

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

Minutes from the meeting on Tuesday, 15th October 2024

Time: 5:30 pm (Beijing Time) GMT+7

Location: NCU JP Conference Room 310

Present from QMUL

Prof. Mark Maconochie Co-Director/Chair

Ms. Jane Qu Administrator

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator

Present from NCU Queen Mary School

Prof. Xiaojuan Hu Vice Dean Education

Ms. Yun He Vice Dean Administration

Student Members Presented:

Name	Cohort	Class	NCU ID	QM ID
Wu Wendi	2022	221	4217122018	221147816
Jiang Chenxin		221	4217122008	221147724
Pu Xinyue		223	4209121029	221148880
Zhang Jiatong		224	4217122133	221149005
Wang Yufei	2023	231	4217123039	231209362
Wu Xinyi		232	4217123054	231209487
Shu Xin		233	4217123114	231210184
Xu Yizhou		234	4217123137	231210634
Zhang Yixiao		236	4217123240	231211273
Wei Jiani		2024	241	8101124035
Tan Yينو	242		8101124057	241092082
Wang Xingchen	243		8101124108	241092598
Yang Canary	244		8101124161	241093126
You Siqi	245		8101124198	241093481
Wu Yandong	246		8101124238	241093908

Part 1: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome

Prof Maconochie welcomed committee members to the Nanchang JP SSLC meeting held on 15th October 2024. Then the vice Deans of NCU Queen Mary School, Prof Hu Xiaojuan and Ms. He Yun, were invited to introduce themselves. Student representatives introduced themselves to the committee.

2. Brief updates on the minutes from the meeting on 24th April 2024

Prof Maconochie briefly updated on some matters and questions arising from the previous meeting.

Regarding the request from some Year 2 students who want to swap teachers in the middle of the semester, Prof Maconochie shared that he had raised it with London staff to consider if they prefer to switch classes halfway in one semester. However, the result is that they want to stick with one class because it allows them to build better and stronger relationships with 125 students.

However, Prof Maconochie reminded students that if one lecturer teaches the students in Year 1, he/she will be scheduled to teach the other half students for their next module. For example, Dr Choi teaches three classes for *Human Anatomy*, and he teaches the other three classes for the module *Basic and applied Pharmacology* in Year 2. Therefore, students should attend their own classroom to study, and they will have the chance to learn from all the teachers and will also therefore develop better skills at interpreting different accents.

Prof Maconochie raised one question with students whether the NCU 3D anatomy has been made available to them. Prof Hu confirmed that she checked with the head of the Anatomy Department of Medical School and the new system is already available for our students. Students just need to apply for the visits from the department or if unsure, to get help from the NCU office for these visits. Prof Maconochie encouraged students to be proactive and consult with Prof Hu if they are unclear about the procedure.

Prof Maconochie raised another question regarding the students journal club, to ask if it has been set up yet. If so, he is happy to arrange the occasional talk for them from a London lecturer. He expressed his own willingness to share with students his research if it is set up next semester.

Regarding the request to put enough notes on the slides and provide more

time on clicker questions, Prof Maconochie confirmed that he had passed on these to staff, and these would be improved.

The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting, held on 24th April 2024, as an accurate record of proceedings, and no questions were raised from the minutes.

Part 2: Programme Delivery and other Matters Raised

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

Year 3 Cohort of 2022

Q1. Ms. Pu Xinyue raised a request regarding PBL (problem-based learning) and essay writing in class. If it's convenient for lecturers to set some PBL questions and essay writing related to exams in class, students can answer them in class or get feedback during office hours.

Prof Maconochie inquired if students already had the Y3 workshop and past exam papers from QMplus. Students confirmed that they have had them, but they think that's not enough for them to practice and prepare for the exam.

Prof Maconochie stated that he doesn't want students just to do exam practice in class, and he emphasized the importance of utilizing office hours to help overcome different individual learning needs. He encourages students to bring the answered attempts of questions from past exam papers and essays to office hour to have an interactive discussion with lecturers and then get feedback they can then work with. He also shared that he was disappointed that he saw only one student come to Dr Mario's office hour. Dr Mario is very encouraging and helpful, and all Queen Mary lecturers are eager to help students. Further he stated that he's not saying they won't provide more essay titles for example, but strongly suggested students use up everything they've already provided by lecturers. Be brave and active to communicate with our lecturers to help you with your studies.

Prof Maconochie declined a student's request regarding in answering questions immediately after class, as the timetable is full, and students have other classes to attend. Indeed, from previous SSLCs some students have complained they have a very short time to run from building to building to take another lecture, and this would make matters worse. Therefore, he finally reminded students that they need some time to first think deeply

about their questions and then they can get maximum help from office hour.

Q2. Ms. Zhang Jiatong raised a request regarding clicker questions. When lecturers are explaining the clicker questions, could they show the slides related to the options to help them better understand?

Prof Maconochie stated that the clicker questions are meant to be relatively simple and easy, and meant to stimulate reflection of what students have just learned. The purpose is to get students to concentrate on what they're being taught in the previous lecture or ongoing lecture. The contribution of clicker questions marks is very small for each module, but he does understand that students are worried about every single mark. However, the syllabus can't be covered, if lecturers start elaborating excessively about each question and just direct teaching for the clicker questions or the exams. It's not good educational practice if we just teach you to do well on the clicker questions and the exams.

To give students all the slides to get the right answers defeats the purpose of teaching as will prompt you to simply memorise these, which doesn't make sense. Therefore, Prof Maconochie declined this request.

Q3. Ms. Zhang Jiatong raised another request regarding the clicker questions from *SNU314 Pathology*. The questions are very difficult, so only a small portion of students can answer correctly in the time given. For those difficult questions, students hope they can have slides to explain.

Prof Maconochie will pass this request to Pathology lecturer, Prof Giulia. As he has mentioned before, the clicker questions should take around 30 seconds for students and teacher to read and another 30 seconds with the countdown to finish. He doesn't refuse this request but is not yet convinced that more time is needed. He will discuss this with Prof Giulia and will feedback from Prof Giulia as to whether she agrees it is reasonable to provide a slightly longer time for students to think about and finish the clicker questions in the time given.

Regarding this question, student representative Wu Wendi added that students want efficiently to review the clicker questions they did incorrectly, as there're too many slides that they need to locate the correct answers which are not highlighted.

Prof Maconochie confirmed with students that they've got the PDF of each lecture from QMplus to review, and he understands that medical study is very difficult for their first learning. He reiterated that the teaching

objective is not teaching students how to do well in a clicker question and not for passing the exams but is to teach an accredited syllabus to make sure you have the foundation knowledge, so you can go on to become doctors and researchers in the future. He is not convinced as students have already got all the material, PDFs and recordings, for their learning and reviewing. He will raise this to Prof Giulia and then give feedback to students.

Prof Hu suggested students can print the previous slides and take them to class to support their learning. If students have questions, they can take them to office hour for support from lecturers.

Q4. Mr. Wu Wendi raised a concern regarding the microphone in the lecture hall and the speaking pace of their lecturer. When Dr. Mario dos Reis is teaching, many students can't hear his voice clearly and he speaks too fast. It would be very helpful if he could speak a little bit slower to make it easier for us to understand.

Prof Maconochie responded that he had noticed the issue of the microphone in the lecture hall, as he just visited there a few hours ago. He initially determined that part of the issue may be with a problem of the AV system, and he will be looking into the defective speaker tomorrow and try to help solve this issue promptly.

Regarding the speaking pace of Dr Mario, Prof Maconochie encourages students to give this feedback to their lecturer directly and politely. He believes all the lectures will not take it personally, because they know you're not native speakers. Students just need to continue to feedback with Dr Mario that you have this trouble, and then he will moderate his pace in class. Not only for Dr Mario, Prof Maconochie and Dr Aravindan also have had the same kind of requests from students to suggest them to moderate the pace in teaching.

Prof Hu shared that Dean Luo, Vice Dean He and herself have the invigilation duty every semester to observe both NCU and QMUL lectures, to check students' attendance and how students react in classes. Therefore, if students let her know they need help, she'd like to listen and provide feedback about any lecturer's speaking pace from the point of view of a non-native speaker.

Q5. Mr. Wu Wendi raised the last request regarding the timing of Year 3 morning classes, if it's possible to move the morning lecture from 8 am to 9 am.

Prof Maconochie declined this request and mentioned this question had previously been raised just in the last SSLC meeting. He explained in detail that if the morning lecture begins one hour later, then there will be very limited time for lunch break, no time for dinner and possibly also late after they finish evening classes. Thus, one hour delay will have a knock-on effect and encroach on time available for other lectures and students' daily routine as well. Furthermore, he reminded students that for regular medical students, NCU lectures start from 7:50am, which means 8am is a reasonable start for our lectures. Indeed our students get a 10-minute lie in.

Q6. Ms. Jiang Chenxin raised an issue regarding some websites of medical resource recommended by lecturers are blocked in China. Therefore, could they provide some resources from those websites by PDF or recommend some websites accessible in China.

Prof Maconochie expressed sympathy for hearing that some websites recommended by lecturers are blocked and couldn't be used by students. We cannot help unblocking those websites, but he suggested and encouraged students to give feedback to their lecturers during office hour that resources they are directed to are unavailable to students. Students need to let their lecturers know what website doesn't work and what data couldn't be obtained and politely request for recommending some other similar websites for them to utilize. It just may take some time for lecturers to search and provide new resources for students, but they will do this for you if they are made aware.

Ms. Jiang Chenxin added that they'd like to have some assignments or small tasks set up by lecturers based on the websites they recommended.

Prof Maconochie acknowledged this idea and reiterated to students the importance of attending office hour to raise the question and get guidance from their lecturers directly.

Year 2 Cohort of 2023

Q7. Mr. Wang Yufei brought up a suggestion regarding the time constraint of clicker questions in Dr Choi's class. When clicker questions contain calculations, the time to solve them is too short, so they wish more time could be provided.

Prof Maconochie will discuss this question with Dr Choi whether the short time set up for clicker questions with calculation is due to some reasons. Students shared they're given only 15 seconds to answer calculation questions, and they prefer 60 seconds to be provided. This request will be discussed and then he will give feedback to students.

Q8. Mr. Xu Yizhou raised a concern regarding the teacher's voice in the lecture hall. The lecturer of *SNU209 Fundamentals of Neurobiology*, Dr Ivan's voice is too low to be heard, and he has a kind of accent, which is difficult for them to understand.

Prof Maconochie indicated that the microphone does have an issue in the lecture hall, as he noticed this when he went to the teaching building today. However, the exact reason hasn't been worked out at the moment, as there're many lectures in the room this week to find a space to run some tests. He reassures students he will work hard to find the issue in the next couple of days and then we can look to get the problem fixed. Students will have classes in room 1-404, where the AV system works well, and the voice is clear for all the students.

In terms of the lecturer's accent, Prof Maconochie highlighted that we all have different accents, and he understands it's difficult for Chinese students at the beginning of learning. However, remember you're going to be talking to people who speak English from lots of different countries and be exposed to different accents. He reminded students that you can also use the recordings for lecture review, and if you don't pick it up straight away for one point, you can listen to it again. Further, they also have a second lecturer, Dr. Guifen's recording on QMplus to choose and listen to if they want. Students are encouraged to give feedback to their lecturer politely and immediately in class to let them slow down and help them to better understand.

Q9. Ms. Zhang Yixiao raised a concern regarding clicker questions of *SNU212 Basic and applied Pharmacology*. After they answered the questions, their lecturer skipped to the next part without explanation.

Prof Maconochie explained that in human cell, if lecturers receive the result that 80% of students get the clicker questions correctly, then the other 20% students should review and look through the knowledge after class or get help from lecturers during office hour. A simple majority of correct answers indicate most students have understood. However, if there are a significant majority of wrong answers, lecturers should be explaining why. Prof Huang Guojun has many years of teaching

experience for this module and the reason why he not going through incorrect answers may rely on our remote teaching strategy when he was co-teaching with Dr Choi during the pandemic time. Dr Choi was mainly in charge of the clicker questions on-line, so Prof Huang didn't get used to using clicker questions in his teaching. He will be gently reminded that students would like to have a brief explanation of the clicker questions in class if there are any significant numbers of wrong answers.

Prof Hu will pass on the message to Prof Huang and then give feedback to students.

Q10. Ms. Wu Xinyi raised a concern regarding NCU attendance software. The NCU study committee has reported that the AI attendance check is quite troublesome, and the error rate is very high, with even half of the students being incorrectly judged as absent. Then students have to individually go through the photo to prove their attendance. The daily check is considered a bit bothersome, so there is a suggestion to change it to a spot check, such as checking only one day a week.

Prof Hu explained that the AI attendance system is just beginning to be used and it's still a work in process, so it does have some issues for getting accurate results. One reason for the high error rate is that many students didn't upload their accurate profile and recent photos, so the machine couldn't recognize their faces and match their information. Therefore, students don't need to worry about it as the system is still in development. At this stage, they will not use it as the real attendance until the whole system is working well. If students have any issues, they're welcome to NCU office to get it solved.

Q11. Ms. Wu Xinyi raised a suggestion regarding the Summer School in London. In addition to having classes like ACS, may the UK summer camp add some British campus activities to make students feel the campus atmosphere.

Prof Maconochie took students' point about their expectations towards the upcoming summer school, and he shared with students that besides the study of academic skills and clinical skills, Summer School in London also has visits to Cambridge, to some research labs, the city tours around London etc. We hope students can have fun and enjoy their time there. This year there were about 150 students attending it and it used to be around 200 students attending before the pandemic. He pointed out that it's not compulsory for students to attend the summer school and some students chose other camps to learn and practice during the break.

Prof Maconochie introduced Dr. Irene, the academic leader of academic and clinical skills, who also manages the academic study of the Summer School. She will be very happy and welcoming for students to feed back and forward to her ideas about the activities they would like to attend in London. Students can talk to her during office hours when she is teaching in Nanchang or email any time.

Also, Prof Maconochie mentioned Mr. Robert, the administrator based in London, who will come to Nanchang next month. During the time of his stay, he will organize a quick meeting with students to listen to and collect your feelings and ideas about the summer school.

Mr. Wu Wendi, the Year 3 student representative, added that Dr. Irene organized meetings with them when they were going to finish Summer School in London this year. They had a very meaningful discussion and Dr Irene promised she would make the next summer vacation much more interesting.

Q12. Ms. Shu Xin raised concern regarding the clicker results. Some teachers are not very familiar with the use of clickers, so students' answers can't be received.

Prof Maconochie acknowledges this issue with clickers and receivers, adding that some clicker receivers lecturers had used were found last year, that didn't work when they restarted to have the face-to-face teaching. Now the issue has largely been solved. Dr. Glenn was raised. He is a new lecturer, and he did have some trouble when he first taught in Nanchang last summer. All new lecturers have some training for clickers before they visit Nanchang and Prof Maconochie reassured students that you don't lose any marks as if there are issues with receivers, we exclude marks until they work normally.

Prof Maconochie also shared that Dr. Aravindan flagged the issue with his receiver earlier last week. The reason is that the clicker company had basically launched a new version of the clicker software, and it has caused some communication corruption on PowerPoint. Now this issue has been sorted and it's working fine now.

Q13. Ms. Shu Xin raised another request regarding the social practice activities organized by NCU. The other colleges have a lot of such activities, but our college seems to have none, so they hope the school can organize some for them to join.

Prof Maconochie questioned if year 2 students have free time to join those activities, because medical students have to study a lot more than other regular major students, and also reminded students they just requested to move morning classes a bit later. Students replied that they want to attend such kind of activities when they're free during summer break and these activities could help them gain more credits from NCU.

Vice Dean He said the request will be taken into consideration and they will give feedback to students.

Year 1 Cohort of 2024

Q14. Ms. Wei Jiani raised a problem regarding the QMUL library. The website of QMUL Library is not working well. When she attempted to download an essay, she could not access it successfully.

Prof Maconochie acknowledged that occasionally QMUL shuts down the QMPlus and library websites for maintenance, so students couldn't access it. He couldn't provide the solution immediately, so he invites this student to the office this week to go through the website. After he finds out the problem, he will help them to solve it out.

Q15. Ms. Wei Jiani raised a request for access to the medical study resources on Osmosis website for their academic study and learning.

Prof Maconochie shared that he's really delighted to hear that students think Osmosis is very useful for their study, and he believes our students should all be able to register freely, as QM has spent a lot of money to bring osmosis to students and bought the licence for our students to access this. He will pass this message to Prof Giulia that students have strong positive feedback about this medical platform and have a discussion with her about the further cooperation. QM has a three-year contract with the company Osmosis, and this year is the last year. He will also get feedback from all teaching staff to see if it's worth renewing the contract with Osmosis, or if there're other better resources websites for students to utilize. Returning to the initial issue raised, Prof Mark will further investigate access, and feedback will be given to students after he gets more information.

Q16. Ms. Tan Yinuo expressed concern regarding the scores of clicker questions. She shared that the slides of Human Cell uploaded on QMplus have no clicker questions, but some students bought copies of previous years course with both clicker questions and answers in the print shop on campus. This student is concerned that it leads to a problem to show the high score in almost every question but can't present the real result.

Prof Maconochie pointed out that the clicker questions will be changed and updated from time to time, and the questions students bought from the print shop are very old ones. He shows sympathy for those students who aren't thinking, just cheating themselves and not really helping themselves in the long term as they do not learn if they refer to outdated questions.

Also to remind again, the clicker questions only have a tiny mark as well. In Human Cell, Prof Maconochie shared that as he puts together this year's PDF for preview, there will be no clicker questions. He noted that the updated PFD of this module for this year's preview has already been updated with about 50 repetitive slides removed, and he and Dr Lilah are planning to make close to 100 excessive slides deletions to ensure the teaching will be finished within time and with adequate time to deliver in class. Prof Maconochie reiterated the importance of developing critical thinking and providing comprehensive answers rather than memorizing predetermined responses. Those students who aren't practicing in class, just getting clicker questions, will find this practice will not be good for them in the final exam when MCQs do play a bigger part in the module assessment.

Prof Maconochie appreciates the student's concern, and he will feed this back to other staff to consider this issue for their modules.

Q17. Ms. Tan Yinuo raised another question regarding the NCU module Human Anatomy. Compared with last year's timetable, they're confused why the lab classes of this module are all arranged on the whole Sunday instead of splitting them on weekdays, and the classes used to be taken for only half a day last year.

Prof Maconochie understands this request from students, as nobody really likes working on weekends. He pointed out that the current timetable is already quite packed, so some of the course sessions have to be planned on weekends. He has experience on working on the timetable for a few years, so he knows it's impossible and very difficult to satisfy all the students and staff. However, it's possible to try to come to a compromise.

Prof Hu asked if students don't want to take a full day of lab classes on weekends, whether they have time to take the classes on weekdays. Also, she needs to find out the reason for the schedule changes this year, and then to see if they have other options to adjust it. If it's not possible, she will also give an explanation to students. She noted that the labs of anatomy are shared with other NCU medical students, and a lot of things need to be considered for the timetable arrangements.

Prof Hu will give feedback to students after she figures out with responses from the anatomy department.

Q18. Mr. Wu Yandong raised a question regarding the final exam of *Human Cell*. They'd like to know if there're some diagrams or drawings, and how to do the revision of this part for the exam.

Prof Maconochie noted that there will be figures given to students in the exam, and if we get you to draw something, it would be quite simple. It won't be very complex, because we know you are a medical student, not artists or animators. For instance, instead of memorizing chemical structures, there may be a chemical structure given for you. You may need to do diagrams with arrows, which we think may be easier with your level of English. When you get to year 3, you will do long essays, but you're just in year 1 now. Prof Maconochie confirmed that there'll be diagrams in the exam for students to fill in, and there may be a request for them to do a simple drawing. However, students don't need to worry, because it will not be difficult as long as you understand the content of the course!

Q19. Ms. Yang Canyu raised a request regarding the content of PPT. Except slides, could lecturers add some more interesting content and list important parts to help them better prepare for exam.

Prof Maconochie declined this request to add more content into slides, because there's already too much. As he just explained they're cutting down the number of slides because there is already so much to learn. Then by checking again with the student representatives, he understands that they just want to know what's going to come in exam and what they need to learn for revision.

Prof Maconochie stated as he and Dr. Lilah said to you at the very start, you need to spend the time now during the teaching of any module, looking to understand the material that they are trying to explain to you. You will refer to the textbooks and come along to office hour to help with your

understanding. During teaching it is vital to focus on grasping concepts rather than simply memorizing words. The first process is to understand. Understanding what you learned is crucial for achieving a higher mark in exams.

For Human Cell, he points out that the bottom line on slides is quite important as well, with everything in between explaining how you go from the title to the bottom line. He suggested and reiterated: look in the book, review your lectures and then bring your questions to office hour.

Prof Hu added that students need to learn how to process all the information and how to make yourself more efficient in study. She suggested students try to link the small pieces of knowledge together and build their own network and own study method. After you have your own knowledge network, it's easier for you to grab and fill in all the things you learned.

Q20. Ms. You Siqi raised a request for the teaching objectives for the next class, because they're not familiar with the knowledge and want to better preview.

Prof Maconochie declined this request, as he confirmed with students that they already have access to last year's PDF files on QMplus, which also include the objective slides for the next class.

Ms. You Siqi added that they'd like to know how many slides they need to preview beforehand.

Prof Maconochie explained to students that for Human Cell they can reckon about 45 slides for 2 hours session, and they also can count how many slides they've already completed in the last 7 days teaching. The slides can then be divided by numbers of days for before lecture preview.

Q21. Ms. Wang Xingchen raised a question regarding the assignment of lab courses, that some of the key points in the assignment paper (the schedule) are not corresponded tightly enough with what the courses teaches in theory, so may we have some time before the class to look through the paper?

Prof Maconochie expressed that he fully understands it's very hard for year 1 students in the first semester, and the difficulty is very dependent on your individual level of English. He recognized that students have different levels of understanding and listening skills. Therefore, students have

already been given a full 3 hours between getting the practical sheet and completing the experiments, with schedules given at the start deliberately arranged as you have to learn to prioritize your responsiveness. There is always going to be a stage where you're going to cut the umbilical cord between having your translator and actually taking that step of making guesses by using the key words you recognise.

Students are advised to use what they learned from Dr Irene's academic skills to look for key words, and to practice teamwork skills in understanding the schedule and consulting the demonstrators, instead of simply being given more time for translation of the assignment. We're forcing you to work on your own feet. It's a long run over the JP years, but starting now will make you be much more successful on the QMUL degree. Prof Maconochie declined this request.

Q22. Ms. Wang Xingchen raised the last question regarding QM student ID card, when they could receive the card.

Ms. Jane Qu will inform all the students on QQ group as soon as the office receives the QM ID cards from London.

Finally, Prof Maconochie expressed gratitude to all the students who attended the meeting, thanked them for all their suggestions and requests and these will be passed on to staff for action and discussion.