attached information on the on-campus vaccination centre.

	<p>TP raised a question with relation to being supported by management with regards to students and Covid boundaries. SB stated staff should be clear with the students of their expected boundaries. It is expected that students will respect the boundaries put in place but may merely forget and may require reminding. The Principal has mentioned that mask guidance would be reviewed weekly and QM guidance may change.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SB to circulate student enrolment numbers and student preferences for face to face versus virtual teaching 	SB	ASAP
<p>5. Training and Resources for Advisers</p>	<p>The following changes to advising were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advising is no longer coupled to Number Sets & Function tutorials. - Students will be assigned a new adviser every year. - Timetabling of meetings handled centrally. - Each adviser should receive students from only a few (2) programmes. <p><u>Advising Roles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Student Experience: <i>Justin Ward</i> Manages advising allocation, Chairs SSLC (UG and PGT), oversees initiatives related to student engagement, experience, voice etc - Year Tutors Organise advising for each year of the cohort, handle communications to hear year's advisers, track and manage student engagement, and handle any issues that may arise in advising. <i>Year Tutors: Shu Sasaki (year 1), Vito Latora (year 2), Robert Johnson (year 3).</i> <p>Advising is more crucial this year as some students' education has been 100% online so far, therefore in some cases year 2 & 3 students should be treated like year one new arrivals in terms of advising and pastoral support. There is no social support network in place as yet, so staff were encouraged to be sensitive to these issues. A lot of effort has been put into preparing and supporting advising resources which are accessible here: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/advisorhub When viewing this page, please hover over the tabs to view the full directory.</p> <p>JW encouraged staff to read and familiarise themselves with the guidance. Whilst further bespoke training can be arranged in house, this would entail lengthy training sessions and it is preferable for staff to familiarise themselves with the guidance in their own time.</p> <p>The Co-tutor system will provide continuity with change of advisers yearly. Staff were reminded to continue to cc co-tutor@qmul.ac.uk on all messages with advisees that need to go on the student file. A guide will be made available when advisee allocation is sent.</p> <p><u>Timetable for this term</u></p>		

	<p>The School has timetabled online welcome meetings for advisees in the first few weeks held in groups of 10/12 and the main goal is to meet advisees and help (re) socialise students.</p> <p>At approximately week 6-8, there will be more standard advising meetings required. An online sign up process is being worked on to help schedule these.</p> <p>Sarah Louise has a separate agenda for foundation. Foundation year advisers follow Sarah Louise. They will be registered on co-tutor but if not they don't need it.</p> <p>TP questioned how advising, coupled with reference writing will be achieved in the new proposed structure. Students will now have 3 people to request references from. Staff can use co-tutor to log and view notes. It was noted that advisers are unable to refuse to write a reference. Advisees may ask their adviser for one reference but are then able to request further references elsewhere.</p>		
<p>6. Research Impact</p>	<p>Luke Cridland (LC), Faculty Impact Engagement Officer, joined the meeting to discuss Research Impact in Maths.</p> <p>LC explained impact includes:</p> <p>Culture & Society, Economy or Commerce, Health, Welfare or NHS, Policy, Environment, Services.</p> <p>Impact does <i>not</i> include:</p> <p>Patents, media interest, public engagement activities, collaborations, presentations or dissemination.</p> <p>Impact is important to research funding, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the QM strategy.</p> <p>LC outlined the support and advice available from the QM Impact Team which includes, drop-ins, 1-2-1 support for grant applications. Relationships have been built with external partners to evidence impact whilst raising the QM impact profile, internally and externally.</p> <p>Staff with queries were encouraged to contact LC at impact@qmul.ac.uk</p> <p>JM thanked to all Impact Case Study Holders for their contribution to the School's REF Return: DA, JG, LL, JVK and for support from EP, ML and school management.</p> <p>For the next REF, new impact case studies will be required. There will be approximately 9 attempts at generating impact case studies. Staff can find further information and examples of the Schools Impact Case Studies here: https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/mod/folder/view.php?id=673406</p>		

	<p>There is additional support for staff on an as-needed basis.</p> <p>LL was invited to present his Case Study. He explained the basis of his Case Study on 'User Intent Prediction' to the School. LL worked independently on his research for 2 years, and when impact was detected, LL received guidance from JM. The impact case was drafted with help from the Impact Team at Faculty level. LL expressed there was a high level of pressure from Faculty throughout the process.</p> <p>➤ ACTION: Due to time constraints, it was proposed that at the next School Meeting. SC to liaise with JM for next meeting agenda.</p>	SC	Jan 2022
7. Any other business	No other business was raised.		
8. Date of next meeting	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 10 January 2022		