**School of Mathematical Sciences**

**Undergraduate Student Voice Committee**
**15th February 2024**

**Draft Minutes**

**Staff members present:**

| Name | Role |
|---|---|
| Weini Huang (WH) | Reader/Director of Student Experience/Meeting Chair |
| Boris Khoruzhenko (BK) | Head of School |
| Shabnam Beheshti (SB) | Reader/Director of Education |
| Sebastian del Bano Rollin (SdBR) | Employability Lead |
| Maria Patsou (MP) | Education Services Administrator/Meeting Secretary |
| Sajida Rahman (SR) | Student Support Officer |
| James Soderman (JS) | Faculty Librarian-Science and Engineering |

**Student members present:**

| Name | Programme name and level |
|---|---|
| Ibtisam Musa (IM) | Mathematics and Statistics Year 2 |
| Daranfan Muralitharan (DM) | Mathematics and Statistics with Professional Placement Year 3 |
| Mehmet Melih Sahin (MMS) | Computer Science and Mathematics Year 2 |
| Buse Ozturk (BO) | Mathematics Year 1 |
| Satvika Mishra (SM) | Mathematics Year 2/Co-chair |
| Fatehdeep Singh (FS) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 2 |
| Mohammed Waleed Hussain Talukdar (MWHT) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 2 |
| Nasiha Khan (NK) | Mathematics Year 1 |

**Apologies for absence:**

| Name | Role or programme and level |
|---|---|
| Mark Walters (MW) | Reader/Interim Director of Education |
| Robert Johnson (RJ) | Senior Lecturer/Deputy Director of Education |
| Simon Rawstron (SR) | Education Services Manager |

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| Dale Breame (DB) | Education Services Officer |
| Bindiya Chongbang (BC) | Education Services Administrator |
| Jade Mills (JM) | Digital Learning Technical Adviser |
| Sonia Lassami (SL) | Careers Consultant |
| Elliott Welch (EW) | Faculty Student Engagement and Support Manager |
| Deanna Patel (DP) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 1 |
| Aruzhan Nussipzhan (AN) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 1 |
| Vidhi Sureka (VS) | Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 3 |

| Part 1 – Preliminary Items | |
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| **1(a)** | **Welcome and introduction for new members** |
| 2023.077 | The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. |
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| **1(b)** | **Apologies for Absence** |
| 2023.078 | The committee noted the apologies from members as recorded above. |
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| **1(c)** | **Minutes of the previous meeting** |
| 2023.079 | The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29.11.2023. |
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| **1(d)** | **Report on matters arising and actions taken** |
| 2023.080 | The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following:<br>2023.030a: This action is complete.<br>2023.056a: This action is complete.<br>2023.056b: This action is complete.<br>2023.056d: This action is complete.<br>2023.065: This action is complete. SB noted that it has been decided that is not practical to specify statistics or pin-point easy mistakes, however staff will direct students to worked examples.<br>2023.066a: This action is complete. The Buddy Scheme cannot be extended to Postgraduate students.<br>2023.066b: This action is complete.<br>2023.066d: This action is complete, however the day is now Thursday instead of Wednesday.<br>2023.067a: This action is complete.<br>2023.067b: This action is complete. The list has also been added to the QMPlus landing page and students are aware of its location.<br>2023.067c: This action is complete.<br>2023.069: This action has been passed on to MW (Interim Director of Education). The action is complete for IM.<br>2023.070: This action has been passed on to RJ (Deputy Director of Education) who will be compiling a list of available opportunities. SB noted that there is the LMS Undergraduate Research Bursary (where the student |

| | applies with a supervisor directly to LMS) as well as the Royal Society UG Research Internships (where any staff who are Royal Society URFs can apply for additional money to supervise summer students and the School puts out a call). Last year, the Faculty also put out a call for EPSRC BAME Research Internships. |
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| **1(e)** | **Admissions, induction and enrolment** |
| 2023.081 | The committee discussed the processes of admissions, enrolment and induction and noted the following: |
| 2023.082 | Nothing to report |
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| **Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters** | |
| **2(a)** | **Programme/module developments and amendments** |
| 2023.083 | The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments and noted the following: |
| 2023.084 | SB noted that MW will be going through programme diets to ensure that students have enough choice for Year 3. |
| 2023.085 | SB noted that the work for the Professional Skills zero credit module is ongoing. |
| 2023.086 | SB noted that SL is putting together appointments for students to attend to, to ask questions about Careers. |
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| **2(b)** | **Student Feedback** |
| 2023.087 | Representatives reported on student feedback matters and the following points were noted: |
| 2023.088 | Year 1 reps noted that some of their examinations hold a high percentage within the module, and a lot relies on those examinations as a result. |
| 2023.089 | Year 1 reps noted that MTH4500 does not have enough resources for students to prepare for assessments and the resource is on QMplus but its location is not obvious. Year 1 reps also noted that the lecturer reads lecture notes which students find difficult to follow and would prefer a ppt where the information is summarised. ACTION: WH to communicate with the module organiser of MTH4500 about reminding students where the resources on QMPlus as well as examine the mode of presenting information (ppt summary vs lecture notes). |
| 2023.090 | Year 1 reps noted that students spend 3 hours in 1 room on Mondays which is tiring. This a result of being taught MTH4115/MTH4215 and MTH4500 consecutively. ACTION: WH to discuss the option of offering students longer breaks for the Monday classes of MTH4115/MTH4215 and MTH4500 with module organisers. |
| 2023.091 | Year 1 reps noted that Mondays are always loaded with activities. MP noted that while this may not be the case for the examples that Year 1 reps have in mind, many students requested changes in their timetables which resulted in freeing up one or two full days, which meant that other days would be overloaded with activities. MP noted that the office does not discriminate against reasons for requesting changes, but highlighted that |

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| | students should be mindful of the consequences of attempting to free up full days, can have on the rest of their week. |
| 2023.092 | Year 1 reps noted that students do not attend their tutorials anymore because they are not at convenient times and many missed the deadline to change them, as they received 1 email about a Week 1 deadline and did not have time to act on it. MP noted that it is possible that students received more than one email (this was later confirmed via SR, post-meeting), and that for future reference, nothing is stopping students from requesting changes for Semester B in Semester A, as the majority of the timetable is stabilised by the beginning of the academic year and students are allocated to activities for the whole year by the time Semester A starts. |
| 2023.093 | MS noted that students in the Computer Science and Mathematics programme are being taught a Level 4 module in Year 2 (MTH4500). This comes in contrast with other modules such as MTH5103, where the level of difficulty is much higher. MS and a number of other students feel like the content is too slow and basic for them, and they have lost the incentive to study the module. MS noted that something similar will be the case next year, where students will be taking a Level 5 module in year 3. SB proposed that MS gets more information about this from the students who are not satisfied with the level of the module and that this is brought up with the Director of Education at EECS. ==ACTION: MS to discuss and bring to the School more detailed feedback about what students think of MTH4500. ACTION: MW to discuss the review of Year 3 diet for the BSc in Computer and Mathematics, with Tassos Tombros, the EECS Director of Education.== |
| 2023.094 | Year 2 reps noted that the day is very long for MTH5114 on Thursdays, for students who are attending both the seminar and the two lectures on that day. ==ACTION: WH to discuss with the MTH5114 module organiser about methods of alleviating tiredness for students on Thursdays.== |
| 2023.095 | Some Year 2 reps reported that students would prefer one-hour lectures. ==ACTION: WH to discuss with the Interim Director of Education (MW) the preference of Year 2 students for one-hour lectures.== |
| 2023.096 | Some Year 2 reps noted that MTH5120 is not engaging, and attendance has dropped as a result. They also noted that the content is ambiguous as students are unsure when to use and when not to use R. Students also do not enjoy self-directed videos as some students do not use them consistently and end up falling behind. They suggested asking the lecturer to mention the videos during the lectures, e.g. 2-3 mins summary of what the videos are about. SB noted that the self-directed videos was an initiative by the module organiser in order to give students a degree of freedom on how they can study the module. Student reps also suggested to offer an example exam with a pseudo-code for students to practise on. ==ACTION: WH to speak to the module organiser of MTH5120 so that they offer a recap in Week 7 as well as discuss making the weekly content structure more explicit, and folding video content into the lecture as a summary, and the possibility of offering students example exam papers.== |

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| 2023.097 | Some Year 2 reps raised the issue that occurred during the examination of MTH5112/MTH5212. SM noted that the wrong paper was delivered to the students and some of the reps also noted that invigilators relayed incorrect information after they received the information as such. Some of the Year 2 reps also raised concerns that the error will not be taken into consideration when the papers are marked. In answer to the delivery of the wrong paper, WH noted that the Maths Office should ensure in the future that the correct paper is handed out. While SR was not in the meeting, the details of how this issue happened were not reflected while the issue was discussed in the meeting. This was later raised with SR outside of the meeting by MP. SR subsequently emailed the following to the reps involved and WH, to clarify the facts on the MTH5112/MTH5212 examination:<br><br>'I understand that you raised some concerns at the Student Voice Committee earlier today regarding the issue that arose on Wednesday 10 January 2024, during the MTH5112, MTH5212. As you'll remember, the invigilators in some of the rooms gave students some confusing information about the number of MCQ questions to answer, following which this matter was escalated to the School's Senior Academic Team. Our Exam Board Chair has advised:<br><br>*"We are aware of the issue, and it is in our best interest to make sure that __no__ student will be treated unfairly as a result of that mishap. That incident has been considered while marking the exam scripts, with appropriate and commensurate actions. Please be reassured that our primary interest is for our students to thrive and pass their exams with the best possible outcome."*<br><br>It would appear that you still have some outstanding queries about this and, if I can help get answers to those for you, I'm more than happy to help. Please do let me know.<br>Dr Huang, I think you were under the impression that this issue arose because the Education Services Team gave the wrong paper to Queen Mary's Exams Team. As mentioned above, the issue arose due to a genuine hard-working error made by the invigilators, rather than because the wrong paper was used.<br>All, again, if you have outstanding questions about the MTH5112/MTH5212, please do let me know.' |
| 2023.098 | Year 2 Mathematics with Finance and Accounting reps noted that there are not enough Finance and Accounting modules in their programme and that the programme has a few of Probability and Statistics modules. SB noted that the foundation of the programme has to be Mathematics modules and while this matter will be looked into, Probability and Statistics modules will not disappear. ACTION: MW to look into more module choices for the Mathematics in Finance and Accounting programme. |
| 2023.099 | IM queried about the possibility of taking out of pathway modules. SB noted that this is possible across the majority of programmes in Year 2, but |

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| | that students should take into consideration that they are completing a Mathematics degree and that the allowance some programmes currently have which is up to 30 credits out of pathway with School approval (including modules out of the School) is very generous and a big part of a 120-credit year. SB noted that options outside of Mathematics will reduce further from next year. |
| 2023.100 | For Year 3 modules, DM noted that there are discrepancies in the delivery of lectures so, for example, for MTH6141 the lecturer reads lecture notes and the lecture is not very interactive, whereas in other modules, only summaries are presented rather than detailed notes. DM noted that MTH6134 is a good example of lectures that include both summaries and longer notes. |
| 2023.101 | DM noted that in MTH6150, too much time is spent on non-examinable content. DM also recommended for the module organiser to offer some guidance on how to use C++ on Mac. DM noted that he generally had very positive feedback for the module and that students are aware it is an over-subscribed module and that, despite that, the students' needs are met with double-teaching. <mark>ACTION: DM to discuss with the module organiser of MTH6150 the possibility of putting up brief slides on how to use C++ on a Mac and operating systems/platforms other than the one currently being used for the University IT Labs. ACTION: WH to discuss with DM whether conversation has taken place with the module organiser of MTH6150.</mark> |
| 2023.102 | DM noted that the style of the MTH6154 lectures in Semester A was not satisfactory as the lecturer read off slides. For MTH6155, students have difficulty understanding the content. <mark>ACTION: WH to discuss with MTH6155 module organiser about making the lecture content more interactive, spelling out examples and providing formula sheets. ACTION: WH to discuss with the Exam Board Chairs and MW (Interim Director of Education), the option of adding formula sheets on QMPlus around week 12.</mark> |
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| **2(c)** | **Learning resources**<br>• Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.)<br>• Qmplus<br>• Qreview<br>• Updates from faculty E-learning forums<br>• IT |
| 2023.103 | JS reminded the Committee of the availability of bite-size sessions as well as Maths and Stats help that is available in the Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays. JS noted that the Library is interested in feedback from students on all levels. MWHT noted that it would be useful if students had access to more private or small group study rooms. <mark>ACTION: All reps to collect feedback on what are the potential barriers to come to the library and feedback on library spaces.</mark> |
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| **2(d)** | **Student feedback (NSS/Module evaluations)** |

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| 2023.104 | The committee discussed responses to NSS and module evaluations and noted the following: |
| 2023.105 | WH explained what the NSS is and its importance. WH noted that staff will make visits during lectures in the next few weeks to make shout outs and encourage students to fill in the NSS. <mark>ACTION: All Year 3 reps to disseminate information about the NSS to their student colleagues.</mark> |
| **2(e)** | **Consideration of External Examiner reports** |
| 2023.106 | The committee received External Examiner reports and noted the following: |
| 2023.107 | The main point of discussion among staff and students was the strong preference of external examiners to the return of face-to-face examinations. SM noted that the feedback she received from students was to maintain and increase online examinations. SM noted that she was surprised by the comments of the external examiners on high marks as a negative point. MP and WH explained to the Committee that high marks presented with an unrealistic view of students' abilities, and that it was troubling to external examiners that there was a discrepancy between marks on courseworks (on the high end) and face-to-face exams (on the low end). MS noted that he was against online examinations as there is no memorisation process for the preparation of online exams, and the questions are long and 'weird' because they have to assess students in a different manner than face-to-face exams. Some of the Year 2 reps noted that while examinations have returned to face-to-face, the format has remained the same as online exams. |
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| **Part 3 – Any Other Business** | |
| 2023.108 | The following items were raised under Any Other Business: |
| 2023.109 | Nothing to report |
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| **Part 4 – Date of the next meeting** | |
| 2023.110 | 19th March 2024 |

## Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

| Minute | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Action status | Issue resolved? |
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| 2023.080a | Examine School of Economics and Finance certification lists and their Mathematics equivalents. | MW | ASAP | | |
| 2023.08b | Compile a list of and advertise existing summer bursary schemes to students. | RJ | ASAP | | |
| 2023.089 | Communicate with the module organiser of MTH4500 about reminding students where the resources are on QMPlus as well as the module of presenting information (ppt summary vs lecture notes). | WH | ASAP | | |
| 2023.090 | Discuss the option of offering students longer breaks for the Monday classes of MTH4115/MTH4215 and MTH4500 with module organisers. | WH | ASAP | | |
| 2023.093a | Discuss and bring to the School more detailed feedback about what students think of MTH4500. | MS | ASAP | | |
| 2023.093b | Discuss the review of Year 3 diet for the BSc in Computer and Mathematics, with | MW | ASAP | | |

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| | Tassos Tombros, the EECS Director of Education. | | | |
| 2023.094 | Discuss with the MTH5114 module organiser about methods of alleviating tiredness for students on Thursdays. | WH | ASAP | |
| 2023.095 | Discuss with the Interim Director of Education (MW) about the preference of Year 2 students for one-hour lectures. | WH | ASAP | |
| 2023.096 | Speak to the module organiser of MTH5120 so that they offer a recap in Week 7 as well as discuss making the weekly content structure more explicit, folding video content into the lecture as a summary, and the possibility of offering students example exam papers. | WH | ASAP | |
| 2023.098 | Look into more module choices for the Mathematics in Finance and Accounting programme. | MW | ASAP | |
| 2023.101a | Discuss with the module organiser of MTH6150 the possibility of putting up brief slides on how to use C++ on a Mac and operating systems/platforms other than the one currently being used for the University IT Labs. | DM | ASAP | |

| 2023.101b | Discuss with DM whether conversation has taken place with module organiser of MTH6150. | WH | ASAP | | |
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| 2023.102a | Discuss with MTH6155 module organiser about making the lecture content more interactive, spelling out examples and providing formula sheets. | WH | ASAP | | |
| 2023.102b | Discuss with Exam Board Chairs and MW (Interim Director of Education), the option of adding formula sheets on QMPlus around Week 12. | WH | ASAP | | |
| 2023.103 | Collect feedback on what are the potential barriers to come to the library and feedback on library spaces. | All Reps | ASAP | | |
| 2023.105 | Disseminate information about the NSS to their student colleagues. | All Year 3 Reps | ASAP | | |