

# 1. Student-Staff Liaison Committees

## Contents

1. Student-Staff Liaison Committees .....	1
1.1 Purpose.....	2
1.2 Scope .....	2
1.3 Documents and guidance for staff and students.....	2
1.4 Terms of reference.....	2
1.5 Membership.....	3
1.6 Election of student members .....	4
1.6.1 Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering .....	5
1.6.2 School of Medicine and Dentistry .....	5
1.7 Organisation of meetings .....	6
1.7.1 Briefing of student members.....	6
1.7.3 Frequency and timing of meetings .....	7
1.7.4 Agendas.....	7
1.8 Minutes, Annual Reports and Follow-up.....	8
1.8.1 Minutes and Action Points .....	8
1.8.2 Annual Report .....	8
1.8.3 Internal reporting .....	8
1.9 Roles and Responsibilities .....	9
Appendix A .....	10

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of Student-Staff Liaison Committees (henceforth SSLCs) is to ensure that there is an effective channel for formal communication between students and staff in each School or Institute, through which students can reflect and give feedback on their programme of study and wider aspects of their student experience. SSLCs are an integral part of Queen Mary's systems and procedures for assuring academic standards and enhancing student experience. Issues and actions identified through the SSLC should be monitored and reported back to the SSLC for review. If necessary, actions from SSLCs should also be added to the school/institute's Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP), Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) or equivalent document and raised at other committees as required.

SSLCs form one part of the mechanisms through which schools/institutes can capture student feedback. The SSLC function should be considered as part of this system and students may need advice on the most appropriate fora to raise queries and concerns, from either their School or the Students' Union. Schools are also required to facilitate SSLCs to satisfy quality assurance measures.

## 1.2 Scope

This procedure covers all students, part time and full time, undergraduate and postgraduate, taught and research including those on distance learning or collaborative programmes. It does not cover non-award-bearing continuing education.

## 1.3 Documents and guidance for staff and students

Queen Mary has an agreed agenda and minutes template for SSLCs which schools/institutes are expected to use unless there are clear academic reasons for using an alternative format agreed by the relevant Dean for Education. This should be made known to the Students' Union and ARCS. These documents can be accessed from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) web page: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality-assurance/student-feedback/>

- Agenda template
- Minutes and action plan template

Students can also access comprehensive information, guidance and advice about the course representative system on the Students' Union web page at <http://www.gmsu.org/coursereprs>. The Students' Union will provide newly appointed representatives with a comprehensive handbook and provide continuous training throughout the academic year. As such, course representatives are under joint governance of Queen Mary Students' Union and Queen Mary University of London as stated in the Students' Union Bye-Law 10.

## 1.4 Terms of reference

The SSLC is constitutionally advisory to the Head of School/Institute or, in the case of the Medicine (MBBS) to the Dean (Education) and in the case of the Dentistry (BDS) to the Head of the Institute of Dentistry.

SSLCs should have a clear remit. Senate recommends the following should be included in all SSLC Terms of Reference:

To consider and discuss matters relating to:

- Feedback given to Course Representatives by their course/cohort.
- The content and organisation of programmes of study and any proposed changes, including planned new programmes.
- The provision of academic facilities and general school/institute/Queen Mary facilities.
- School/institute social activities that enhance skills development and community cohesion.
- Provision for student welfare including the operation of the personal tutor/academic advisor system.
- Arrangements for course and other relevant inductions and study skills provision.
- Local monitoring of academic standards through consideration of the school/institute's Student Experience Action Plan, Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) or another document that the school/institute uses for tracking actions relating to teaching and learning enhancement.
- Consideration of external examiners' reports, first destination statistics and results of module evaluation questionnaires and student surveys such as NSS, UKES, PTES and PRES where appropriate.
- Initial consideration of the commendations and recommendations of Periodic Review reports followed by regular reports on action taken in response.
- Any other matters on which the SSLC wishes to express a view, such as strategic developments being planned by the school/institute.

## 1.5 Membership

SSLC	Student membership	Staff membership	Chair	Secretary
<b>HSS &amp; S&amp;E</b>	UG (inclusive of Joint Honours) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 per year of course ≤20 students</li> <li>• At least 2 per year if course &gt;20 students. Exact number to be agreed between schools and the Students' Union</li> <li>• School Representatives (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of School / Institute Director or nominee (<i>ex officio</i>)</li> <li>• Senior Tutor or equivalent (<i>ex officio</i>)</li> <li>• Other academic staff as agreed by SSLC</li> <li>• Other Professional Services staff (e.g. library) as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul>	To be agreed by SSLC. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so. Training would be provided by the Students' Union.	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute
	PGT- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 per programme</li> </ul>			
	PGR – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 rep (minimum)</li> <li>• School Representatives (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul>			

<b>SMD</b>	<b>Institute Based</b>					
	All Institutes except IoD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute Representatives for that institute:</li> <li>PGT Institute Reps</li> <li>UG Institute Reps</li> <li>Course reps for that institute*</li> <li>Non-clinical Representative (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul>	As above	To be agreed by SSLC. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so. Training would be provided by the Students' Union. From table Junior and Senior MBBS and BDS SSLC are chaired by School Reps.	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute Junior and Senior MBBS and BDS SSLC should be minuted by a secretary appointed by the SSLC.	
	Institute of Dentistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course reps for that institute*</li> <li>Dental Faculty Rep</li> <li>Dental President</li> <li>BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul>	As above	Dental President with an elected staff chair	BDS SSLC should be minuted by a secretary appointed by the SSLC.	
	<b>Course Based</b>					
Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course representatives (5 per year of course)</li> <li>Pre-clinical for Junior SSLC</li> <li>Clinical representatives for Senior SSLC</li> <li>BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Tutor or equivalent (ex officio)</li> <li>Course leads or modules lead, as agreed by SSLC</li> <li>Other academic staff as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul>	Pre-clinical for Junior SSLC and Clinical representatives for Senior SSLC	Junior and Senior MBBS SSLC should be minuted by a secretary appointed by the SSLC.		
Other Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course reps for the course*</li> <li>Institute Representatives (UG and PGT) for that institute (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>Non-clinical Representative (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>UG –5 per year of course</li> </ul>	As above	To be agreed by SSLC. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so. Training would be provided by the Students' Union.	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute.		

\*Expected number of course representatives for SMD:

- UG courses:
  - 1 per year of course ≤20 students
  - At least 2 per year if course >20 students. Exact number to be agreed between schools and the Students' Union
  - Medicine: 5 per year
- PGT Courses: 1 per programme
- PGR: 1 rep (minimum)

## 1.6 Election of student members

Student members of an SSLC should be elected by the respective student constituency. Elections are organised by the Students' Union as follows:

### 1.6.1 Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering

- Course Reps for first years and PGT shall be elected at the beginning of semester 1 for courses starting in September. For courses starting in January, elections shall take place at the start of semester 2.

- Course Reps shall be elected to serve for the duration of the academic year, unless:
- the Rep decides to resign, in which case the post will be put up for election, either during a designated period in semester 2, or at the beginning of semester 1 of the next academic year.
- any student on their course issues a challenge during a designated period in semester 2, in which case the post will be put up for election. This is a vote of no confidence which is explained in Bye-Law 10.
- a serving Course Rep fails to attend at least one SSLC meeting each semester as a minimum, the Students' Union will do a welfare check to understand why. If there is still no proper cause or apologies for engagement, they shall be considered to have resigned and the post will be put up for election at the next Course Rep Elections.

Whenever a position falls vacant, due to resignation, the relevant SSLC may co-opt a Course Rep to serve until the next Course Rep Elections, with Student Union guidance.

- Elections for vacancies in continuing cohorts for the following academic year shall be held during semester 2 at a time decided by the Students' Union. The school or institute should inform the Students' Union if this is the case.
- Any un-filled positions at this point shall, in the first instance, be the subject of re-opened nominations at the beginning of semester 1 of the next academic year.
- Should a position remain unfilled at this point, the relevant SSLC may co-opt a Course Rep to serve until the next Course Rep elections, with Student Union guidance.
- A School Representatives (a part-time Student Council position elected annually during the Students' Union elections in Spring) will chair their relevant School Forum.

#### **Postgraduate Students (PGTs and PGRs)**

- Most Postgraduate Taught courses at Queen Mary are one year full-time, therefore PGT Course Representatives shall be elected at the beginning of semester 1.
- Postgraduate Research students have varying terms of study; therefore, PGR Course Representatives shall be elected at the beginning of semester 1.
- All PGT and PGR Representatives should be invited to relevant SSLCs and other forums

### 1.6.2 School of Medicine and Dentistry

## **Medicine**

- There shall be 5 elected Course Representative positions for all MBBS and Graduate Entry Programme (GEP) years.
- There shall be 1 elected Course Representative position for intercalating students in Medicine. This rep would attend any relevant SSLCs including course based and Institute based SSLCs.
- Year 1 Course Representative positions should be elected in semester 1.
- Year 2 Course Representatives shall be elected during semester 3 for the following year.
- Years 3, 4 and 5 Course Representatives shall be elected during semester 3 for the following year.
- All positions are elected for one year only.
- The annual Student Staff Conference replaces Faculty Forums within Medicine.

## **Dentistry**

- Course Representatives for Dentistry are elected from within the Dental Society (DentSoc) in elections conducted under the rules for Societies.
- Elections take place in semester 3 for continuing students, for the following academic year, and at the beginning of semester 1 for new First Year (BDS1) students and Dental Hygiene Therapists (DHTs/DCPs – Dental Care Professionals).
- There shall be 1 elected Course Representative position for intercalating students in Dentistry.
- All positions are elected for one year only.

Further information on any of the above can be obtained from the Students' Union's Education Coordinator.

## **Other courses**

An Institute Representatives (a part-time position, that sits on QMSU's Education Board, elected annually during the Students' Union elections in Spring or other suitable time) will chair their relevant Institute Forum.\*

\*for 2021-22 academic year, Institute Reps will be selected from amongst the course reps for each institute at the beginning of the academic year.

## **1.7 Organisation of meetings**

### **1.7.1 Briefing of student members**

For SSLCs to be effective their role must be made known to the student community and their members must feel able to participate fully in meetings. The Student's Union and Queen Mary will therefore endeavour to advertise the Course Representative system to students as well as provide them with avenues to collect feedback and be contacted (e.g. emails).

The Head of School or delegated person such as the SSLC Chair should ensure that Course Representatives are provided with written or oral briefings; these briefings could involve

participation by experienced Course Representatives. Details of the SSLC(s) should be included in locally produced student handbooks and reference of these should be made to the committee during student induction.

Training is also organised by the Students' Union; more information can be provided by the Students' Union's Education Coordinator and the relevant Executive Officers for each Faculty.

### 1.7.3 Frequency and timing of meetings

SSLCs should meet at least once each semester with the expectation that two meetings per semester is best practice. Some SSLCs arrange their meetings to take place over a buffet lunch in order to encourage attendance and this practice, where possible, is commended. If the meeting is held virtually, alternative options should be explored by the School.

Dates of meetings should be agreed by the SSLC and publicised widely in advance at the start of the year – normally by the Head of School or delegated person such as the SSLC Chair and/or the Secretary to the SSLC. Dates may be changed if needed later in the year, but this should be communicated at least 1 week in advance of the original date or new date, whichever comes first.

Within the School of Medicine and Dentistry all institutes will have the option for one of two approaches: either Institute SSLCs only or a dual approach with at least one institute based SSLC being required per semester with the option for additional termly SSLCs to be held at a course/programme level. A table of reference for these different approaches can be found as Appendix A.

### 1.7.4 Agendas

Queen Mary has an agenda template for use in SSLC meetings. This ensures that schools and institutes cover all the areas required by the university and external agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency. All items should be included at every meeting, with the following exceptions:

- Approval of terms of reference and membership - first meeting of the year only.
- New students' arrivals experience – first meeting of the year. However, if there is a subsequent entry period, this item should be re-considered as appropriate.
- SMD institutes running a dual approach (course based and institute based SSLCs) can use the agenda template for one of the 2 SSLC levels. For example, the template could be used for Course Based SSLCs and then Institute SSLCs can have an agenda that only includes relevant/escalated items.

The agenda should be distributed to all members at least 1 week in advance of the meeting and displayed to all staff and students, e.g. via noticeboards or on QMplus pages.

Student representatives should be given sufficient time to propose other items for the agenda, canvas views and opinions from the cohort for the meeting as well as report back on outcomes. Schools and institutes are expected to support representatives in engaging with the cohort by allowing time for representatives to address students at the beginning or end of teaching sessions or via email (such as a providing a distribution list or sending emails on the representatives' behalf) or by using QMplus pages and any other relevant methods.

## 1.8 Minutes, Annual Reports and Follow-up

### 1.8.1 Minutes and Action Points

The minutes should be completed promptly after the meeting and include an action points table – a template is provided by ARCS. Minutes must be sent to ARCS and the Students' Union within four weeks of the meeting taking place. ARCS publish the confirmed SSLC minutes at <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/qmintranet/quality-assurance/sslc/sslc-2019-20/>. Minutes should also be published by Schools/Institutes on the relevant QMplus homepage.

It is expected that the minutes or an oral report from the SSLC are considered at the school or institute's Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent) to ensure that SSLC's recommendations can be reviewed and acted upon promptly.

The minutes of SSLC meetings are not deemed to be confidential. However, where sensitive or confidential information need to be recorded these specific items may be marked as confidential. In this case a non-confidential version of the minutes of the meeting should be published. Where detailed discussion of the teaching of a particular module takes place, some SSLCs may choose to exclude the identity of the teacher concerned from the minutes although the discussion should still be noted.

It is the School/institute's responsibility to ensure that the minutes and action points from SSLC meetings are available to all students to review. This can be done in a variety of ways either using noticeboards or electronic methods such as an SSLC or course page on QMplus but should be placed where the documents are easily accessible to the cohort.

Students should also be informed about the actions being taken to address the concerns raised. It is recommended that this is done via student communications for more general issues. Specific concerns relating to a particular programme or module may be addressed on the relevant QMplus page or forum.

### 1.8.2 Annual Report

At the end of the academic year each SSLC should produce a short annual report of its work. This report should consist of the following:

- Table showing all action points raised over the year and the current status of actions (e.g. closed, ongoing etc.) – this should be the collated actions points table from each set of minutes.
- Short commentary on any actions that are incomplete or ongoing to explain why this is the case.
- Any good practice or positive developments arising from the SSLC that the school/institute would wish to highlight.
- Any actions or issues that will be carried over into the next academic year.

### 1.8.3 Internal reporting

Schools and Institutes should produce an annual report providing an overview of the issues raised by Course Representatives in the previous year, examples of good practice, and track trends. These reports should be co-completed by staff and student members of the SSLC, most suitably the Chair and Student Co-Chair. This will be considered at the university and faculty advisory groups with responsibility for teaching, learning and the student experience. These reports should be reported for discussion at Education Quality and Standards Board and Senate.



## 1.9 Roles and Responsibilities

There is a separate document which outlines each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities. Please see this for more information.

## Appendix A

Appendix A is a table of reference for the two approaches to SSLCs within courses outside of the IHSE and IoD

	SSLCS		
	Institute Based SSLC Only	Institute Based SSLC with Course Based SSLCs	
		OR	Course SSLC
<b>How often?</b>	At least 1 per semester with at least 2 being per semester being best practice.	At least 1 per semester with at least 2 being per semester being best practice.	At least 1 per semester
<b>When</b>	Should not occur so early so as to not allow students to have feedback but should also not happen so late so that feedback cannot be implemented quickly enough	Should not occur so early so as to not allow students to have feedback but should also not happen so late so that feedback cannot be implemented quickly enough.  Should occur in advance of the Institute SSLC so that any institute relevant matters can be discussed at the Institute SSLC.	Should occur after the course SSLC so that any institute relevant matters can be discussed at the Institute SSLC.
<b>Who attends?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute staff:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institute Director or nominee (ex officio)</li> <li>○ Senior Tutor or equivalent (ex officio)</li> <li>○ Course leads or modules lead, as agreed by SSLC</li> <li>○ Other academic staff as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other staff:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Library representative</li> <li>○ Advice and Counselling representative</li> <li>○ Other Professional Services staff as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institute Representatives for that institute:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PGT Institute Reps</li> <li>▪ UG Institute Reps</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Course reps for the institute</li> <li>○ Non-clinical Representative (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>○ BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute staff:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Senior Tutor or equivalent (ex officio)</li> <li>○ Course leads or modules lead, as agreed by SSLC</li> <li>○ Other academic staff as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Course reps for the course</li> <li>○ Institute Representatives (UG and PGT) for that institute (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>○ Non-clinical Representative (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>○ BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute staff:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institute Director or nominee (ex officio)</li> <li>○ Senior Tutor or equivalent (ex officio)</li> <li>○ Course leads or modules lead, as agreed by SSLC</li> <li>○ Other academic staff as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other staff:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Library representative</li> <li>○ Advice and Counselling representative</li> <li>○ Other Professional Services staff (e.g. library) as agreed by SSLC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institute Representatives for that institute:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PGT Institute Reps</li> <li>▪ UG Institute Reps</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Course reps for that institute</li> <li>○ Non-clinical Representative (non-compulsory to attend)</li> <li>○ BLSA President (non-compulsory to attend)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Chair:</b>	To be agreed by SSLC. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so. Training would be provided by the Students' Union	To be agreed by SSLC (unless already determined in this guidance). Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so or this guidance outlines who should be chair. Training would be provided by the Students' Union	To be agreed by SSLC. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided not to do so. Training would be provided by the Students' Union
<b>Secretary</b>	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute	Should be a member of staff from the school/institute

<b>Structure:</b>	Should follow structure as set out in the education manual as much as possible with reasonable adjustments to better sit the institute	Up to the individual course and institute staff but a set agenda should be used as a template and should allow different representatives from different year groups to input. The agenda should include matters for escalation to the institute SSLC.	Should follow structure as set out in the education manual as much as possible with reasonable adjustments to better sit the institute. It is not required for all courses to be discussed but institute and cross programme topics and items for escalation from course based SSLCs should be discussed.
-------------------	--	---	---