

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

The minutes from meeting on Monday, June 6th, 2022

Time: 5:00 pm Beijing time

Location: NCU JP conference room 301

Staff Members present:

Professor Zhijun Luo Chair (NCU)

Professor Mark Maconochie (QM)

Ms. Yi Yang Vice Dean (NCU)

Ms. Jane Qu Administrator (QM)

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator (QM)

Mr. Robert Say Administrator (QM)

Ms. Edyta Kozłowska Administrator (QM)

Student Members Present:

Name	Class	NCU ID
Wang, Zhaowen	211	4217121008
Song, Qimin	212	4217121074
Qian, Xianzhe	214	4217121129
Zhang, Kexin	215	4217121199
Wang, Yilu	202	4217120037
Liang, Hanlin	203	4217120185
Liu, Yuxin	204	4217120077
Liang, Dingfa	191	4202118026
Lv, Zhaoru	195	4217119180
Yu, Zhengyi	196	4217119226

Part 1: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome

Prof Maconochie and Prof Luo welcomed committee members to the Nanchang JP SSLC meeting on June 6th, 2022. Prof Maconochie introduced Ms. Edyta Kozłowska from QM administration to everyone. Student representatives introduced themselves to the committee.

2. Brief updates on the minutes from the previous meeting, held November 18th, 2021

The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting, held on November 18th, 2021, as an accurate record of proceedings, no questions were raised.

Part 2: Programme Delivery and other Matters raised

Student representatives reported the following issues related to learning and teaching matters:

Year 2, Ms. Liu, Yuxin

Q1. Ms. Liu, Yuxin raised a question on invigilation policy, she suggests that the policy should make things flexible for students in emergency cases during the exam, e.g. bathroom break emergency, taking of medicines etc. The current policy does not allow students to use the toilet which is bit not human-centered.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that QM used to allow students to go to the toilets, but unfortunately this was being abused by students using this as a mechanism for cheating while doing so. In addition, as this required one invigilator to accompany the student, the consistent and repeated toilet breaks compromised exam security in the examination classroom. In acute cases or by prior arrangement, students can take medicine during the exam by alerting the invigilator team, or in emergency be free to see a doctor immediately if really needed.

Prof Luo also confirmed that a few students were caught cheating while going to the toilet. He confirmed that if students have acute cases during the exams and cannot sit for the exams, they can leave the exams and submit ECs, but that will need doctors' certification and the EC committee will subsequently be asked to consider each case.

Year 2, Ms. Wang, Yilu

Q2, Ms. Wang, Yilu raised a concern on practical knowledge of SNU208 being taught in class 123 and 456. (Note of explanation for archiving: Students were locked down in dorms for much of semester B and most practicals were postponed). Class 123 did not mention any practical knowledge about zebrafish whereas class 456 did. As result, students were confused as what was necessary. Students think such materials should be taught in class as listed on the syllabus. The lecturer for class 123 says if there are questions, students can raise during office hours. However, if students could not make it to office hours, they would miss this part of knowledge.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that he would take the question back to the lecturers to confirm that all material required for the examination was covered. If zebrafish development is the students' main concern, he is confident on both lecturers' knowledge on this topic. The minor difference in delivery will have been brought on by the uncertainty of whether practicals would be feasible. Mark will have a quick chat with both lecturers to make sure important knowledge is delivered consistently and will get back to students to confirm.

Q3. Ms. Wang also said due to lockdown, students are not able to go to actual practical, so the lecturers asked them to look at the pictures and videos instead, which is hard for students to understand.

Prof Luo mentioned that the 3 in-person physical practical will be made up after exam, in the summer term. If someone does not go to a practical, they will receive zero point for this part by NCU even though the marks have been given to the students by QM lecturers. Mark confirms that the practical is very expensive to lay on for students and is important for medical students to go to as part of their education. The coursework during the semester was expected to have been carried out regardless as advised and clearly laid out on QMPlus.

Year 2, Ms. Liang Hanlin

Q4, Ms. Liang, Hanlin raised a question on Mentimeter questions for module SNU208 during office hours. She suggests for lecturers to provide more questions for student to understand what they have been taught; currently only 1 or 2 questions on Mentimeter are related to the content covered in office hours.

Prof Maconochie explains that firstly QM have different lecturers using different strategies during office hours, some lecturers just use Mentimeter to get students to feel comfortable as an “ice breaker” to make students feel comfortable and encourage them to engage. Office hours are not timetabled as simply daily carrying out practice questions or tests. It is not a place for staff to ask you questions, but rather and importantly these are designed for students ask staff questions on their module. We appreciate and note that students want more questions during office hours, but it is up to the lecturing staff to decide what questions they would ask students, the amount and how it best suits their teaching session to encourage student engagement. This situation over the last 2 years is very different from when we teach face to face, where you will see lecturing staff asking student questions verbally as well as using clicker questions to make sure students understand the main concepts every 20 or 30 minutes during the lecture. Indeed some of the clicker questions are represented on Mentimeter. He does understand the students desire to have more questions, and will pass this on to lecturers to consider within their own educational design for office hour.

Year 3, Mr. Yu, Zhengyi

Q5, Mr. Yu, Zhenyi raised a question on examination for the SNU301 presentation. He raised a concern about whether marks would be impacted by students' answers to the questions examiner asked after students'

presentations, because students were questioned at different levels by different examiners.

Prof Maconochie pointed out that questions may represent the level of the presentation given. Students should not worry about whether their question was perceived as easy or difficult, as the level of the question is not what is marked, but rather their attempted answer. Remember in every project presentation you will be answering many questions during presentations, that is just because examiners need to check if students really understand what they did, and also to see that students are not just simply memorizing their presentation.

Q6, Mr. Yu says some examiners' questions did not reflect the project itself.

Prof Maconochie explains that this could be the examiner not understanding the project presentation. He suspects the examiner should be able to ask relevant questions if the presentation is delivered properly, and he thinks students might misjudge the way examiners ask questions. Examiners need to make sure there is understanding of why you did what you did in the project, and were not simply carrying out instructions without thought. But he will raise this to the whole team and make sure examiners are aware that students have this concern, but again staff do have their own style of asking questions. This should not impact on their mark. (Note added after SSLC: students are reminded that presentations are examined by two examiners who discuss each presentation and arrive at a consensus mark).

Prof Luo commented that even if examiners ask difficult questions, it does not mean they would give you low marks, they just want to test the scope of your knowledge.

Q7, Mr. Yu also raised a concern on the level of feedback from SNU301 project supervisors, e.g. Mario giving very short feedback for draft final report students submitted (one or two sentences), compared to some supervisors who provided long comments, seems not fair to students.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that what he needs to know is which lecturers' feedback had not met students' expectation, and he can talk to Mario to give good feedback. He also will remind staff generally to give good feedback. If students could let us know which lecturers are not giving sufficient feedback, he can look into this and approach the individual lecturers. He agrees that feedback is important to students.

Q8, Mr. Yu raised a question on the new SNU310 module, taught by Richard and Lilah. His main concern is that lecture progress is too slow, Lilah only covers a dozen slides in 2 hours. because they are allowed student interaction during the lectures, with both of them present in the same lecture. The lectures became more like office hours.

Prof Maconochie is surprised to hear this as a problem. He explained that since the module is brand new with new material, we were concerned that if the

lecture went too fast with so much unseen material, this could overwhelm students in their learning. He had asked the two lecturers to make sure both were available to deliver this new module, because he thought it's a good idea to have second lecturer present to help interaction with students and ensure learning is happening. In this way if students do not engage with the brand new material, we will try to find a way to improve engagement. This has been a pilot to see if this would work, but will of course not be the delivery approach when we return to in-person teaching.

Q9, Mr. Yu says rest of students don't care about it being interactive, just want lecture content.

Prof Maconochie asked the student if they think interactions during class is time wasting or actually can be stimulating. He disagrees that interaction is unimportant to the class. We have other years' students who want interaction, and also reports that in some years, few students go to office hours. This is a pilot we are running in class to stimulate engagement. We understand that it can perhaps feel a little slow. Open to suggestions on how it might be improved.

Year 3, Mr. Liang, Dingfa

Q10, Mr. Liang, Dingfa raised a concern on the Surgery and Diagnostic module. He says the assignments' contents are different between class 123 and 456, e.g. Class 456 just needs to submit online coursework while class 123 needs to record a video. Exams are also different which is unfair to the students.

Prof Luo explained the reason to add the teaching of this module in 3rd year, and comments on practicals in general surgery. Practical are probably different between different hospitals, some portion of marks are not same from different hospitals, but the ratio should not be significantly different, we can tell hospitals final mark should not be very different. We can tell them to be consistent in marking.

Q11, Mr. Liang also reported an issue on the student managed library, they complained that staff recently just broke the library lock to enter the library without advance notice, and students are not happy about this. Students wonder if the space can be respected by staff in non-emergency situations. Also, there are a lot of valuable books stored in the room, and it's best to have someone that manages the room who is familiar with the books to be there.

Prof Luo mentioned that next year the university would consider to give the school more space. If that is happens he plans to move the library to the first floor of the Administration building so as to avoid this issue. Students mentioned that currently students pay 100 yuan refundable deposit to borrow a book. Prof Luo comments that if students can use a student card to swipe into the library and borrow books that would be ideal. Prof Luo promise he will raise these questions to Nanchang university and we will explore to improve library access.

Year 3, Ms. Lyv, Zhaoru

Q12, Ms. Lv, zhaoru gave a suggestion on feedback for projects. Some students received feedback from Mario but don't understand the point made e.g. improve presentation. She suggests that the feedback needs to have more specific points to make it clear to students on how to improve.

Prof Maconochie explained that the lecturer is likely looking to find the right balance of feedback that does not raise quality control issues. Some supervisors like to provide very detailed feedback, but this could be a concern for external examiners when looking over the project reports. Remember the reports should be the students' writing not supervisor's writing! However, he does agree with the student's general points that feedback should be clear, and involve what needs to improve, identify the problem, and how to improve – but without doing this for the student. This will be fed back to the JP team.

Q13, Ms.Lv also questioned Development Biology and Cell Signalling lectures, the student reports that the lecturer doesn't have enough text in the slides and only explains things verbally in class. This created some difficulties for some students since the either don't have good listening skills to catch every word said in the class, and also don't have enough time to listen to recordings. They wonder if it is possible to add more text in the slides?

Prof Maconochie mentioned that he has observed every class this semester. For the module of Y3 development biology (and also Y2 developmental biology) this is a subject that students either find easy or difficult. It is a subject that requires lots of pictures, animations and videos to help explain. He does agree that more keywords and bullet points in the graphic slides will help the students understand and focus on the major points made and will pass this message on to the lecturers.

Q14, Ms. Lv suggests that SNU207 (Basic Immunology) needs to add more words in slides. Students found for some lectures, there were too many pictures and too little text in slides.

Prof Maconochie commented again that more pictures and graphics is great, but he agrees that slides do need keywords. He will pass this on to the lecturer and will report back in next SSLC meeting.

Year 1, Mr. Song, Qiming

Q15, Mr. Song, Qiming reported that some students feel there is too much content in modules, He wonders if lecturers can pinpoint some main points so the students can focus on these parts.

Prof Maconochie stated that as you learn you need to revise and not leave to the last minute. But first you must focus on really understanding the contents

as delivered. If you understand, then it is much easier to recall. We don't want students to simply memorise things as that does not show your understanding. However we do realise that in the medical curriculum there is memorization needed. Regarding volume of material. For medical students, regardless of where you are in the world, you will encounter a lot of content that you will need to digest and understand as it is listed on the medical syllabus. While we provide the content, we also provide lots of opportunities for you to learn and engage in the material deeply with support from staff. It will show that if you do not truly understand the content e.g. you may face problems getting licensed. We do understand students' frustration, but this is typical of every medical program. If we cut the content further, then you could have difficulties later on in passing the licence exams.

Q16, Mr. Song also reported that each module provided previous exam papers to help students in revising, and students wonder if they can be provided more examples of previous exam papers with answers.

Prof Maconochie said that we do provide some past papers, but do not give you model answers as you may just simply memorize them which is not good. You simply cannot and are not encouraged to memorise answers to the questions that have been asked in the past. Furthermore, different lecturers offer different ways to help you in exams, e.g in my module, we run exam workshops to go through answers of a past exam once you have had the opportunity to have an attempt. However for all modules, if you can not answer a question on the past paper(s) on your module website, why not take your answers to an office hour and I am sure the lecturer will be very happy to help you.

Year 1, Ms. Wang, Zhaowen

Q17, Ms. Wang, Zhaowen hopes there can be questions and exercise for each lecture, so students can review the materials efficiently.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that when we do face to face teaching, students are offered at least 2 or 3 questions on each lecture by answering MCQs in class, and lecturers can see if students understand the content being taught. Since we are in the UK currently, we cannot run this kind of interactive exercise to engage all students as electronic devices are not allowed in class, but when we are back to normal face to face teaching, you will be able to experience this level of questioning. In terms of reviewing each lecture with a series of questions, we don't have time to do a separate test for every lecture. This is also not a good way to teach because we teach you understanding and scientific knowledge, not just help you to pass the exams. In the short term, and also if you want more questions, I suggest that if you look at the recommended textbooks, for modules you will likely find each chapter has more question and answers. This might be at least something you and your fellow students could do before we return to teaching in person. I will take these comments back to your lecturers, but not simply just give you more exercises instead to be aware you would like more practice. If you talk to more senior students, you will find this becomes less of a problem.

Year 1 , Mr. Qian,Xianzhe

Q18, Mr. Qian, Xianzhe reported that students have office hours after each class that help students, and students wonder if we can put all the questions or exercises and answers together, this way it would help students a lot

Prof Maconochie comments this is an interesting question. What he would say first is that in office hours, students need to make sure they understand the lecture content. There is a big difference between high school and university education. In university, education is directed way beyond just training you to pass exams. University provides you not only with the opportunity to fully understand knowledge but also to find your own limit of ability and motivation of in depth understanding. During office hours, we take all levels of understanding into account. If students don't understand any explanations given in office hour, please just write this down and ask again in the office hour. Then the lecturer can offer an alternative explanation to help you understand.

Year 1 , Ms. Wang kexin,

Q19, Ms. Wang, Kexin is wondering if QM can open QMplus during summer break so students can get access earlier to prepare studies for next semester

Prof Maconochie clarified that the days lecture should be uploaded on the same day as it is given – both the PDF and the recording, so as to allow student review. This is the lecture you should review. But in addition, every module should have the entire slide deck from the previous year available as the module opens. But students do need to bear in mind that lectures do change every year, either in minor details or the occasional redrafting of one or more lectures. We provide the previous years lectures as we are aware students want the opportunity to translate before the lecture.

On the question of whether you can have access to QMplus during the entire summer break, probably not as the content needs to first be rolled over. However I will check with the admin team to see if possible to open in August, and we can then make the previous years lectures available.

Minutes submitted by Jane Qu