

# **Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP**

Minutes from the meeting on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Time:** 5:10PM Beijing time

Location: NCU JP Conference Room 310

## **Staff Members Present:**

Professor Mark Maconochie (QM)

Ms. Jane Qu Administrator Secretary (QM)

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator (QM)

Professor Zhijun Luo (NCU)

Ms. Yun He Vice Dean (NCU)

Ms. Xiaojuan Hu Vice Dean (NCU)

## **Student Members Present:**

Name	Class	NCU ID	QM ID
Wei, Jiani	241	8101124035	241091867
Wang, Xingchen	242	8101124108	241092598
Tan, Yinuo	243	8101124057	241092082
Yang, Canyu	244	8101124161	241093126
You, Siqi	245	8101124198	241093481
Wu, Yandong	246	8101124238	241093908
Wu, Shuoyi	232	4217123054	231209487
Shu, Xin	233	4217123114	231210184
Zhang, Yixiao	236	4217123240	231211273
Xu, Yizhou	234	4217123137	231210634
Wu, Wendi	221	4217122018	221147816
Pu, Xinyue	223	4209121029	221148880
Su, Lechen	223	4217122123	221148879
Zhang, Jiatong	224	4217122133	221149005

An apology was received from student representative Wang, Yufei

## **Part 1: Preliminary Items**

### **1. Welcome**

Prof Maconochie and Prof Luo welcomed committee members to the Nanchang JP SSLC meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Prof Maconochie introduced himself to all the student representatives present. He also introduced all the other staff members who attended the meeting

Prof Maconochie received confirmation from all present that the minutes were an accurate and reasonable record of what was discussed at the previous meeting held in semester A.

Professor Maconochie provided a few updates following on from questions raised during the previous meeting.

1, Clicker questions – timing. There was a concern raised about the countdown timer during occasions in Giulia's classes. Giulia has confirmed that the countdown timer does not begin until she has finished reading the question. You will have up to one minute to respond, but no more. This should help mitigate any issues related to time constraints, give sufficient time to respond and also not detract from meeting the details of contents that needs to be delivered during the lecture.

2, On answers not covered in the slides: As mentioned before, students may need to conduct additional research, including reviewing resources from other courses and not just the slides presented in the lecture. If you are unable to find the answers in the provided PDFs, please attend office hours. Giulia is available and happy to assist you.

3, Concerning Choi and clicker question timing: There were concerns raised about time limits for answering questions. He clarified that students generally will have a minimum of 60 seconds, with most questions allowing up to 90 seconds to answer depending on complexity. However, for simpler questions, the time may be shorter. He is mindful of the need to ensure sufficient time for all participants.

4, Queen Mary Library online access: Students responded that online access is functioning properly now. Similarly osmosis is accessible and being used by Year 1 students.

## Year 3

**Q1, Ms. Pu, Xinyue** raised concerns regarding the lack of timely feedback on their 301 project report drafts. Some students reported that supervisors did not provide feedback by the required deadline and, in some cases, failed to respond to emails. (Aravindan)

Prof Maconochie emphasized that it is unacceptable for students not to receive feedback if they meet the deadlines. To resolve this, he requested that students provide the names of the advisors involved so that the issue can be raised directly with the staff concerned to understand better the issues and emphasise the importance of providing timely feedback.

Additionally, discussion was had concerning the quality of feedback, stating that it should be constructive and actionable. While excessive or insufficient feedback can be problematic, students should receive comments that help students improve their work. He also mentioned that if students receive unhelpful feedback, they should report it to the module organiser, so this can be reviewed. Ultimately, the goal is to improve the process and ensure timely and valuable feedback for all students.

**Q2, Mr. Wu, Wendi** raised a concern about the scheduling of the SNU301 presentations, which is set to occur between the QM and NCU final exams. He explained that students feel they don't have enough time to adequately prepare for all three tasks.

Prof Maconochie acknowledged the difficulty of balancing multiple deadlines but emphasized that the main effort required for preparing for the presentation should be completed by the time students submit their slides to QMplus, which is scheduled well before the exams. He advised students to treat the slide submission as the effective deadline for presentation preparation, allowing them to focus on their exams thereafter. He also noted that the intense workload is a common challenge in medical education globally due to the nature of the accredited curriculum.

**Q3, The student raised** another question about the 301 project and submission deadlines and receiving feedback. Some students still email their advisors after the deadline, seeking more detailed feedback as the first feedback is unclear.

Prof Maconochie emphasized the importance of balance in giving feedback from staff ; to give sufficient feedback for students to work on, but not rewriting student reports as this is their work that is being examined. He noted that this challenge for staff extends across the entire school in London as well. Training sessions are provided to staff in the School.

He acknowledged that students will always seek more feedback, but ultimately, it is their responsibility to improve their work, not the project advisors.

He outlined that feedback varies in depth depending on the status of the draft, for example a major issue might be presenting raw data without analysis, while a minor one could be a spelling error. He also stressed the importance of adhering to scientific writing conventions, even while accommodating individual writing styles.

He noted that deadlines are in place to ensure timely feedback and revision opportunities, and we guarantee actionable feedback if the deadlines are met by students. Expecting rapid feedback after submitting work two weeks late is unreasonable. Finally, he advised students to raise any concerns about inadequate feedback early with the module leader.

**Q4, Ms. Zhang, Jiatong** raised a concern about the significant differences in teaching styles between two professors teaching the same module. She strongly suggested assigning one professor to the first block of teaching and the other to the second block so all students experience both styles.

Prof. Maconochie noted that although the idea had been previously discussed at SSLC, the decision was ultimately left to the teaching staff to consider. He personally rotates between classes to expose all students to varied teaching methods on Human cell so that all students know who he is, but acknowledged the benefits raised by staff following discussion in maintaining one teacher for module teaching of the same class in building rapport with one group over time. He also emphasized that students cannot switch classes solely based on teaching style preferences, and all lectures are recorded to ensure accessibility so they can choose whichever teaching style for review. Prof. Maconochie recognized differing views among faculty on the balance between rotation and consistency. While open to further discussion, he pointed out logistical constraints, particularly the limited capacity that prevents students from following

popular instructors across teaching blocks.

Prof. Luo inquired about the teaching structure in London, specifically whether professors typically teach entire modules or only parts.

Prof. Maconochie responded that, in most cases, two to three professors share a module, making it uncommon for one to handle the entire course. However all classes are taught together in London as there are no constraints on class size unlike the JP as a requirement in order to meet MoE regulations

He also addressed student preferences for consistency in teaching staff. While some students value continuity with a single professor over several weeks, others prefer the diversity of multiple teaching styles. As views remain mixed, the matter will be revisited again at the academic committee and more generally amongst staff.

**Q5, Ms. Jiang Chenxin** raised concern regarding the lack of Wi-Fi connectivity in the Student Staff Center, noting that many students frequently study there using laptops. She suggested that campus Wi-Fi be installed to enhance convenience.

Ms. Yunhe responded that the university has already been alerted and is coordinating with the Internet Center, and Wi-Fi installation has either been completed or is scheduled for all campus buildings, particularly teaching facilities.

Prof Luo expressed uncertainty about whether students should be connecting to the NCU's network or using alternative 5G services to access Google.

A student noted inconsistent access to the NCU network, reporting that while some students are able to connect, others are not. Particular difficulties were mentioned when attempting to access platforms like Google.

Prof Luo reiterated that the campus network is available, although only around 3% of JP students are currently utilizing it. The university encourages wider adoption of the NCU network by JP students so as to support the case for continued improvements.

Professor Luo further highlighted the limitations of 4G/5G access, explaining that certain apps and websites may only function properly

through the campus Wi-Fi. He inquired when students would ideally like the connectivity issues resolved and expressed support for an immediate solution if possible.

**Q6,** In addition, a student raised concerns about the lack of self-study rooms in the dormitories. They pointed out that the North Campus library closes at 9:30 PM and the Student Center also shuts down thereafter, forcing students to return to their dormitories where distractions are more prevalent. It was noted that while some students attempt to use conference rooms in rehabilitation institutions, these are frequently occupied by meetings.

Prof Luo acknowledged the concern and referenced that certain programs, such as “Huang Kui,” receive special consideration from the university. He recognized the disparity in access and suggested that alternative arrangements be explored. One potential solution discussed was converting the second floor of a building into a dedicated study space beginning next semester, but the early closure would still remain an issue to meet students demands.

**Q7,** Another issue raised by a student concerned the recurring malfunction of projection of slides on the large dropdown screen in the lecture hall, which frequently turns off or flickers during classes.

Ms. Qu confirmed having received similar complaints and reported that maintenance had already been carried out the previous week. However, the issue appears to persist.

Prof Maconochie asked whether the issue was isolated or widespread among different lecturers.

Ms. Qu responded that the problem might stem from a hardware fault, possibly related to the HDMI cable or projection equipment. If the issue continues, we plan to replace the main cable but the scale of this repair can only occur during vacation periods.

Prof Maconochie asked if the problem could lie deeper, perhaps involving a faulty projector bulb or ceiling-mounted projector.

Ms. Qu confirmed that the bulb had previously (during the summer break last year) been replaced and general maintenance conducted but noted that further external support might be necessary. We will continue to monitor and address the issue.

## Year 2

**Q8, Ms. Zhang Yixiao** inquired whether students would be allowed to switch classes if they have difficulty understanding a teacher's accent or teaching style.

Prof Maconochie responded that different accents will always remain an ongoing concern for our JP students given their native language being Chinese. While students facing such challenges can make use of lecture recordings and supplementary materials to aid their understanding, class switching is not a viable solution, as it could lead to overcrowding in certain sessions and break MoE and NCU regulations.

The student asked if there could be more elaboration of points in lectures, particularly in Clinical Chemistry, where some students felt the lecturer Rosemary simply read off slides. This would help students follow along better.

Prof Maconochie acknowledged the feedback and promised to pass it on to the lecturer. The suggestion from students was to reduce reading directly from slides and focus more on explaining concepts.

**Q9,** The Student raised a concern about the Developmental Biology and Genetics slides. Students find the course hard to understand, and clearer structures in the slides could help them grasp complex concepts, particularly regarding signal molecules and complex pathways. (Manuela)

Prof Maconochie requested further clarification on the slides issue. It was agreed that additional text or visual cues could be added to enhance understanding. He also asked students to understand that some teachers, particularly new ones, are working hard to ensure that their teaching style meets the needs of our JP students . Student feedback would be passed to the relevant staff members.

**Q10, Mr Xu yizhou** proposed more preparation time for group presentations, as current timelines are insufficient for designing slides, scripting, and rehearsing and take too much time impacting on later coursework and revision for exams.

Prof Maconochie discussed the difficulty of adjusting the curriculum but expressed understanding, and suggested that instructors inform students

about presentation requirements early in the semester to allow better preparation. Further he would discuss if deadlines for presentation submission could be earlier in the course so as to reduce the impact later on revision time.

**Q11, Ms. Shu xin** voiced concerns about the 301 program, highlighting issues with supervisors not providing adequate support or selectively ignoring student requests. Some graduate students in PI labs are reported to offer incorrect guidance or delegate non-academic tasks like running errands. Prof Maconochie acknowledged these concerns, noting that they try to address them by first hearing both sides of the story. He further emphasized that the 301 program is meant to provide real research experience and not just focus on the completion of tasks.

Prof Maconochie and Prof Luo/Xiaojuan discussed supervisor/advisor expectations for 301 and 309 projects, stressing the importance of regular meetings between students and mentors. They clarified that supervisors should provide guidance and not ask students to perform non-academic tasks. They also addressed issues related to plagiarism and emphasized that students should not rely on external work outside the project period or from other lab members or take shortcuts.

**Q12, student** raised concerns about balancing strict class attendance with research commitments, especially as students enter their third year.

Prof Maconochie advised against overcommitting to extra research during the semester, suggesting that students should focus on their coursework to ensure a good GPA.

Prof Luo echoed this, highlighting that students should prioritize their academic performance, especially for postgraduate applications.

There will be plenty of time for intensive research after they receive a good degree.

**Q13,** The second question is about the 301 project for next semester. Students hope that the selection of Chinese supervisors could be based on a mutual choice mechanism, rather than solely on academic performance rankings. They want more freedom for students with mid-tier academic performance to choose supervisors, instead of just getting what's left after others have made their choices.

Prof. Maconochie noted that a similar issue was raised last year. While establishing early connections with reputable labs to gain additional research experience is a sensible strategy for JP students, continuing with the same lab for the 32-day project would be unfair to other students, who are randomly assigned supervisors. Therefore, this will not be permitted. Indeed in looking to target particular supervisors for a 301 project is unfair to other students and the PI which we aim to avoid. These concerns highlight the importance of maintaining scientific integrity beginning as a student.

Ultimately, the system is based on merit. While stronger students may gravitate toward research, all students must understand and are trained in the scientific method, even those not pursuing research careers. This skill is essential for tasks like evaluating clinical evidence for prescriptions for patients. We require a fair allocation system due to the limited number of available projects. Both 301 and 309 offer high-quality research experiences, 301 may foster more self reliance and independence, whereas 309 emphasizes teamwork, team building and interpersonal skills. The lab environment in both project types plays a significant role in what students take away. While the selection system isn't perfect, it's designed to balance fairness and opportunity.

Students eligible for 301 may still choose 309, which is acceptable. However, unless a more equitable system is proposed, the current structure will remain. Allowing students to switch between labs mid-course would disrupt academic continuity.

**Q14,** Regarding the UK summer program, some students have expressed dissatisfaction with attending daily classes after paying 40,000 RMB for a one-month stay. They suggested more meaningful alternatives to daily lectures.

Prof. Maconochie revealed that the program has been substantially restructured this year. Daily classes will continue under a summer camp format, but the previous academic skills sessions have been replaced in response to student feedback. The new curriculum also includes a weekly self-study day, and students may use other days as preferred. Additional excursions and activities have also been introduced based on prior suggestions. Nonetheless, if the program is not seen as valuable, we understand that if students do not wish to attend then it may not continue.

Its sustainability depends on perceived benefit and is a glorious opportunity to come and study in London and experience life in a different international city that offers many attractions.

Prof. Luo added that students will receive a scholarship and emphasized that 40,000 RMB is a relatively modest cost for a five-week overseas program. The focus remains must remain educational to obtain university backing, in line with the university's commitment to exposing students to diverse educational models.

### **Year 1**

**Q15, Mr. Wu Yandong** mentioned that some students are struggling to understand basic medical genetics due to the instructors' accents. A request is made to consider alternatives to authorized class recordings that still ensure academic success.

Prof. Maconochie replies that he understands their concern and particularly for year one students accents can be difficult. If there is one instructor whose accent is a bit harder to follow for some students, this is one of the reasons why we provide class recordings. If you are in the class that is more difficult to follow, you will actually benefit in the longer term as in later life in collaborating or communicating with researchers or practitioners, you will want to understand. He understands students may not believe that, but this helps build your listening skills.

The student mentioned that while one instructor speaks clearly, the other, despite making an effort, can be difficult to understand for some.

Prof. Maconochie acknowledged that both instructors are clear to him but he is a native English speaker, though he understands this may vary for learners. He emphasized that this is part of the academic experience. In research seminars, students and staff often rely more on slides and key points than on full comprehension of spoken content, which is a valuable real-world skill for their future professional life.

The student further explained that some classmates have to spend extra hours listening to recordings, while others do not.

Prof. Maconochie responded that this is not necessarily negative, as it can lead to a deeper understanding, though he recognizes the frustration it may cause.

The student suggested rotating instructors or switching sections every two weeks for those who struggle.

Prof. Maconochie considered this a valid point, noting similar feedback from Year 1 as we have heard from Year 3 students. However, he pointed out limitations, such as the Ministry of Education's restriction on student numbers being in the same lecture hall. He shared his experience of one teacher, him, teaching multiple repeated lectures daily in the past, which became overwhelming, and expressed a desire to avoid overburdening staff as this will undoubtedly affect teaching quality. He will raise the issue of teacher rotation again with staff.

**Q16, Mr. Wu Yandong** addressed concerns from students feeling stressed due to the academic and clinical skills workload, particularly regarding the amount of writing assignments, such as 100–300 word essays, which some find overwhelming. He suggested these assignments should be aligned with future job requirements but acknowledged the workload issue.

Prof. Maconochie responded by stressing that academic skills are crucial for improving students' writing, listening and study structuring abilities, with external examiners already noting improvement over recent time with the newly restructured academic skills curriculum. He reassured students that the workload will be reviewed, but emphasized that academic skills remains essential for future university work and career development needs. He emphasized not to treat academic skills as mere technical modules to pass, as it serves a deeper life-long professional purpose. He reminded students that he and all staff were once students too, understand the challenges and devise and deliver the curriculum to make learning more achievable and enjoyable. Prof. Maconochie acknowledges the stress students face but stresses the importance that academic skills should not be seen as a waste of time.

**Q17, Ms You Siqi** brings up a question regarding the possibility of arranging a mock exam that is more representative of the final exam.

Prof. Maconochie responds to the idea of mock exams by pointing out that universities goal is not teach students solely to pass exams as at High School. Instead, the goal is to teach students how to think critically and become more self-reliant independent learners. He recommends reviewing past exam papers available on QMPlus and seeking feedback during office hours. He also clarifies that providing mock exams would reduce the teaching time, mean the curriculum would have to be taught quicker with less explanation and more of the curriculum would remain uncovered. This would have a negative effect in the long term during and beyond the degree.

Prof. Maconochie concludes by stating that there are already resources available, like office hours, and advises against relying on mock exams. Prof Maconochie indicates that QM and NCU are looking at the curriculum content and design to see if there might be a better approach to address the licence exam performance and JP exam preparation needs.

**Q18, The student** asks whether revision sessions can be organized.

Prof. Maconochie confirms that most modules will have revision sessions close to the exam period.

**Q19, Ms Yang canyu** raises an issue about late uploads of lecture PDFs, particularly for genetics classes. She explained that PDFs are sometimes uploaded too late (e.g., at 8 PM after an 8 AM class), which makes it hard to prepare effectively.

Prof. Maconochie responds that the expectation is generally for PDFs to be uploaded within 2–3 hours of the lecture and acknowledges their concern. He notes the issue of different lecture timings and agrees to look into this, but cautions against using this as justification for delaying release of delivered lecture material.

**Q20, The student** also asks whether students can borrow a print version of the Human Anatomy textbook from the Queen Mary library, as some students prefer print books for research.

Prof. Maconochie suggests checking the JP library and queries if there is

a shortage or if books are all signed out of the JP library. If needed, more copies could be purchased, but it is too late for this academic year. He recommends identifying which students currently have the copies so others can share them in the meantime.

**Ms Qu** confirms that they have hard copies for each module

**Q21, Ms Yang Canyu** raised concerns about students having difficulty downloading Microsoft Office from the university platform, QMPlus, and suggested that some may not know how to proceed. They mentioned that some students might need guidance on downloading it.

Prof. Maconochie expressed uncertainty about how to help students download the software

**Ms Qu** offered to provide instructions on how to download the necessary software and students should contact the office.

**Q22, Ms Wang Xinchen** noted that students found the clinical skills lessons, particularly those related to practical tasks like taking blood pressure, very useful.

Prof. Maconochie acknowledged the importance of these skills. However first-year students are not expected to diagnose or treat patients, as they have only just begun to accrue the relevant medical knowledge; the detailed diagnosis they will be expected to achieve will develop the further their foundation knowledge develops.

Prof. Maconochie suggested that introducing more clinical skills sessions could be beneficial but noted that the curriculum is already very full and students already feel overburdened. Therefore, such changes will be considered but would take time and are difficult to implement quickly.

**Q23, Ms Tan yinuo** also mentioned a challenge with the Chinese anatomy class, which is not graded and does not earn credits. This lack of credit motivation led some students to lose interest, and some have been disrespectful when working with cadavers. Attendance was also reported to be low for some classes.

Prof. Maconochie commented on the importance of Chinese anatomy for the licence exam, but was disappointed in the attendance that was reported, particularly given the large investment in teaching and resources to make this module relevant to students. The difficulty in getting students to attend, especially when there are no grades attached to the course is disappointing.

Prof Luo suggested that using AI in teaching could help increase student engagement, as it could make lessons more interactive and challenging. However, Pro Luo emphasized that students often avoid attending non-credit classes and that the use of AI might be a way to address the issue.

QM and NCU will revisit as to what can be done to motivate students to attend these important classes.

**Q24, The student** raised the problem of students using phones to take photos of questions during lectures, particularly during genetics classes, and sending them online or to AI for answers.

Prof. Maconochie acknowledged the issue and indicated that accepted practice and expectations was that phones would be confiscated to prevent cheating during class. Phones remain prohibited from the teaching session

Prof. Maconochie noted that this was a form of academic misconduct and that it needed to be addressed.

Prof. Maconochie concluded the discussion by stressing the importance of maintaining academic integrity and ensuring that students are aware of the consequences of cheating.

**Ms Qu** raised a concern regarding low student attendance over the past two months, noting that multiple complaints had been received from teaching staff. They asked for the students' perspective on the possible causes of this issue.

Prof Luo attributed the attendance problem to technical difficulties, specifically the disruption of Wi-Fi on campus due to construction damage to cables. In particular the AI-based attendance monitoring system was no longer functioning properly as a result.

Prof. Maconochie thanked Prof Luo for this explanation and added that QM staff have been using clickers to track attendance manually. He confirmed that data from clickers will be provided to the Queen Mary School as an alternative method of attendance verification.

Prof Luo emphasized that, according to university regulations, students who are absent for more than 10 hours face penalties, including the possibility of probation. He reiterated that the Wi-Fi outage was caused by construction, but it is expected to be resolved soon.

Prof. Maconochie/Prof Luo jointly agreed that, once the data is available, it could be used to retrospectively verify attendance and that students should be informed of the seriousness of attendance requirements and the ongoing manual tracking system.

Ending the meeting, Prof. Maconochie reiterated that all student feedback would be taken seriously, and action would be taken where possible and thanked students for bringing their queries to staff's attention.

**Minutes submitted by Jane Qu**