

Faculty Education Committee (FEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

DATE: 6 March 2020

TIME: 13:00 – 15:00

LOCATION: SALC 10

MINUTES – APPROVED

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present:

Prof Emma McCoy	vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair)
Prof Donald Craig	DUGS Chemistry
Dr Huw Williams	DUGS Life Sciences
Prof David Evans	DUGS Mathematics
Dr Rudiger Woscholski	MRes Director of Studies in Chemistry
Prof John Seddon	Faculty Senior Tutor
Dr William Proud (WP)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics
Dr Lisa Bushby	Science Coordinator
Ms Michaela Flegrova	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Mr Ashley Brooks	ICU Deputy President (Education)
Ms Emma Couves	GSU Representative
Ms Moira Sarsfield	Senior Learning Technologist
Prof Jonathan Mestel	College Consul, Maths
Ms Kate Ippolito	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Dr Vijay Tymms (VT)	FoNS Programmes Committee Rep., Physics
Ms Rebecca Middleton	Faculty Education Manager
Ms Kasia Kmiecowskiak	Administrative Assistant, FoNS
Prof Ji-Seon Kim	Professor of Solid State Physics

Apologies:

Dr Niki Gounaris	Life Sciences PGT Representative
Dr Travis Schedler	Maths PGT Representative
Dr Mike Tennant	CEP Representative
Prof Stephen Warren	College Consul, Physics
Dr Mark Anderson	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Ms Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer
Mr Stefan Hoyle	Faculty Safety Representative
Mr Will Bennett	Information and Communication Technologies
Mr Scott Tucker	Registry Representative - Assistant Registrar (Monitoring & Review)
Dr Felicitas Starr-Egger	CLCC representation

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Wednesday 27th November 2019 [**NSEC.2019.30.01**] and the Committee Action Tracker [**NSEC.2019.30.02**]. With two minor corrections as listed below, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated:

1. *Present*

Prof Carl Paterson

Dr Mark Anderson

3. Matters arising from the Minutes/ Action Tracker

Action 10, 9 and 6 – were noted as complete.

Action 8 and 7 – was noted as ongoing; it was agreed that HW will submit both the Life Sciences Schemes for Award of Honours document and the Life Sciences UG Annual Monitoring Report as soon as possible, to be approved via Chair's Action, or at the NSEC on 29 April.

NEW ACTION 11: HW to submit the Life Sciences Schemes for Award of Honours document as well as the Life Sciences UG Annual Monitoring Report to be approved via Chair's Action, or at the NSEC on 29 April.

Action 9 – The *Life Sciences 2019 PTES Action Plan* was noted as still pending. It was originally due for submission in Jan 2019, a version was submitted to NSEC in April 2019, but was not approved. It was agreed that EMcC would contact NG and request an updated Life Sciences PTES Action to be reconsidered at the April NSEC Meeting.

NEW ACTION 12: NG to submit an updated Life Sciences 2019 PTES Action Plan ASAP to be approved via Chair's Action, or at the NSEC on 29 April.

Action 3 – was noted as ongoing. Members of the committee were encouraged to send any comments they may have with regards to SOLE to Jonathan Mestel or Ashley Brooks who are both members of the Survey Working Group. KI added that funding had been obtained to employ a Project Manager to lead the module evaluation/SOLE review process.

RM added that Ewan Roberts, Management Trainee, is currently compiling positive SOLE comments into one document, having already completed a review of the more negative feedback. RM will circulate it to the committee once completed.

MS queried whether the comments related specifically to Y1, curriculum reviewed modules could be extracted. This would show whether the different teaching methods implemented in Y1 modules as part of the CR process made students more satisfied with their course. In response to that, EMcC said that she would investigate it and that perhaps adding module codes would enable tracing comments made for a specific year.

4. Programme Withdrawals:

The committee considered proposals from:

- The Department of Life Sciences to withdraw the Neuroscience Research module (3yr) from 2020/21 academic year.

HW explained that due to key teaching staff retiring and no capacity to teach, this module can no longer be provided.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the decision to withdraw the Neuroscience Research module from October 2020.

- The Department of Mathematics to withdraw two programmes:
 - BSc Mathematics with Education
 - MSci Mathematics with Education from 2020/21 academic year

DE reported that these programmes are being delivered in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). However, CCCU is unable to guarantee delivery of their portion of the programme in the near future due to resourcing and staffing issues. Without CCCU involvement, the programmes are not viable. He added that there had been no expression of interest in re-establishing these programmes from CCCU. There had also been no students on these programmes since 2016-17, and even prior to that, numbers had been extremely low.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the decision to withdraw BSc Mathematics with Education and MSci Mathematics with Education programmes from October 2020.

5. Programme modifications:

The committee considered the following proposals from:

- The Department of Physics to introduce major programme specification changes to the MRes in Plastic Electronic Materials (1yr) from 2020/21 academic year. JSK reported the changes include:
 - Renaming '*MRes in Plastic Electronic Materials*' to '*MRes in Soft Electronic Materials*' from October 2021. The scope of the course has changed and "Soft" is a term that represents this better than "Plastic". She added that 'Plastic' may be also perceived negatively.
 - Removing a part of practical workshops from the programme from October 2020 as the loss of CDT funding means not all practical workshops would remain viable.
 - Combining existing modules into two 15 ECTS modules and simplifying overall ECTS structure to reflect focus on taught modules (term 1) and independent research (terms 2 and 3) for balanced assessment throughout year. This would enable a fair balance of assessment in the modules for students with different background. All courses are based in South Kensington campus and there will be approximately 15-20 students per cohort.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the major programme specification changes to the MRes in Plastic Electronic Materials (1yr) from 2020/21 academic year.

- The Department of Mathematics to revise year 1 of the following Joint Mathematics and Computing programmes:
 - Introduction to University Mathematics (for JMC) - revision of existing module
 - Linear Algebra and Groups for JMC - new module

DE reported that the revised programmes had been submitted to FoE Education Committee, but the tabled module outlines for two of the core Mathematics modules on the programme need to be approved by this committee. These two modules would be delivered in the first 4 weeks of the first term. It had been identified that the previous *Introduction to University Mathematics* module included too many activities, so the new format is an amended version of that, however the learning outcomes would remain the same.

The reason to revise the *Joint Mathematics and Computing* programmes is to enable students to get involved more in activities delivered by the Department of Mathematics.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the above programme changes.

- The Department of Mathematics to introduce major changes to one of the elective modules of MSc Mathematics and Finance programme (Y1), effective retrospectively from October 2019.

The new elective course, "Topics in Quantitative Finance", would have changed assessment type i.e. 100% coursework/Project instead of 20% course work 80% exam. While the theoretical contents will be developed throughout the module, students will benefit from focussing on a precise application of the methodology to real data. Therefore, rather than a theoretical exam, a project based on testing the theory on practical cases would be more useful.

EMcC pointed out that the number of 5 ECTS is not correct if the total number of hours is 65. RM added that the student consent form had been provided separately.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, as well as the amendment/clarification to be made by the Department of Mathematics to the number of ECTS, the committee approved the proposed changes to the elective module.

- The Department of Chemistry to introduce major programme modification to the MRes in Plant Chemical Biology from 2020/21 academic year.
RW reported that the proposed major modification relates to the title change from the full title of “*MRes Plant Chemical Biology: Multidisciplinary Research for Next Generation Agri-Sciences*” to “*MRes in Biological and Physical Chemistry*”. The minor change relates to changes of assessments and modules in the taught element only.
Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved both the major and minor programme changes.
- The Department of Chemistry to introduce a major modification to the MRes Nanomaterials Programme (Y1) effective from October 2019.
The core modules selection had been added i.e. to choose 2 from 3 options (there had been no selection rule previously) as well as Marking Scheme had been rewritten.
There had been no change in the content being delivered on these courses.
Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the major retrospective programme changes.
- The Department of Chemistry to introduce major changes to the following modules:
 - Analysis of molecules, materials, and mixtures
 - Chemistry of Molecular Systems
 - Electronic States and Bonding
 - Macromolecules and Materials
 - Maths and Physics
 - Medicinal Chemistry
 - Molecular Synthesis
 - Solids, Liquids and Interfaces

DC reported that the substantive change will be to incorporate an extra module so as to make the modules smaller overall and more coherent. This has the inevitable effect of changing ILOs for individual modules, hence this request to make a major modification. He added that the learning outcomes will not change just the value of the ECTS per module. The names of modules will be changed as well.

DC also reported that the Department of Chemistry had proposed changes to the number of ECTS in Year 4/5 modules for year abroad students for 2020–21. He explained that the year abroad programmes had not been considered in the recent departmental review of year 4 which had made the year more research-focussed. Given the recent departmental review, the CR proposed no significant structural changes to year 4 at IC. A higher weighting for the research project for year abroad degrees would bring these programmes into better alignment with the year 4 at IC. In addition, a proportional reduction in the lecture’s module is necessary, and would alleviate the workload problem sometimes encountered with host institutions having considerably more teaching hours per ECTS than IC.

Subject to Programmes Committee and QAEC approval, the committee approved the above programme modification proposal.

ACTION 13: RM to notify Registry that the Excel format of the programme modification form makes it hard to track all the changes made to the modules/programmes and request whether modification forms could be provided in a Word format.

6. Student exchange partnerships

The committee considered and approved proposals from the Department of Life Sciences to renew the following student exchange partnerships. The renewal will be for 5 years commencing 2020-21:

- University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Université Paul Sabatier (Toulouse III), France

7. **Timeliness of Academic Feedback to Students – Departments - verbal report**

- **Life Sciences** - HW reported that some staff members are asking to extend deadlines so there are occasional extensions being made to the feedback deadlines. Other than that, the timeliness of academic feedback is well managed within the Department of Life Sciences.
- **Mathematics** – DE reported that feedback is mostly provided within deadlines. The only issue raised in the Department of Mathematics related to releasing full sets of marks. This has to be made clear to students in advance and staff must be a bit more consistent.
- **Physics** - VT reported there had been some issues with providing marking in Y1 seminars, but it had not related to timeliness. KI added that some academics like Dr Jon Fenton provides feedback halfway through the course which is favoured by students.

MS reported that the CEP focuses on group work therefore often peer assessment need to be provided which can cause delays. In response to that, EC said that it is important to notify students in advance about delays in providing the feedback. She added that students generally prefer detailed and constructive feedback, even if it is delayed.

8. **PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) – Results and Action Plans**

The committee considered the PRES Results and Action Plans from the following Departments:

- Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Department of Life Sciences - the PRES Results were not submitted.

ACTION 14: NG to submit PRES Results to be approved via Chair's Action, or at the NSEC on 29 April.

EC reported that a Working Group had been set up between Graduate School and Students Union to discuss issues such as wellbeing, research culture and supervision. The outcomes of the discussion will be provided to the Faculty in May. She also reported that Laura Lane from the Graduate School is organising a workshop where students from other Faculties and staff come together to brainstorm ideas for supervisor support, development and training.

9. **Student application and enrolment numbers compared to previous years**

The committee considered student application and enrolment numbers compared to previous years.

EC queried whether any training is being provided to the interviewers. In response to that, EMcC said [Unconscious Bias training](#) is available to all staff members.

10. **Standing Items:**

10.1 **Learning Technology Matters – MS reported the following matters:**

- Second ELIG meeting took place on 2nd March and it was agreed that the minutes of these meetings would be added as a link to the NSEC agenda for the committee to note. Also NSEC members will be given access to the ELIG Teams site.
- Following the ELIG meeting, a mini-showcase was presented with posters/demos/rolling slideshows outlining the Ed Tech Team's work on pedagogic transformation.
- The team is involved with preparations for COVID-19 mitigation and with further work to integrate Blackboard to Banner. Next academic year the plan is for Blackboard courses to be generated and populated with students directly from Banner; the following year the plan is for coursework grades to be transferred directly from Blackboard into Banner.

10.2 **Safety** – there were no updates to report.

10.3 Education – RM reported the following matters:

- Covid-19 College Level Incident Group and its sub-groups had been set up. Its members discuss plans for the possible further disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is also to include preparations for the total shut down of the College. There had been also concerns raised about 2020/21 admissions as coronavirus might have a major impact on the number of overseas students being admitted in that academic year (students may not be able to fly to the UK or have their Language assessed prior to coming to the UK or not fulfil the admission requirements if their current schools close down). With regards to the exams scheduled after Easter, RM reported that some faculties will run online exams. In addition, there are also discussions about the possible cancellation of the PG Graduation Ceremony on 6th May.
- The Prizes for Excellence deadline had passed (6th March), but the online nomination portal will remain open until 5pm on Monday 16 March for those who have not yet made their nominations.

10.4 Faculty Senior Tutor – JS reported the following matters:

- PG Pastoral Support Survey – a report based on the results of surveys sent to PG students and staff had been sent to HoDs and will be distributed more widely soon. In addition, JS will visit individual departments to discuss the findings and recommendations outlined in the survey. RM added that one of the issues highlighted in the survey was the fact that although department staff articulated what support was available, students within the departments seemed unaware of this, or unclear of who they could speak to.
- Emergency contact – JS reminded the committee that the College is looking into adopting a scheme where a named person chosen by a given student could be contacted where the College had serious concerns about the student’s wellbeing. JS had attended a workshop to establish what situations are considered as ‘critical’ and how to handle cases of students who opt out from the scheme. BP commented that a number of students across FoNS are experiencing mental health issues. These are often related to the overwhelming workload as well as being away from home.
- GDPR - JS raised an issue related to GDPR. Staff members are legally obliged not to disclose any information about students to a third party, even to student’s close relatives. BP added that often students change their address and do not notify the department. Consequently, if a student does not attend tutorials and lectures for a prolonged period of time and does not respond to emails, it is very difficult to get in touch with that student. JS noted that an email had been sent to all student-facing staff with details of GDPR requirements.
- Faculty Mitigation Oversight Panel – the next UG and PG FMOP meetings will take place in April. Further mitigating circumstances will be discussed and the members will share good practice.
- Silver Cloud – JS reported that this is an online service which provides CBT with no waiting time so more immediate support would be available to students. This service will be introduced in addition to the existing counselling service provided by the College. More details will follow once SilverCloud is formally launched.

10.5 FOO – there were no updates to report.

10.6 Registry - there were no updates to report.

10.7 College level initiatives:

- I-Explore update – list of courses are available on the College’s website: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/studentshapers/how-to-get-involved/iexplore/>
- Student Shapers update – committee noted the *StudentShapers projects from 1st October 2019* report.

11. Minutes of the Previous Meetings of the NSEC Sub-Committees

The committee noted the latest, confirmed minutes from the UG/Masters Sub-Committee meetings: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/natural-sciences/education-and-teaching/fons-education-committee/>

12. Chair's Report

The committee noted the following actions taken by the Chair on behalf of the committee:

12.1 Major Modification for F1U7 MRes Green Chemistry: Energy and the Environment 2019-20.

The Chair agreed the request from the Department of Chemistry for a Major modification to the MRes Green Chemistry: Energy and the Environment programme.

12.2 Withdrawal of the MSc Conservation Science programme

The Chair agreed the request from the Department of Life Sciences for the withdrawal of the (currently suspended) MSc Conservation Science programme, with effect from October 2020.

13. Graduate School's Annual Report – 2018/19

The committee noted the Graduate School's Annual Report.

14. Surveys: SOLE lecturer/module Autumn term results

The committee noted the SOLE lecturer/module Autumn term results.

15. Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)

The committee noted the latest minutes from the Graduate School's [Postgraduate Professional Development Committee](https://icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk/Registry/10.Committees/PPDC): [\\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\PPDC](https://icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk/Registry/10.Committees/PPDC)

16. Minutes from QAEC, Senate and the other Faculties' Education Committees

The committee noted the latest minutes from the [QAEC](#), [Senate](#) and the other [Faculty Education Committees](#)

17. Any other business:

UG curriculum/year abroad at California Institute of Technology – RM asked the committee members to contact her should any of the FoNS students express their interest in this exchange. RM will also send a reminder outlining the details.

ACTION 15: RM to send a reminder outlining the details of the UG curriculum/year abroad at California Institute of Technology student exchange partnership.

18. Dates of Future Meetings (2019/20 Committee Schedule)

Committee	Date	Time
NSEC	Weds 29/04/20	12.00-14.00
UG Sub-Committee of NSEC	Weds 27/05/20	12.30-14.00
Masters Sub-Committee of NSEC	Weds 03/06/20	12.30-14.00