

# FLTQC 30 April 2025

Wednesday, 30th April 2025 2:15pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

## Attendees

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### Attended

Ben Adams (BA)

Sascha Athey (SA)

Zoe Burke (ZB)

Andy Burrows (Chair)

Susan Crennell (SC)

James Foadi

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Liz Haynes

Momna Hejmadi (MH)

Nikki Hodgson (NH)

Zack Lyons (ZL)

Ioana Mocanu

Sarah Paine (SP)

Charareh Pourzand

Philip Rogers (PR)

Tony Shardlow (TS)

Gan Shermer (GS)

Paul Snow (PS)

### Did Not Attend

Robbie Altham

Florin Bisset

Plato Ng

## 1.0 Welcome and Quorum (3410)

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The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate.

## 2.0 Declaration of Interest (3411)

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There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

## 3.0 QA Code of Practice consultation (3412)

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The Committee considered the following QA Code of Practice changes:

- **Academic Framework:** to consider new UG and PGT Academic Frameworks (Paper 103): SA reported that the document aims to bring together the University's regulatory requirements for course approval, other than those for which it is not easy to 'tick off' because they are the province of academic judgement, e.g. the extent to which a course is research-informed, into one document for ease of use by staff. He noted that further updates may be required in response to changing regulation, notably the Lifelong Learning Entitlement about the government plans to provide detail in June. Updates to the requirements are highlighted in yellow in the document. The Academic Framework will be updated annually to reflect changes as they are introduced, e.g. introduction of the 50% pass mark for Level 7 units across the University from 2026/27. PS noted that students may take up to 5 credits as extra-curricular units with the approval of the DoS and sought clarification as to whether this was per year. SA agreed to clarify this in the document. SA explained that policy regarding pathways will be reviewed to address situations whereby students complete a diet of units that qualify them for more than 1 award title. PR reported that named exit awards exist for the MPharm [BSc and MSci (Hons) Pharmaceutical Studies]. SA confirmed that the Academic Framework did not preclude these awards and reiterated that the Framework would apply only to new course approvals (and possibly courses undergoing periodic review); it would not be retrofitted to existing courses. He noted that he had not been aware of alternative Undergraduate Master awards and would edit the framework to reflect this. SA confirmed that the Framework accommodated 4 Year Undergraduate Master's degrees with a substituting (as opposed to extra) placement year. He agreed to make this clearer. SA noted that AP3T programmes are in CATS and commented that it may become necessary, depending on the LLE guidance, for the rest of the University to transition from ECTS to CATS in the future. GS flagged that Chemistry with Management students have the option to take more than 30 credits in a semester (e.g. 35 credits), but have a pathway through the course where it is possible to study 30 credits in each semester. SA explained that 30 credits per semester is a full-time study load so requiring students to study more than full-time would require an exemption. SA agreed to review whether the Framework should be amended to state that courses should be designed so that students are not required to study more than 30 credits in a semester. SC reported that some Natural Sciences students are required to take 32.5 credits in a semester. SC also reported that there is some optionality in Year 1 of the Natural Sciences courses. SA explained that any exemptions departments have now will carry over. ZB enquired as to how group work as a UILO (e.g. work effectively as a group) could be assessed through reassessment of an individual's work. ZB suggested that the reassessment might not require all UILOs to be met. SA agreed to review this, taking into account relevant CLT guidance. The Chair enquired as to whether coteaching UG and PGT units might be lifted as a requirement in the near future given the number of courses with exemptions to this rule. SA stated that he had not been notified of any change to current requirements but that should a change be agreed, the Framework would be updated accordingly.

ZL enquired as to whether there would be flexibility regarding Online MScs meeting the Framework requirements. SA explained that he expects that once the LLE guidance is published the University will want to publish a separate Framework for credit accumulation courses.

SC enquired as to whether placements are reflected in the award name on degree certificates. SA reported that 'with placement / SYA' is only reflected on the transcript.

- PGTAR Dissertation supplementary assessment (Paper 104):

SA explained that under PGTAR taught units do not need to be passed before progression to the dissertation is permitted and reassessment can be taken in all units, including the dissertation (i.e. there is no minimum mark requirement). This may have led to more students failing the dissertation (because there is no taught stage hurdle) and inconsistency in the way students are being reassessed for a failed dissertation / project, e.g. students may be required to resubmit after having been provided with feedback, or to complete a new project with a new supervisor.

SA invited the Committee to make suggestions regarding a standardised approach. SoM have suggested an offer of 1 session of supervision prior to resubmission. Once all FLTQCs have provided feedback, SA will bring a revised paper back to FLTQCs for consultation.

ZB flagged that there might be exceptional circumstances in which additional support is required / appropriate. The Chair agreed and suggested that any standardised approach be caveated with 'normally'.

PS suggested that practice could be adopted from PhDs, e.g. minor corrections vs a more substantial rewrite (due to a more severe fail mark) with specified timeframes for completion. The Chair flagged the need to specify whether practical work / experiments / simulations need to be redone, or if it is more about re-writing up what has been done already, i.e. new interpretation rather than new experiments.

SA noted that PGTAR has eliminated the project/dissertation as a separate concept and that this may be proving problematic for different reasons.

ZL commented that students often have different wishes regarding project resubmission, e.g. some students want to do a completely new project, possibly with a new supervisor, while others just want to achieve a passing mark, and this may depend on whether IMC apply enabling a student to improve their mark. ZL enquired as to whether students are allowed to choose whether to pay for supervision on dissertation reassessment. SA stated that he was not aware of such a possibility.

SA suggested that students could be provided with flexibility, but from a range of limited options.

MH supported this, highlighting the need for consistency.

SA noted that perhaps greater clarification regarding what constitutes supervision is necessary.

SA added that there may be pressure to help visa-holder students complete their course by January / February so they can qualify for a Graduate Work Visa.

SA noted that any policy agreed for PGT dissertation resubmissions could then be applied to UG. SA added that PGT dissertations can be research and therefore subject to export control in certain subject areas and so solving these questions for PGT is more urgent.

DoTs agreed to take Paper 104 to their DLTQCs & to provide SA with written feedback.

## **4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (3413)**

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The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2025 (Paper 105).

## 5.0 Matters Arising (3414)

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The Committee noted the following matters arising from the previous minutes:

### **M3397 Matters Arising:**

- Explanatory text has been approved for students taking different credit weighted pre-CT and CT units concurrently (Paper 106A), which may be added to the unit catalogue:

SC commented that the document reads as though a student's transition year could have a mix of 10 and 6 credit units. Secretary's note: It was confirmed following the meeting that a mixed economy is permitted so long as a total of 60 credits is met (with a balance of 30/30 per semester).

NH reported that DoTs are welcome to share the wording with students, e.g. in response to queries regarding unit selection, happening currently.

TS suggested that the statement "More, or less, credit would create an imbalance and unfairness in the calculation of degree outcomes" be removed given that a unit can be worth either 5 or 6 credits for the same work, i.e. are delivered and assessed in the same way.

**Action:** NH agreed to take this back to Registry for consideration.

PS flagged that some 6 credit units need to be taught as 5 credit units which means 2 hours fewer lectures to maintain 1 credit equating to 10 hours' work, so in effect students are being made to work harder. Therefore, messaging to colleagues is important in terms of how this is communicated to students, e.g. emphasising that this is a 1-year fix.

- Possible alternative options to publishing anonymised student assessment performance within a cohort:

The Chair highlighted that QA16 states that "students should not be able to identify a 'class rank' or similar based on any anonymised sharing of marks" due to wellbeing concerns.

Consequently, departments can no longer release anonymised marks on Moodle. This had been met with disappointment among some students. GS reported that the Chemistry SSLC were keen to see the spread of marks so they knew where they fitted within the cohort, but understood that this might affect some students' wellbeing. The Chair suggested that publishing average marks, and spreads of marks, might be appropriate, particularly if students have to opt in to see this, i.e. students can obtain their marks without having to see the cohort average / spread of marks. TS reported that Maths have an extensive database of exam results and statistics which are made available to students over a period of 5 years. However, the Department considers that it contains too much data and that students are making unit decisions based on this data, e.g. choosing units with the highest means and the lowest variance. A consistent Faculty approach would support the Department in reducing the data it provides to students, e.g. only publish data within a unit, rather than comparative data across units, or just for one semester, or only for a few weeks when exam results are released. PR agreed that a consistent approach would help with feedback. Currently, some Academic Advisors may give more information than others in feedback sessions. A median mark for the cohort on the unit and the interquartile range would give a student an idea into which quadrant of the cohort they fall. **Action:** TS agreed to draft a proposal for handling this, based on comments collated from members, for discussion at the next meeting.

## 6.0 Chair's Business (3415)

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The Chair brought the following matters to the Committee's attention:

- Bringing the examination-setting process forward to help reduce the number of errors in examination papers:

The Chair reported that at the last BoS (2nd April) concerns has been expressed about the examination paper deadline being slightly earlier this year (4th April; the last Friday of teaching before the Easter vacation), given the time pressures on staff to set questions. Some had been

supportive of this position while others had suggested that staff should set questions at the start of the academic year, as soon as they know which units they will be teaching. The Committee noted that the deadline had been earlier this year due to the timing of the Easter vacation. Last year the deadline was 15th April, but this had been problematic as it was the first day back after the Easter vacation, so many academic staff were away when they needed to be available to check final printed papers before they were taken to the Examinations Office.

- A final reminder will be sent today to all students who have not yet responded to their invitation to the graduation ceremonies. The webform they need to complete closes at midnight on 4 May so if they respond after that they are no longer guaranteed a place at their ceremony or guest tickets. There are still 1,000 students who have not responded, which is approx. 23% of all those invited. The Chair asked DoTs to encourage students to respond to the invitation.

#### Chair's actions:

- Replacement for 2025/26 of optional unit SL32064 Conservation and Global Change Biology (suspended) with the following for Natural Sciences: BSc Year 3: Entrepreneurial Biotechnology (AY 10 credits) OR Science Communication and Biological Ethics (2x5-credits). MSci Final Year: Beer & Biofuels (SL50200) OR Food Security and the Environment (SL50203) (approved 14 March 2025) (no paper).
- Suspension of optional units CM52061 Cybersecurity, CM52062 Data and Cloud Development, CM52065 Natural Language Processing, CM52075 Reinforcement Learning 2 & CM52079 Computer Vision from 2025/26 (approved 27 March 2025) (Paper 106).
- Withdrawal of optional unit SL32078 / SL52089 Advanced Cardiovascular Pharmacology from 2025/26 from BSc (Hons) Pharmacology / MPharmacol, BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences and BSc/MSci (Hons) Natural Sciences (approved 10 April 2025) (Paper 107).
- Approval of the interim accreditation submission to the Society of Natural Sciences (SNS) for the CT BSc (Hons) Natural Sciences cohort graduating in 2025/26 (approved 23 April 2025) (Paper 108), ahead of the full accreditation next year.
- Removal of MA42142 Viscous Fluid Dynamics from Year 3 of all Mathematical Sciences courses from 2025/26 (approved 25 April 2025) (no paper).
- Change of CM32024 & CM52037 Bayesian Machine Learning optional units from Semester 2 to All Year units from 2025/26 (approved 28 April 2025) (Paper 109A).
- Addition of DoS approved options to the Final Year of BSc (Hons) Mathematics and Statistics from 2025/26 (approved 29 April 2025) (no paper).
- Addition of MA32056 Introduction to Topology as a Semester 2 option to Year 3 of Mathematics and Physics courses from 2025/26 (approved 30 April 2025) (no paper).
- Addition of MA52088 Modelling with Randomness as an option to the Final Year of MMath (Hons) Mathematics from 2025/26 (approved 30 April 2025) (no paper).

## **7.0 Addition of a placement to MSc Financial Mathematics with Data Science (3416)**

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The Committee considered and agreed to recommend to CPAC (for consideration by circulation) Stage 2 Full Approval of a proposal to add a placement to MSc Financial Mathematics with Data Science, in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, for commencement from 2026/27 (Paper 109), which covers:

- Rationale (including resource implications and market information) and list of placement providers.
- Programme Specification.
- Updated CILO and assessment map.
- Placement Unit Description.

BA explained that the MSc had run for the first time in 2024/25; it had not originally been proposed with a placement option because it had been decided to introduce a placement later, after the course had been consolidated. BA added that the Placement Unit, which is Pass/Fail, proposed to be added already exists. There is no resource implication. The aim is for the placement to attract a small number of additional students, particularly international students who are keen to gain experience of the UK workplace. The Chair noted that students would complete their dissertation after completion of the placement. PS enquired as to whether a student could choose a dissertation based on their placement that did not align with staff expertise. BA explained that before leaving for placement students complete a project in small groups which forms the foundation of their dissertation.

## **8.0 Faculty strategy for timely assessment feedback (3417)**

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The Committee considered the draft Faculty strategy to improve timely assessment feedback monitoring, understand reasons for delays, and provide support as needed to reduce delays (Paper 110). The Committee noted that the strategy had been supported by Faculty Executive. The Committee noted that assessment deadlines are recorded in SAMIS, so it should be possible for assessment maps to be produced centrally. The Committee noted that some assessments are staggered in their completion, e.g. if it is not possible for a whole cohort to complete a placement or practical at the same time. Therefore, full feedback cannot be provided to students within the required timeframe since this could benefit unfairly students completing the assessment later. Instead, students should be given their mark, possibly with a few comments, within the 3 week window, with full feedback provided once the whole cohort has completed the assessment. The Committee acknowledged that this creates additional work for staff and delays the provision of full feedback to students, which is frustrating when delayed completion of assessment is due to student non-compliance. With regard to the target agreed with the Dean and ADE at the beginning of the year for the maximum percentage of coursework that can be returned late, PR enquired as to how this would be calculated, e.g. per assessment item, per volume. The Chair explained that a benchmark will be set for each department, based on their performance last year, with a view to seeing a continual improvement.

## **9.0 Science Moodle page review (3418)**

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The Committee reviewed data (Paper 111A) on the extent to which Science CT Moodle pages meet the Bath Blend Baseline (Paper 111B) and noted that 2 interns (Year 1 students from Nat Sci and Maths) have been recruited for June & July to work on Year 1 & 2 CT Moodle pages. The interns will be trained by the TEL team and will build on the work of the intern employed last year by addressing quick fix accessibility issues and inserting basic key information (e.g. contact details for the Unit Convenor, links to the AITT and key assessment information taken from the unit catalogue). Academic related information and content, e.g. PDF uploads, will not be amended by the interns. SP agreed to draft an email for DoTs to send out to colleagues in departments to make them aware of the work that will be taking place over the summer. PS commented that the Baseline checklist appears incomprehensible and onerous in places so would benefit from greater support from the CLT. The Committee noted that existing guidance, resources and training for Unit Convenors will be improved, to help ensure that improvements to Moodle pages continue to be made by Unit Convenors after the interns have completed their work.

## 10.0 Feedback from Committees (3419)

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### **Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC):**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2025 (Paper 112).

### **Student Experience Advisory Board (SEAB):**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025 (Paper 113).

### **Education Advisory Board (EAB):**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2025 (Paper 114).

## 11.0 Papers from EAB: Access and Degree Outcomes (3420)

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The Committee noted:

- a report from Access and Participation Plan (APP) Oversight Group providing an update on access for the 2025 admissions cycle and the activity being undertaken to support the access targets set out in the APP (Paper 115A).
- a report setting out future plans for Degree Outcomes for student cohorts that are monitoring within the APP (Paper 115B).
- a report outlining Widening Access activity across the University, submitted to University Executive Board on 18 March 2025 (Paper 115C).
- UG Degree Outcomes Report analysing trends in UG degree awards made to 2023/24, with a focus on degree inflation, considered by Senate on 2 April 2025 (Paper 115D).

MH invited members to let her know if any academic colleagues would be interested in conducting research for a number of projects on access and participation. The Chair added that this could be an area of work for undergraduate or PGT projects, if data could be appropriately anonymised.

## 12.0 Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (DLTQC) Minutes (3421)

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The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on:

**Department of Chemistry:** 12 March 2025 (Paper 116).

**Department of Computer Science:** 5 March 2025 (Paper 117).

**Department of Mathematical Sciences:** 26 February 2025 (Paper 118).

**Department of Physics:** 5 March (Paper 119A) and 3 March (Paper 119B) 2025.

## 13.0 Any Other Business (3422)

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There was none.