

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

Minutes from the meeting on Wednesday, 16th November 2022

Time: 5:15 pm GMT+8

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)

Ms. Edyta Kozłowska Administrator (QM)

Student Members Present:

Name	Class	NCU ID	QM ID
Wu Wendi	221	4217122018	221147816
Pu Xinyue	223	4209121029	221148880
Su Lechen	223	4217122123	221148879
Zhang Jiatong	224	4217122133	221149005
Wang Zhaowen	211	4217121008	210969067
Song Qimin	212	4217121074	210968967
Qian Xianzhe	214	4217121129	210968853
Zhang Kexin	215	4217121199	210969894
Wang Yilu	202	4217120037	200964272
Liang Hanlin	203	4217120185	200964892
Yao Nan	204	4217120095	200965187

Part 1: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome

Prof Maconochie and Prof Luo welcomed committee members to the Nanchang JP SSLC meeting on 16th November 2022. Prof Maconochie introduced himself to all the student representatives.

2. Brief updates on the minutes from the previous meeting on 6th June 2022

Prof Maconochie briefly updated on some of the issues raised from previous meeting.

- a) Regarding whether students could use toilet during exam, Prof Maconochie repeated that if students have an acute medical case during exams and cannot sit, they can leave but need to submit EC with doctor's certificate. However students need to understand that not all such cases are guaranteed that the EC will be granted. He also indicated that if student is particularly unwell before the exam, they should not attend the exam, but see a doctor instead. Students should understand that JP students are Queen Mary students, and therefore follow the same exam « Fit to sit » policy as detailed in the academic regulations, to ensure JP students are fully compliant with student regulations and policy in London. The academic regulations are readily available on the Nanchang landing page.
- b) Regarding the request whether QMplus can open during summer break so students can get access earlier for study preparation before term starts. Prof Maconochie confirmed that QMplus was opened on 10th August this year for Year 2 and Year 3 students, with a minimum of the entire course of last year's lectures available.
- c) Regarding Year 2 and Year 3 students' requests on *SNU207 Basic Immunology* (add a few more bits of text to accompany all the figures), *SNU208 Cell Biology and Developmental Genetics* (more questions in office hours), *SNU307 Development Biology and cell Signaling* (more text on slides), Prof Maconochie has passed on students' feedback to the lecturers, and they are engaged in addressing those comments and will be responding in updating their modules accordingly in the next semester.

The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting, held on 6th June 2022, 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 1 Mr. Wu Wendi

Q1. Mr. Wu Wendi raised a question about **courseware**. Some students want to better preview the lectures, so they are wondering whether the final version of PDF documents could be uploaded to QM+ before lectures. If it is possible to upload them in advance, then can they be uploaded as one document instead of several different parts?

Prof Maconochie declined the request and explained that students do already receive the entire courseware from last year for preview. The changes that are made each year tend to be minimal, so students can prepare beforehand by studying last year's PDF, with the documents available on QMplus from the start of the semester (or before – see note above). Lecturers need to be able to modify lectures every year to improve and sculpt the knowledge and teaching material into a better format for students to understand and learn. There are new developments every year in subject matter, which means the final lecture is usually finished only one or two days in advance although generally including only minor changes. Lecturers receive constant feedback from students and constant feedback from the module co-lecturer during teaching and they try to update every lecture every year as want to continually improve and bring students the latest developments and provide the best and most recent course material possible.

Year 1 Ms. Su Lechen

Q2. Ms. Su Lechen raised a request about the requirement of **lab Practical coursework (Human Cell)**. Some students want to know if lecturers could provide them with a more detailed list and specific requirements for the diagram drawing and cell drawing in the human cell lab report. For example, they want to know before they work on their drawings whether they need to figure out the average values in the graph? Should they use plain pencils or colored pencils in cell drawings to make them clearer?

Prof Maconochie replied that the use of colored pencils is fine, but students do not get extra marks from doing so and lecturers never take marks off for these things. Students should understand that lecturers are not looking to tell students every single point required in a report as if it was a checklist. Students can get very good marks by following what is said in the practical guidance and report proforma, but some students will be able to think

further forward. We want to encourage this for all. If you are going to be a pioneer in research or a pioneer in medicine, please try to take the knowledge you already have, take the knowledge that you are developing and combine these and also consider if there is anything that you've not been told to do that can make things even better in your report. It is unlikely that students will ever get 100 % on any piece of coursework, because there is a small margin to allow for marks where students submit an exceptional report where they individually add additional value to their report. Your lecturers are looking to encourage you to take things a little bit further forward in an independent fashion as you become independent critical thinkers on the JP.

Year 1 Ms. Pu Xinyue

Q3. Ms. Pu Xinyue raised a concern about **independent thinking**. The student said from the feedback of the lab report, they all know that professors pay much attention to encouraging students' independent thinking, but some students reflect that this notation is too abstract for them. These students want more specific guidance to develop their independent thinking. So is it possible for professors to guide them stepwise to achieve this?

Prof Luo explained and narrowed the student's question into how to independently finish coursework and avoid plagiarism in practical report as some students struggle and unconsciously get caught up in it.

Prof Maconochie referred to Practical 2 coursework of *SNU101 Human Cell*, and he fully understands 250 students are doing the same practical facing similar sorts of problems, such as the list of chemicals to report. Students should not worry if they are asked for lists of things they've used, as that would not be identified as plagiarism. He pointed out that the best way for students to secure themselves against a charge of plagiarism when doing write-ups is to simply make sure it is your own writing. Year 1 students are getting a lot of exercises and support from Academic Skills on plagiarism, and they are soon going to do an essay, to see whether they've grasped this knowledge. Finally, Prof Maconochie reiterated that whenever students are writing a report or other piece of coursework, do it yourself, independently.

Q4. Ms. Pu Xinyue raised another question about the **lab data**. Whether it's acceptable if students share the lab data, because sometimes they don't

get all the data to fill in the blanks in a table.

Prof Maconochie explained students certainly could put in the class data as was mentioned in the practical guidance, but more generally, in a report if you use other students data, you need to make sure you write clearly what is your group's data, other groups' data and what is the average data (if calculated). If the practical requires that it must only be your data, then you cannot use others' data. He also pointed out that as a scientist and a researcher, the more data you get, the more accurate your calculations can be.

Year 1 Ms. Zhang Jiatong

Q5. Ms. Zhang Jiatong raised a request about **more exam questions**. Some students want to get more past paper questions to consolidate what they have learned in class, but the questions on QM+ are very limited.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that this question is raised every year. He explained that staff are aware that students like practice questions, so practice papers are always provided on QMPlus to let students have a practice exam to try out and also to be able to see the upcoming exam paper format. If more past exam papers were provided, then the request for the model answers would be raised, and then additional practice papers and model answers. We do not provide excessive libraries of past papers as we do not want to encourage students to try to memorise answers to questions from past papers. Please remember that every single final QM exam paper is brand new. Instead of providing this, students need to spend their study time understanding the material, so that when teachers finish teaching, students can review and be ready for the exams. Lecturers don't want students to spend all their time answering past questions. Therefore, no more questions will be provided, as the same amount of past papers are available as Queen Mary students have in London.

However, Prof Maconochie encourages students to attend Office Hours to raise their questions as are already used for posing interactive MCQs or Mentimeter questions for practice. Office hours are set up for addressing student's learning requirements. He encouraged them to bring more questions to the office hour as this is a forum specifically for them to use to help support their learning.

Year 2 Ms. Wang Zhaowen

Q6. Ms. Wang Zhaowen questioned if the **evaluation standard** of the Practical could be unified. Most Year 2 modules have two different lecturers respectively for class123 and class456, and the teachers' grading standards are different, so some students think it's unfair in modules such as SNU213, SNU209 and SNU205. They hope lecturers could unify the evaluation standard.

Prof Maconochie replied that he would request and look into the data of the coursework from class123 and class456, and then give feedback in the next SSLC. He mentioned for the Year 1 module *SNU101*, he and Dr. Lilah Glazer mark the different practical coursework in turn for all the students classes to make sure the marking is consistent for each piece of coursework.

Dean Luo suggested the two co-teaching lecturers could do a statistical analysis for the practical results of the two classes. Prof Maconochie replied that was exactly what he is planning to do and will report back.

Year 3 representative Ms. Liang Hanlin also mentioned when they were studying Year 2, the evaluation standard was not same for *SNU213 Essential Biochemistry for Medicine* classes.

Year 2 Ms. Zhang Kexin

Q7. Ms. Zhang Kexin gave a suggestion on **SNU209 teaching**. Hopes Dr. Ursula (Class4-6) could speak a little slower and give more written explanation in the lecture about the diagrams shown in the lectures. The student explained that in the first session of Introduction to the module, which is not difficult to understand, so students told Dr. Ursula that she could speak a bit faster, but the following lectures are becoming more difficult for most students to understand and they're a bit shy to let her know that it is now too fast to understand.

Prof Maconochie welcomes students' feedback and comments on teaching improvement, and this and all other feedback received will be fed back to lecturing staff.

Year 2 Mr. Qian Xianzhe

Q8. Mr. Qian Xianzhe suggested whether lecturers could remind students to attend **Office Hours** by ensuring the id for the office hour meeting is distributed by QQ group. He firstly expressed sincere gratitude to all lecturers for providing the online office hours during the academic period as these are much appreciated. Some students with higher self-discipline join the office hour on time regularly, but some students often forget the VooV meeting IDs and the meeting time. Therefore, they hope lecturers could release the meeting ID in the QQ group before office hour starts.

Prof Maconochie questioned how students received the meeting IDs for office hours and the student replied some lecturers release by QQ groups, but some just post IDs on the QMplus website and therefore the less motivated students miss out.

Prof Maconochie shared his experience that he and Lilah usually put the office hour meeting ID on QQ within an hour in advance to remind students where to attend as it is already timetabled. If there's lots of discussion in the QQ group, it is easy to miss the meeting details. He understands some students who are not as self-disciplined probably also have issues in regularly logging onto QMplus, such as forgetting their login details for QMplus. However, he will raise this request amongst staff and recommend all lecturers to use QQ to put office hours IDs.

Year 2 Mr. Song Qimin

Q9. Mr. Song Qimin suggested the following to improve **remote teaching**. They hope lecturers could point out the parts on the slide they are talking about and label the important parts in the lecture, as some students find it's difficult to follow the concept of the course whilst the lecturer is talking. They are wondering if lecturers could use a cursor to point out the point they are talking about when they're teaching, which might be easier for students to follow and stay focused.

Prof Maconochie shared that some lecturers also use animations for teaching, which is introducing points on the slide as they are presented and discussed and hopefully making it easier for students follow the lecturer's words. This is often also used in combination with the cursor or laser pointer or powerpoint pen. He will pass students' point about improving the online delivery by better linking speech and text on slide to all lecturers.

Year 3 Ms. Yao Nan

Q10. Ms. Yao Nan suggested whether their **online assessments duration/submission** could be adjusted to between 7pm to 10 pm Beijing time. Students understand the test time is arranged by both Chinese and British sides according to the timetable, but due to PCR tests (usually from 7am-10am on campus), they prepare and complete assessments in a hurry. Also, they would like to timely explain the problems encountered in the testing process to lecturers and lecturers can also make adjustments during breaks. Therefore, it will be helpful for all students by shifting the submission time.

Prof Maconochie checked with the student representative to know that this is only the request for online submissions, not all assessments. Then he expressed his concern that we want students get some rest at night, instead of setting the assessment deadline at the latest time possible. He accepts it as a suggestion and will raise this with Dr Giulia de Falco, Director of Teaching, to consider and see if a compromise solution can be achieved.

Year 3 Ms. Liang Hanlin

Q11. Ms. Liang Hanlin raised a question whether they could get their **final exam grades** more quickly.

Prof Maconochie understood that students want their marks quickly, but it is difficult to achieve quality and speed. The results cannot be released until the SEB (Subject Examination Board) is held in February 2023. The final results have to go through SEB, and this includes overview by external examiners from other universities in the UK and China. The external examiners look over students' final exam as well as coursework grades to make sure all the marking is done consistently, accurately and fairly. In addition, occasionally a third marker for exams will be involved for some cases in addition to the normal two markers. For year 3 students, the two semester A exams will be taken very early, so that then students can focus on their projects. This may explain why year 3 students believe it takes a long time, but time is needed for the SEB and our quality control. For Year 1 and 2, the exams will be taken in Week 18, the last week of this semester. Therefore, there are only around 4.5 weeks to transfer the exam

papers to the UK and then two markers need to look over the exam scripts and provide a provisional mark, followed by discussions between themselves to make sure the marking is accurate. Also, we need to wait NCU to open after the holiday, which is only around 5 weeks after exams (semester B), so that we can have the formal board meeting to check and verify students' marks. In other words, by the end of week 2 or week 3 of semester B, students should normally have the final module mark. It's not possible to do it any quicker, because although we know how important marks are for all students, we want to ensure the quality of the marks as fully accurate.

Year 3 Ms. Wang Yilu

Q12. Ms. Wang Yilu raised one question about **office hour**. She said office hours are normally set from 5pm to 6pm, and during this time students usually have dinner in the canteen, or sometimes they couldn't turn on the microphone to communicate with lecturers. Therefore, she questioned whether they could type in the VooV chat box to answer questions.

Prof Maconochie explained that lecturers are trying to help students to build up their confidence by communicating with them directly during office hours by turning off their mics. However he also understands that sometimes students might be in their dorms and don't want to disturb their roommates, or as mentioned are in the canteen, so he will feedback this suggestion to his colleagues to consider. If students are able to and would like to open their microphone, they should, but if not, they could put their questions in chat. And considering a point raised earlier in today's meeting, he is considering suggesting sending out a practice question for the weeks office hour, and lecturers could use it for students to have a practice and bring their answers to office hours for communicating with lecturers and receiving feedback. He will try and encourage these ideas amongst staff to involve students in more office hours. The more students get involved in office hour by speaking— or through voov chat - the easier understanding of the course material should become.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Wang