

**Academic Sub-Committee**

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| **Meeting details** | | | |
| **Meeting name** | **Academic Sub-Committee** | | |
| **Date** | **Tuesday 15th November 2022** | **Time** | **18:00 – 19:00** |
| **Location** | The Little Room, Students’ Union, Plymouth Campus | | |

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| **Minutes** | |
| **1.**  **Welcome** | VP Education Tonari Arikekpar (TA) welcomed attendees and introduced the format of the academic sub-committee. |
| **2.**  **Attendance / Apologies** | Attendance:  Louis Wilson- SR Society & Culture  Aaron Huggett- SR Biological and Marine Sciences  Olayinka Kareem-PGT Part Time Officer  Mya Symister-SR SECAM  Tonari Arikekpar- VP Education  75 Course Reps  Apologies:  Robert Dyson- SR Art Design and Architecture  Amy Bishop- SR SNAM  Cheryl Addo-Quarshie- SR Biomedical Sciences  Ahmed Hammad- PGR Part Time Officer  Tina Hunt –Mature Students Part Time Officer  Daniella Marley - President  Joshua Borokinni - VP Wellbeing & Diversity  Mitch Laughton - VP Activities |
| **3.**  **Minutes of last meeting** | Inaugural meeting of the academic sub-committee, no prior minutes for review. |
| **4. Notification of any other business** | Attendees raised the following as topics for further discussion:  Assessment  Library  Seminars  Recorded Materials  Labs and Technical sessions |
| **5a.**  **Library Services** | Library Services were unable to attend due to staff sickness. In their absence students raised the following feedback.  An attendee raised that being able to book a space for 12 hours is unfair especially during busy times. This was echoed by other attendees and mentioned that this wasn’t available before Covid  An attendee raised that the staff seem uninformed about the support in the Library for neurodiverse students including services such as coloured paper for Dyslexic students.  An attendee raised that the computers with eco stickers seem to run on a lower processing power which is not able to cope with coursework projects. As these computers seem to be random it is not possible in a busy session to ask someone not using the processing capacity to swop but there is no option to un-limit the eco mode. |
| **5b.**  **Co-option of School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences Rep** | * ED explained what co-option means to those present. Attendees then had a chance to read manifesto before voting. * For 64 * Abstain 1 * Against 0 * Adam Holt is elected School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences Rep |
| **6.**  **Priority work / campaigns** | TA highlighted that in a normal meeting this agenda point would be covered by Sabbatical and PTO campaigns however at this point in the academic year, it is too early to have significant information to report. |
| **7.**  **Sabbatical Officer Report Q&A** | TA expressed that her officer report can be found on the UPSU website. Ta also gave a brief overview on the following topics:  Community Larder  Blended Learning  Cost of Living crisis  [Give it a Go](https://www.upsu.com/giveitago/) – The opportunity to engage in sports without having to commit to joining the team  Night-time safety |
| **8.**  **School Rep Reports Q&A** | School Reps present gave a quick overview of how to get in contact with them. |
| **9. Any other business** | Emma Duckworth (ED) expressed that it’s important that representatives appreciate that they themselves are the student union. It is not the building or the events, but representatives themselves that make up the Union.  Attendees had significant amounts of feedback to offer which would have been more than could be discussed so attendees gave written feedback (see attached) |
| **10. Dates for the diary** | Next meeting due to take place on the 12th December 18:00-19:00 Rolle 001. |
|  | **End of meeting** |

Academic Sub Committee Feedback

Assessment

* Not enough time between assessment deadlines, staff need to liase in order to make assignments more handelble for students - Creative Writing, Marketing, Law , Psychology Msc
* Lecturers have not made requirements/marking criteria accessible within a reasonable time period
* Feedback tutorials the day before dedlines is leaving students without enough time to make amendments- Architecture
* Feedback for 1st submission was not provided until after the 2nd submission date had past.- Msc Internationsal logistics and supply chain management

Content delivery

* Breaks between 2 hour lectures
* Breaks in lectures to discuss content
* Find ways to get more people involved in seminars – solutions maybe ask specific people rather than on a volunteering basis
* Library
* Library should either provide headsets or allow Bluetooth connection as not everyone has wired headphones anymore to use on library computers
* Library induction didn’t include info on how to take out laptops
* No information about the availability of coloured paper

SU

* Gym should be free
* Student representative meetings should be held in a more quiet place like RLB Hall
* Better venue for meetings like this for example a lecture theatre
* Free food in student meetings

Writing support

* Ongoing support for paper writing, not just in year one
* A number of students have expressed a lack of confidence in their academic writing capabilities. Whilst support like the writing café exists, it would be beneficial for an academic writing element in first year of course

IT and Learning Resources

* Shared school resources- eg film software/editing software is beneficial for everyone or green screen use for business school – Marketing
* Provide Headphones or allow Bluetooth device connection
* More accessible info on different resources and support
* Eco computers in library sometimes have reduced computing power or do not work
* The mics in lecture spaces not picking up the audio or making a static/echoing sound makes it difficult to hear the course content
* Maybe consider reading pens like city college for SEND benefit
* Optional training or re-cap on initial IT skilles
* Lecture audio/ video recording available to students
* Student support for new software in lectures
* Making software readily available to undergrads eg spss, thomson reuters
* Smarthub is glitch
* CAD lessons for architecture students, some people find it hard to learn software without guidance

University Cards

* Don’t always scan
* Don’t open doors for some rooms
* Solutions – making it clear on card design how to use It properly
* Be clear where students can access rooms/ buildings only by card

Module feedback

* Make module handbooks the same across a course so that it is easier to see gaps

Labs and practical sessions

* Smeaton building especially, Access hours – get locked out at 5pm is not enough time to do uni work after lectures are done
* Can only access software and hardware in labs so can't do coursework in the library it has to be in labs
* Lab machines not having access for students to work on
* Lack of technicians for IT help
* Software not up to date – Game development
* Davy building difficult to get into lab, door is blocked due to unauthorised access
* Lack of space for groups to use chart room –Navigation
* Prefer in class lab and practicals- EE Foundation
* Bigger space/separate groups into 3 or more- Physio stage 1
* Practical results update on DLE should follow what happened in the sessions
* ‘Take the helm’- the uni yacht used to be accessible to navigation students to go out on Wednesday afternoons with a uni provided skipper, this is now not available and many are disappointed as our course fees cover its costs

SOB&MS

* Difficult to do assessments/reports when data is only given 4 days before
* Face to face learning is preferable
* Many students had issues with having too little time to do the end of module assessments (only a week) as well as starting new modules
* Careers
* Careers sessions later in the year- too overwhelming at the beginning
* Would prefer smaller spread out sessions to one 2 hour block

PALS

* Would like PALS sessions where second and third year students help out first years

Student services

* Not supporting and signposting enough for international students with issues such as financial aid, information about foodbanks, or access to sanitation like washing machines while in the process of getting a bank account

Inclusivity

* Recordable / prevision of lectures
* Paremy has made us well aware though services
* Why aren’t we moving towards accessibility?
* Accessibility & wheelchair users have been made to feel a spectacle due to seating plans for them to be sat at the front of lecture halls
* Colour overlay systems not made accessible for dyslexic students
* Disabled / chronically ill students are placed in a position of unreasonable responsibility for their own advocacy.

Online Lectures

* Course reps miss representing their course
* IT issues
* Lack of space for groups to use chat room (new)
* Lectures and students preferred zoom setup over Panopto – easier to rewatch and record
* Virtual appearance (have a zoom meeting on and students who can turn up can ask the lecturer to attend it)
* Transcripts not matching the lectures
* Have online lectures at later times (5-6pm)
* Have email notifications in Plymouth’s app
* Exam content not being covered in lectures -> lack of communication between lectures when are went of ill long term

Recorded Materials

* Possibly have regular checklists that have clear outcomes
* No recorded lectures, ever & it would be helpful to have documents/presentations uploaded before the lecture start so we know what we are doing
* When there are presentations half the lecture topic is not in the presentation, you only hear it – this + recorded lectures = stubbed
* Bring back zoom for individuals w/ chronic illness + train strikes

Accommodation

* No non-recycling waste bins in Mary Newman Accommodation
* Everyday “lectures” not accepted
* Sports for postgraduate students
* Home at halls is not working effectively

Labs + Practical Sessions

* Practical results update on DLE should follow what we did in the practical sessions

Emdeck

* Half of course being expected to write our report as though we actually got to go which isn't helpful or fair
* Being turned down by lecturer for being slightly behind / struggling (CAT Emdeck)
* Financial help w it
* Sessions so confusing
* Some lecturers don’t upload Panopto videos
* Group work – could be good to choose a friend or 2 to go with
* They don’t record them because they say its interactive and they go around however to use excel and them failing through it is helpful they should still record
* More places for left-handed students! Agreed from marketing

Lectures:

* There appears to be a lack of engagement with certain lecturers due to a lack of directions when carrying out teaching
* Language barriers to some extent limit engagement
* Marketing

Seminars:

* Rushed
* Majority only last 1h30m/1h
* Not much assessment to ensure students are on track
* Tutors do not seem extreme well versed on their curriculum / content
* Based off feedback
* Marketing

Course Specifics

PHYSIO

* Bigger space / separate groups into 3 or more – PHYSIO. Stage 1

Navigation

* ‘Take the helm’ - the uni Yacht used to be accessable to Navigation students to go out on wednesday afternoons with a uni provided skipper, this is not not available and many are disapointed as our course fees cover its costs. - NAVIGATION
* Lack of space for groups to use chart room – NAVIGATION ALL STAGES

Game Development

* LACK of IT help in Smeaton – GAME DEVELOPMENT STAGE 4

EE Found.

* Prefer in class lab + practical – EE Foundation.

Robotics

* Access hours: cant access labs (specifically Smeaton 303) after 5pm. This is the only lab with all the software + hardware we need. Therefore cant do work after hours (9-5pm is also when we have lectures!) Used to be open until 10pm before covid. This gave much more flexibility for people who work / have class etc. Also student cards don’t always open the door during 9-5 anyway - ROBOTICS 4TH STAGE

Law

* My cohort are very argumentative, please send help! - Law
* No recorded materials, difficult for people who cannot make it such as ill or train strikes. Sometimes lectures move too quickly or a need to review a difficult topic is there. Powepoints are sometimes unclear. - LAW

CREATIVE WRITING

* Many members of the cohort have complained about attendance to lectures / seminars being mandatory – some students have to commute in which is often difficult for 9am starts – CREATIVE WRITING

ECONOMICS

* Recordings with tawer (projector thingy) sometimes do not appear on Panopto and sound quality is not always good. Also tutorials should be recorded. Writings on the smart board sometimes don’t show