

BMB Staff Student Liaison Group

Wednesday 11th November 2020

14:00 – 16:00

MS Teams

| | Agenda item | Lead | Paper |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Welcome & Apologies for Absence | Chair | |
| 2. | Updated Terms of Reference | Chair | SSLGBMB2021-01 |
| 2. | Minutes of the last BMB SSLG | Chair | SSLGBMB2021-02 |
| 3. | Matters arising | Chair | |
| 4. | BMB Wellbeing Rep Reports | | |
| | 4.1 Year 1 | Dominic Haworth-Staines | SSLGBMB2021-03 |
| | 4.2 Year 2 | Zicheng Wang | SSLGBMB2021-04 |
| | 4.3 Year 3 | ICSMSU Vice-Chair of Wellbeing Reps | SSLGBMB2021-05 |
| 5. | BMB Academic Rep Reports | | |
| | 5.1 Year 1 | Yuki Agarwala Miss Angellica Marta | SSLGBMB2021-06 |
| | 5.2 Year 2 | Cris Riquelme Vano Nitya Gupta | SSLGBMB2021-07 |
| | 5.3 Year 3 | Kah Ng | SSLGBMB2021-08 |
| 6. | Update from Library Manager and Liaison Librarian | Rebecca Jones | |
| 7. | Any Other Business | | |
| 8. | Date of Next Meeting | | |
| | Wednesday 10 th February 2021 | | |

Staff Student Liaison Group (BSc Medical Biosciences BMB) Terms of Reference and Membership 2020-21

The Staff Student Liaison Groups report to the relevant Undergraduate Education Board and are chaired by the President of the ICSM Student Union. The role of these groups is to provide a forum for consideration of academic and non-academic issues raised by staff and/or students regarding all three years of the BMB programme.

The Group's specific responsibilities include:

1. To consider academic and non-academic issues and problems raised by students and/or staff concerning the relevant years of the course, identify possible solutions and oversee remedial action, referring matters to the relevant Education Committee where appropriate.
2. To receive and respond to teaching evaluations as part of the quality management process.
3. To consider proposed changes to teaching and assessment.

Membership:

| | |
|---|---|
| ICSM Student Union President | Muntaha Naeem (Chair) |
| ICSMSU Welfare Chair | Natania Varshney |
| ICSMSU Welfare Vice Chair Representatives | Mabel Prendergast |
| Director for Undergraduate Science | Professor Alison McGregor |
| Head of Programme | |
| Head of Assessment and Feedback | Dr Birgit Leitinger |
| Senior Welfare Tutor | Dr Rebecca Salter |
| Head of Year 1 | Dr Jacqueline Dickson |
| Head of Year 2 | Dr Elizabeth Want |
| Head of Year 3 | Dr Vania Braga |
| BMB Module Leads | Dr Birgit Leitinger (MCB) Dr Toby Athersuch (CBI) Dr Paul Strutton (INTS) Dr Kirsty Flower (STAT) Dr Luisa Garcia-Haro (LP I) Dr Andy Porter (GEN) Professor Charlotte Bevan (CBIO) Dr Ana Costa-Pereira (IMI) Dr Laura Canevari (NEURO) Professor Julian Marchesi (MHD) Dr Duncan Rogers (CTB) Dr Harry Leitch (SCRB) Dr Jacqueline Dickson (LP II) Dr Chris John (PHAR) Dr Anne Burke-Gaffney (DESD) Dr Ian Adcock (DESD) Dr Catherine Webb (SCPE & SCPEA) Dr Jennifer Wallis (CREF) Dr Miriam Sbaiti (GLOH) Dr Peter Clark (NANO) Professor Terry Tetley (NANO) Dr Ali Abbara (OBD) Dr Charlotte Dean (REGM) Dr Samuel Barnes (BOA) Dr Andrew Edwards (TAR) Dr Brian Robertson (TAR) Professor Hector Keun (PMED) Dr Nicholas Kirkby (LABP, LITP, WKBP) Dr Ricardo Petraco Da Cunha (LABP, LITP, WKBP) |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Instructional Designers | Dr Agata Sadza |
| Programme Officer (BMB) | Deanna Greenwood (Secretary) |
| ICSMSU Academic Officer | Jai Chapman |
| ICSMSU BMB President | Elena Torrell |
| Student Year Reps: | |
| BMB Year 1 Representatives | Yuki Agarwala Angellica Marta |
| BMB Year 1 Wellbeing Rep | Dominic Haworth-Staines |
| BMB Year 2 Representatives | Cris Riquelme Vano Nitya Gupta |
| BMB Year 2 Wellbeing Rep | Zichen Wang |
| BMB Year 3 Representatives BMB Year 3 Wellbeing Rep | Kah Ng TBC |
| Associate Dean & Head of Undergraduate School Medicine | Dr Martin Lupton |
| Teaching Facilities Manager | Rebecca Sie |
| Director of Education Management | Vanessa Powell |
| Programme Manager (BScs) | Alyeisha Joseph |
| Head of Programme Management | Chris Harris |
| Head of Technology Enhanced Education | Lisa Carrier |
| Student Services Manager | Francesca Bertolini |
| Library Manager and Liaison Librarian | Rebecca Jones |
| Head of School of Medicine Secretariat | Trish Brown |
| Communications Manager | Dorrit Pollard-Davey |

Department Education Leads, College Consuls and other FEO staff will receive papers.

Working Groups & Co-opted members:

The Committee will expect to form working parties, co-opting other members of staff with particular knowledge and experience, to consider specific issues, when appropriate.

Frequency and Timing of Meetings:

Three times a year (once per term).

BSc Medical Biosciences Staff Student Liaison Group
Minutes of Meeting held on 03 June 2020

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Present: | Prof Ian Adcock, Ms Anissa Alloula, Dr Toby Athersuch, Ms Fran Bertolini, Prof. Charlotte Bevan, Ms Emma Blyth, Ms Trish Brown, Dr Anne Burke-Gaffney, Dr Laura Canevari, Mr Jai Chapman, Dr Peter Clark, Dr Ana Costa-Pereira, Ms Caitlin Davies, Dr Jacqueline Dickson, Dr Andrew Edwards, Ms Aprodite Eshetu, Ms Andrea Flores Esparza, Dr Kirsty Flower, Dr Letizia Foroni, Dr Luisa Garcia-Haro, Ms Deanna Greenwood (Secretary), Mr Jack Hall, Mr Chris Harris, Ms Sharon Hubscher, Ms Nayana Iyer, Dr James Martin-Jensen, Dr Chris John, Ms Rebecca Jones, Ms Aleysha Joseph, Dr Hector Keun, Dr Harry Leitch, Dr Birgit Leitingner, Dr Jia Li, Mr Martin Lupton, Ms Mariam Malik-Gabol, Dr Alison McGregor, Mr Sabino Mendez-Pastor, Ms Dorrit Pollard-Davey, Dr Andy Porter, Dr Duncan Rogers, Mr Ben Russell (Chair), Dr Rebecca Salter, Ms Rebecca Sie, Ms Veronika Suchankova, Dr Elizabeth Want, Mr James Wild |
| Apologies | Dr Ali Abbara, Dr Christina Atchison, Dr Samuel Barnes, Mr Josh Blacker, Dr Vania Braga, Ms Lisa Carrier, Dr Charlotte Dean, Ms Rumi Khanom, Dr Brian Robertson, Ms Agata Sadza, Dr Paul Strutton, Prof Terry Tetley, Ms Natania Varshey, |

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| 1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence | |
| REPORTED | The Chair welcomed members to the second BMB SSLG of the 2019-20 academic year. |
| 2. Minutes of the previous BMB SSLG | |
| AGREED | Minutes from the last meeting were approved as an accurate record |
| 3. Matters Arising | |
| NOTED | <p>4.7 – In relation to student concerns over LP1 assessment, a session explaining assessment in more details took place and comms reassuring students were circulated by email and through the BMB Bulletin.</p> <p>4.9 – Student concerns over assessment overall - Year reps met with Dr Birgit Leitingner to discuss assessment and proposed changes for next year.</p> <p>4.13 – In relation to feedback on the MHD Module, Dr Leitingner and Dr Want met with Dr Jia Li to review module feedback in detail.</p> <p>4.21 – Feedback on the SCRB Module was reviewed with Module Team and Head of Year</p> <p>4.23 – Year 2 reps to advise students to contact Dr Vania Braga and Aleysha Joseph in case of any issues</p> <p>4.30 – In relation to issues of confidentiality for students on projects and the impact on assessments – Dr Braga and Chris Harris looked at contracts in more detail, and assessments are included in confidentiality agreements. This was particularly relevant for AZ students.</p> <p>5.3 – Organising careers sessions – Careers sessions for all three years have been organised in Term 3</p> <p>5.4 – In relation to support for new Y1 students – plans are under way with tutorials, padlet and other online platforms.</p> |

| | | |
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| | 10.2 and 10.4 – Action plan for Y3 – an updated version was circulated via the Bulletin and a Town Hall organised for WKBP students 10.4 – In relation to WKBP markers and marking criteria – Assessors were briefed in more detail on what students were expected to do in the assessment. | |
| 4. BMB Academic Rep Reports | | |
| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB21920-04.3 - Year 1 Report | |
| NOTED | 4.1 | 111 students answered the Y1 survey |
| | 4.2 | Mock papers and consolidation sessions had been helpful in order to practice and prepare for the formal examinations |
| | 4.3 | In relation to the MCB Exam, where one question had no right answer, students reported that many lost time looking for a right answer. |
| NOTED | 4.4 | Students requested suggestions on how to improve the write-up component. Many students had found that the amount of detail they were told to include was difficult to achieve because of the word count. Prof. Alison McGregor (AMG) explained that one of the key skills in scientific writing was learning to be succinct. AMG acknowledged that this was a difficult skill to achieve in a short time and noted that more support for BMB students was being developed around study skills and essay writing. |
| | 4.5 | Dr Luisa Garcia-Haro (LGH) also acknowledged that scientific writing was a difficult skill to master but noted that 2000 words was sufficient to convey the information requested by the ICA. LGH reminded students that support or LP1 assessments had been available year-round and the write-up should be viewed as an ongoing assessment, week by week. LGH reported that the LP1 Team were working on developing new tools to support students with this. |
| DISCUSSED | 4.6 | Some students reported that they struggled to know what was expected of them with coursework and requested more formative assessments or examples of good quality work from previous years to understand what they should strive for. AMG noted that the risk with releasing examples was that it stopped students from writing independently, when the point of coursework was to give students some academic judgment on their understanding. |
| | 4.7 | Students were reminded that the centre for Academic English and the Library both had useful study skills resources to help students transition from A-Level to University level writing. |
| NOTED | 4.8 | Students were reminded that the proposed changes to Y1 assessments were already approved and would come into force in 2020/21. |
| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB21920-04.2 - Year 2 report | |
| NOTED | 4.11 | Whilst most students reported no issues with exams, a few students found the interface challenging, particularly when answering the Data Interpretation questions, and having to look at figures. |
| DISCUSSED | 4.12 | Some students found the length of the CTB Exam challenging. Dr Duncan Rogers (DR) noted that he had requested for the exam to be extended to 3 hours. Members of the Group were reminded that any changes to assessment have to go through appropriate governance procedures and the FEO do not have the authority to make these changes. DR noted that a mechanism should be in place to allow more flexibility, in the event of unforeseen situations. Trish Brown (TB) added that whilst some changes may seem pragmatic at the time, in the long run they could become counterproductive. |

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| | 4.13 | Students reported that many were still confused about Year 3 structure and requested more clarity on Year 3. Members discussed current challenges in relation to planning for next year, noting that the situation was complex and dynamic, with advice and guidance constantly changing. Students were reassured that all College staff was completely focused on this and on planning for them. |
| DISCUSSED | 4.14 | Mr Martin Lupton (ML) asked students whether they preferred more communication from College, accepting that advice may change, or less communication with more precise information. Students noted that they were under a lot of pressure with commitments such as accommodation and contracts. Members acknowledged that it was challenging to strike the right balance here. |
| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB21920-04.3 - Year 3 report | |
| NOTED | 4.22 | In 20/21 there will be a member of staff specifically dedicated to Year 3 projects, which should make things run smoother for students and staff |
| | 4.23 | Students reported being satisfied with how the Safety Net was updated and calculated for BMB |
| | 4.24 | Students were reminded that final year project marks and feedback would be released after the Exam Board in July |
| | 4.25 | AMG noted that the team were working with tutoring around a better understanding of the BMB programme and the structure of Year 3, aiming to make sure that staff who engage with the course properly understand it |
| 5. Welfare | | |
| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB31920-12 Year 1 Report SSLGBMB31920-13 Year 2 Report | |
| NOTED | 5.1 | The volume of Mitigating Circumstances applications has increased further to Covid-19 and the process has been expedited. |
| | 5.2 | Some Year 2 students reported not feeling supported or recognised during the Covid crisis. AMG said this was disturbing to hear, as the focus for all staff had been to be empathetic around the issues and anxieties that the situation had caused. AMG reminded students that the impact had been far reaching on everyone, that none of it was addressed casually and that staff had been affected too. |
| | 5.3 | Chris Harris recognised that students had pressures in relation to accommodation, and confirmed that more guidance would be circulated very soon. |
| NOTED | 5.4 | Mr Martin Lupton (ML) asked students for their views on what College should be doing, in light of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the U.S. and across the world. Aphrodite Eshetu (AE) said acknowledging that it's a systemic issue that is not separated from us. Acknowledging the situation and having the support of staff and supervisors is crucial. Trish Brown reported that BMA had released a charter on tackling and addressing racial discrimination in Medical Schools. College has been reviewing this and there was enthusiasm for adopting the principles more widely across Imperial. TB noted that this will need extensive input from the College community. |
| 6. Student engagement around development of CX Campus | | |
| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB31920-14 | |
| NOTED | 6.1 | As part of the refurbishment project to update facilities at Charing Cross, a student engagement group was set up to look at various elements of the project and provide feedback. Students were invited to contact the group with thoughts and comments on the refurbishment project. |

| 7. Proposed changes to BMBY2 | | |
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| CONSIDERED | SSLGBMB31920-15 SSLGBMB31920-16 SSLGBMB31920-17 SSLGBMB31920-18 SSLGBMB31920-19 SSLGBMB31920-20 | |
| NOTED | 7.1 | <p>Dr Liz Want gave an overview on the rationale and proposed changes for Year 2, explaining that the review of assessments throughout the BMB programme was to relieve the burden of assessment on BMB students, which was higher than necessary and needed to be streamlined and consolidated. The team also recognised that skills were being repeatedly assessed across modules and that the balance of assessment formats throughout the year could be improved.</p> <p>To that end, for Year 2, the following changes were proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In GEN, a reduction of the number of ICAs from two to one. • In CBIO, a reduction of the number of ICAs from two to one. • In CTB, the change of exam length from 1 hr to 3 hr to bring it in line with all other Y2 exams. • In LP2, removal of the Lab Book and Practical Exam, and re-weighting of remaining components • In IMI, replacing coursework with an individual oral presentation |
| DISCUSSED | 7.2 | Students were pleased with the changes suggested which will streamline Year 2. |
| | 7.3 | Some students reported being more confident with more assessments. Dr Leitinger explained that the course was designed to ensure each assessment had a formative before a summative, allowing students to try the assessment first. |
| 8. Update from Library Manager and Liaison Librarian | | |
| NOTED | 8.1 | Rebecca Jones reminded students that the Library was open online and to check the main library webpage for updates. Students were reminded about the LibKey Nomad extension in Google, which provides links to full text articles subscribed to by Imperial. |
| 9. Any Other Business | | |
| NOTED | 9.1 | The Group thanked Mr Ben Russell and all the Reps for their hard work in 2019/20. |
| 10. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 11th November 2020 | | |



Term 1 – Year 1 Welfare Report

Feedback collection Information:

- Total survey respondents: 60
- Survey opened on **31st October** and closed on **4th of November**
- Qualitative feedback methods: open-text boxes on Qualtrics survey

Areas of focus:

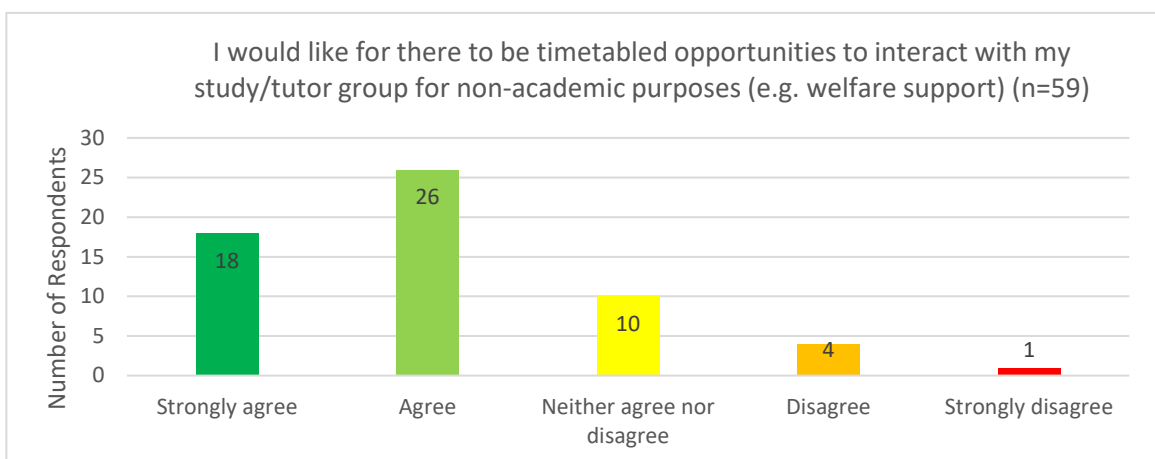
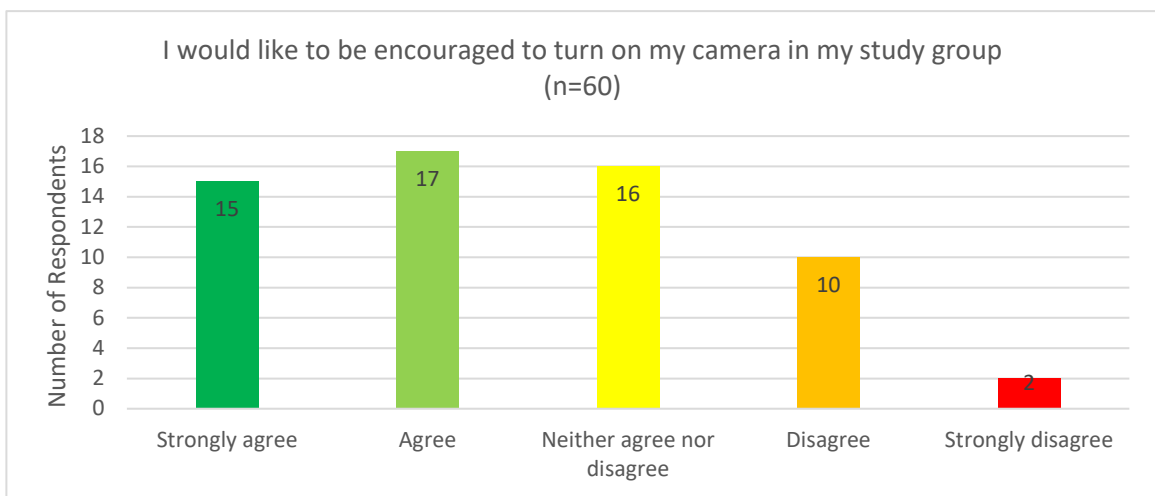
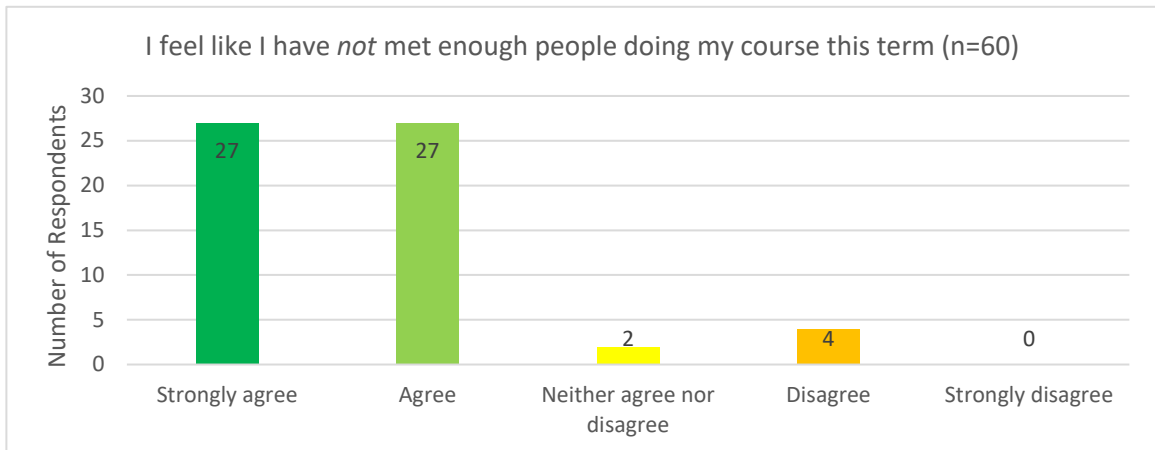
- Wellbeing during online learning
- Feedback
- Self-isolation

Welfare Vice Chair of Representatives: Mabel Prendergast

Year 1 Wellbeing Representative: Dominic Haworth-Staines



Focus 1 – Wellbeing during online-learning



Qualitative Feedback

Mental health of students

- "I feel quite stressed and overwhelmed and i feel sometimes quite abandoned by the teachers as well."
- "this (*online learning*) is really affecting my anxiety and stress levels"

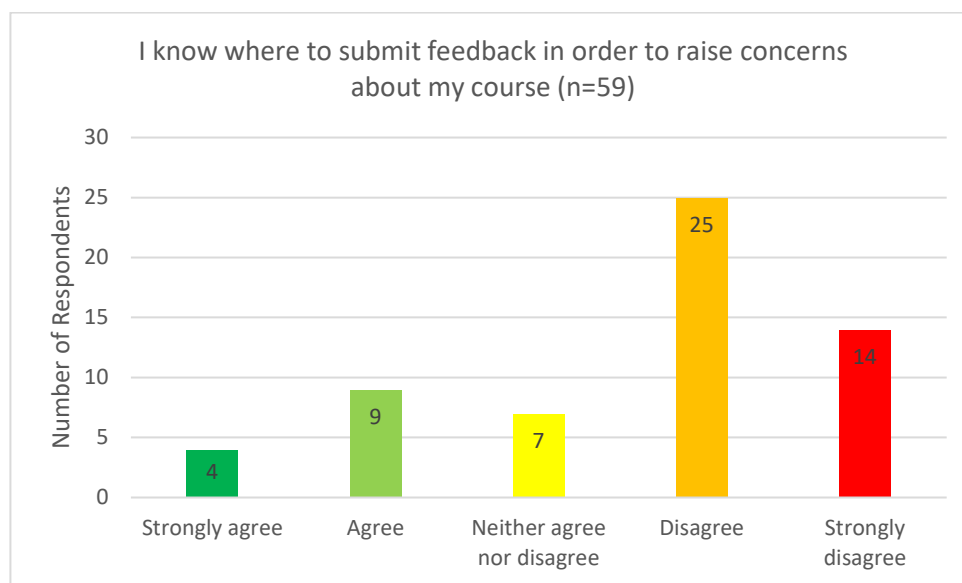


Some students raised that they would like to increase the interaction time they have with their professors

Action Points

- Continuously encourage students to turn on their cameras throughout teaching
- Liaise with FEO welfare to consider the opportunity of timetabled welfare sessions and/or brainstorm ideas about how we can provide timetabled welfare opportunities for biomed students
- Consider providing drop-in sessions led by professors where students can provide feedback and simultaneously increase interaction with professors

Focus 2 – Feedback



Qualitative Feedback

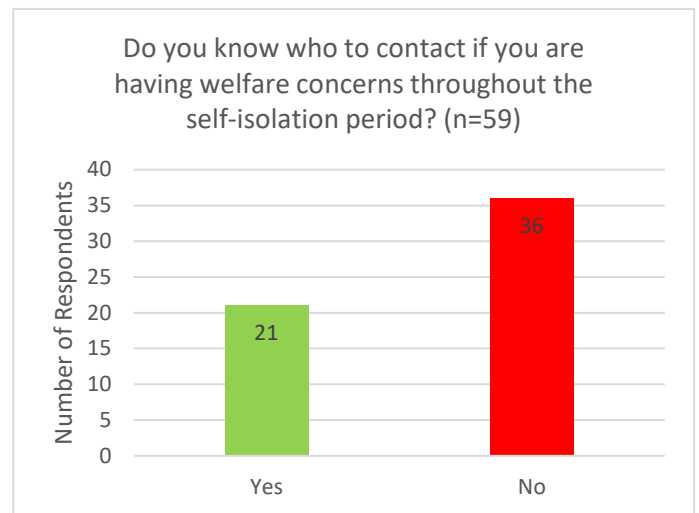
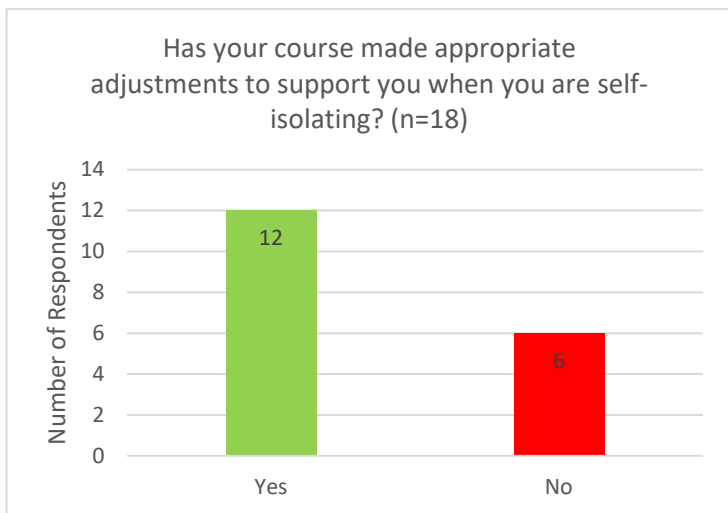
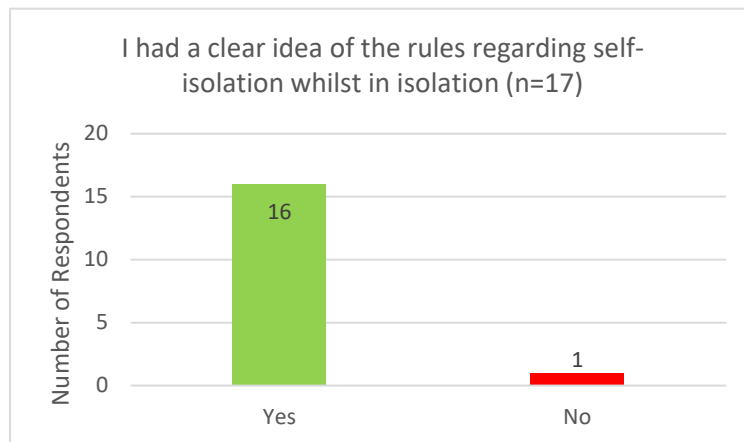
- Some students raised concerns about questions not being answered enough on the Padlet

Action Points

- See Action Point raised above
- Signpost students to the relevant feedback links and resources in an upcoming email or newsletter



Focus 3 – Self-isolation



Qualitative Feedback

- Some students raised concerns about more guidance on how to relieve their academic pressure if they are ill during self-isolation

Action Points

- Signpost to students whom they can contact regarding welfare concerns before they are due to enter self-isolation
- Provide advice to students about how to relieve academic pressure when ill during self-isolation within the welfare check ups that are provided for students



Term 1 – Year 2 Welfare Report

Feedback collection Information:

- Total survey respondents: 61
- Survey opened on **31st October** and closed on **3rd of November**
- Qualitative feedback methods: open-text boxes on Qualtrics survey

Areas of focus:

- Impact of COVID-19 on student wellbeing
- Improvement of service from personal tutors

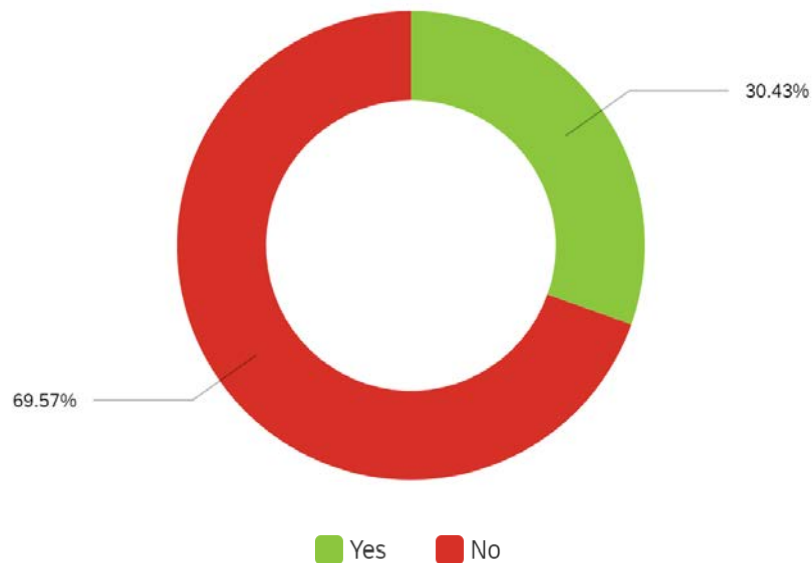
Welfare Vice Chair of Representatives: Mabel Prendergast

Year 2 Wellbeing Representative: Zicheng Wang

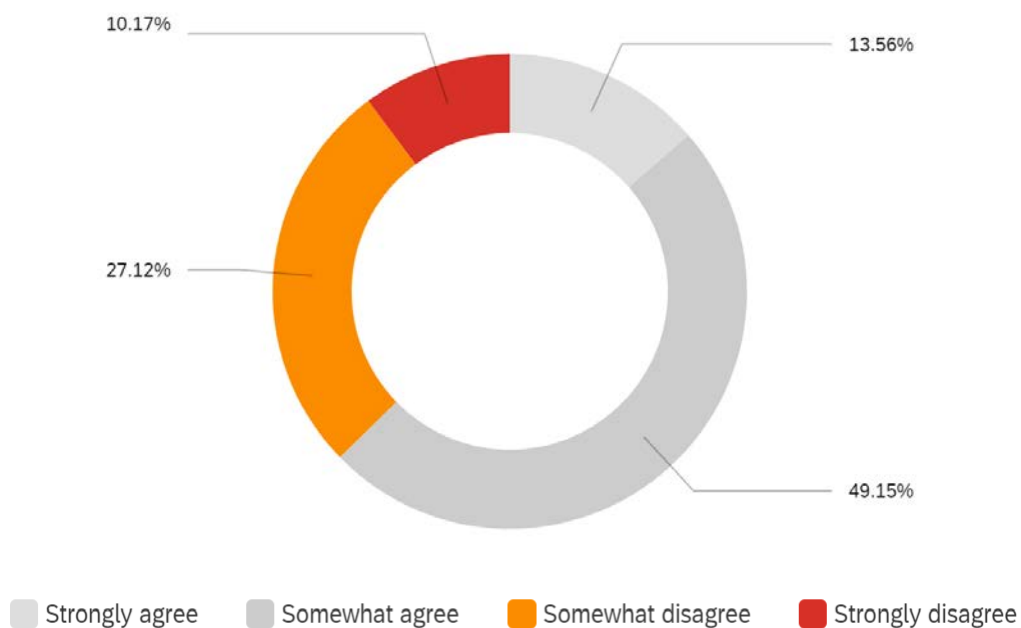


Focus 1 – Impact of COVID-19 on Student Wellbeing

Has not being in London negatively impacted your wellbeing this term? (n=23)



I know where to submit feedback when I want to? (n=59)



Are you currently in self-isolation? (n=60)



Qualitative Feedback

Lack of interaction with peers

- "It's helpful to have your peers around for academic and moral support"
- "would be better if I'm actually with students and studying together/discussing"

Action Points

- Signpost students to where they can submit feedback in a newsletter/e-mail
- Encourage personal tutors to reach out to students about their welfare (particularly those in self-isolation), without students having to request this
- Consider Zoom drop-in sessions once a term where faculty can listen to the welfare and academic concerns of students

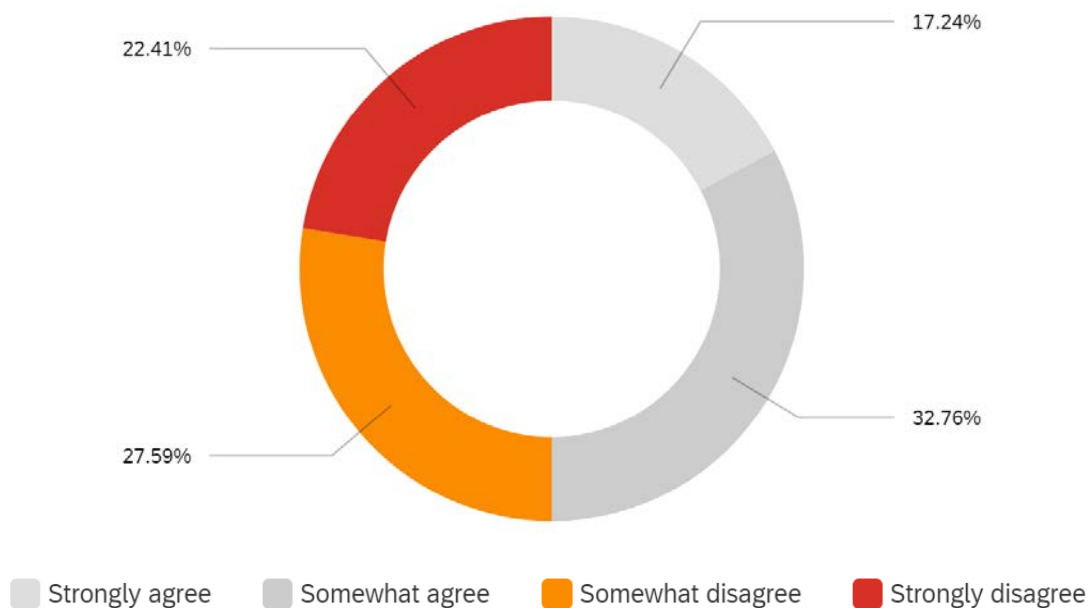
Focus 2 – Improvement of Service from Personal Tutors

On a scale of 0-10, how satisfied are you with the overall experience with your personal tutor? (n=55)

Average satisfaction

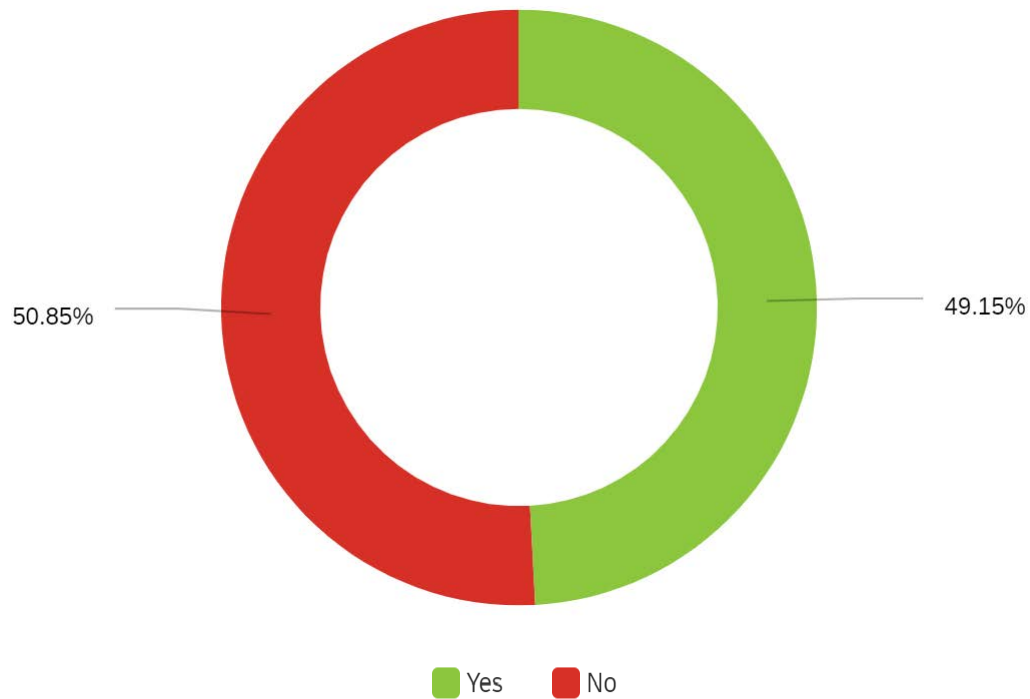


My personal tutor has a clear idea of how our course is structured (modules, flipped-classroom, exam structures)? (n=58)

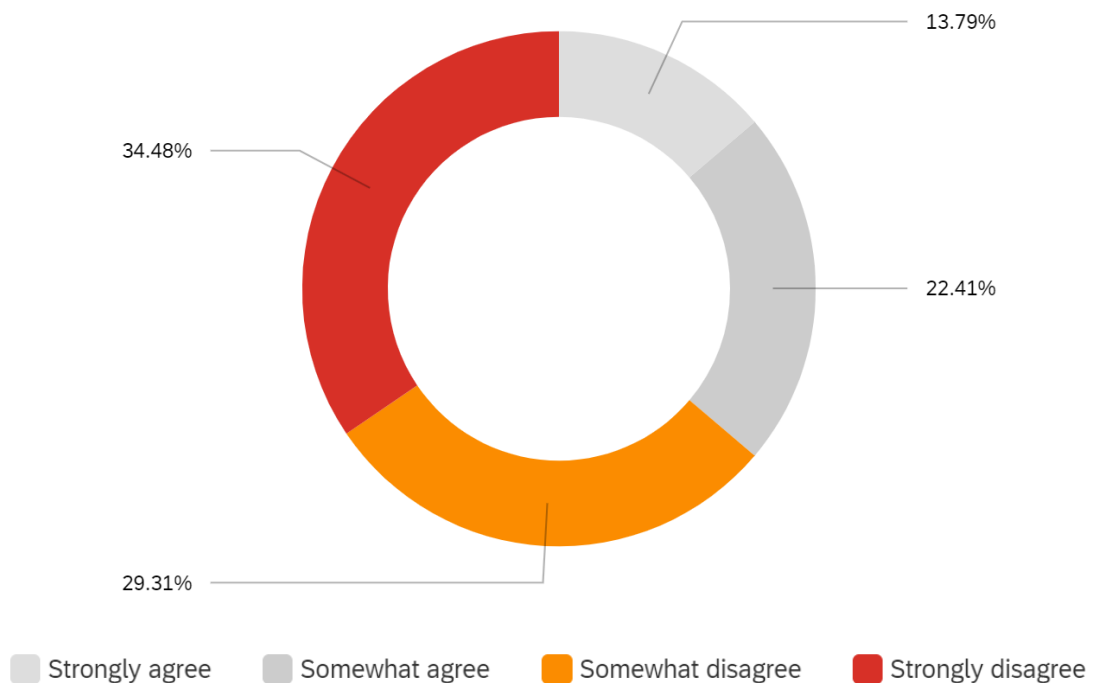




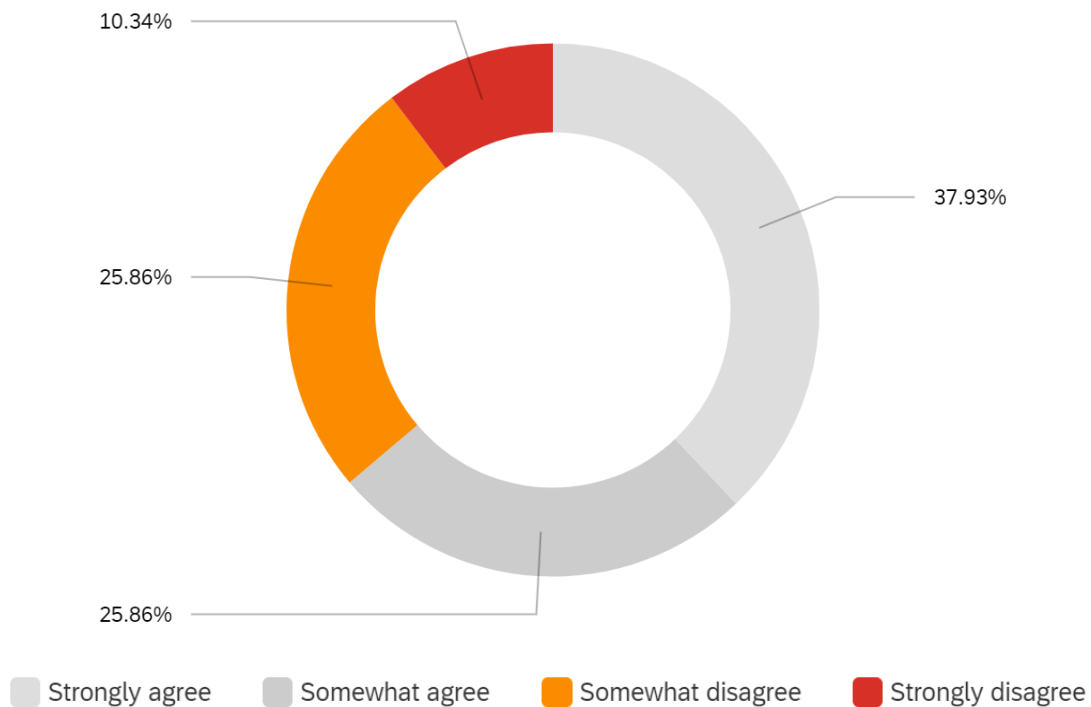
I have sought help from my personal tutor at least once, regarding some difficulty I encountered (financial, academic, wellbeing, etc.)



I think of contacting my personal tutor when I encounter difficulties (financial, academic, wellbeing) (n=58)



I wish my personal tutor would reach out to me more (n=58)



Qualitative Feedback

| | |
|--|--|
| Tutor unresponsive | <p>"I could not reach my personal tutor."</p> <p>"I asked for further details and I haven't got a response."</p> <p>"He doesn't reply to emails, even if he does it's after the 2nd-3rd reminder I sent them."</p> |
| Students are hesitant to contact their tutor | <p>"They seem unavailable"</p> <p>"The thought that my personal tutor might have to write a recommendation for me scares me"</p> |
| Students are unsure when to contact their tutor | <p>"[I want to] be told what kind of problems I can come to them about."</p> <p>"I'm not really sure what my personal tutor is there to do."</p> |
| Tutor does not have sufficient knowledge/did not have sufficient training | <p>"They should get in touch with the FEO more to know more about what's going on with the course."</p> <p>"Maybe not all personal tutors know when/how often they should contact their students."</p> |
| Students look forward to being contacted by tutors | <p>"Be contacted by them more."</p> <p>"Haven't heard from them at all this academic year."</p> <p>"More meetings arranged compulsory so more interactions with them."</p> |



Action Points

- Send out a newsletter/e-mail dedicated to tutors so students can understand when to seek help from their tutors and effective ways in which to communicate with them
- Encourage and ensure that tutors are reaching out to their students every term
- Create an easily accessible feedback link for students where they can submit their ideas, concerns and expectations about the tutoring system. Signpost this link.
- Ensure that the education of tutors covers but also emphasizes the following topics:
 - o In-depth knowledge of the BMB course as well as the new online adaptations
 - o Understand how to effectively communicate with their students through e-mails in a *timely* manner





Term 1 – Year 3 Welfare Report

Feedback collection Information:

- Total survey respondents: 36
- Survey opened on **31st October** and closed on **3rd of November**
- Qualitative feedback methods: open-text boxes on Qualtrics survey

Areas of focus:

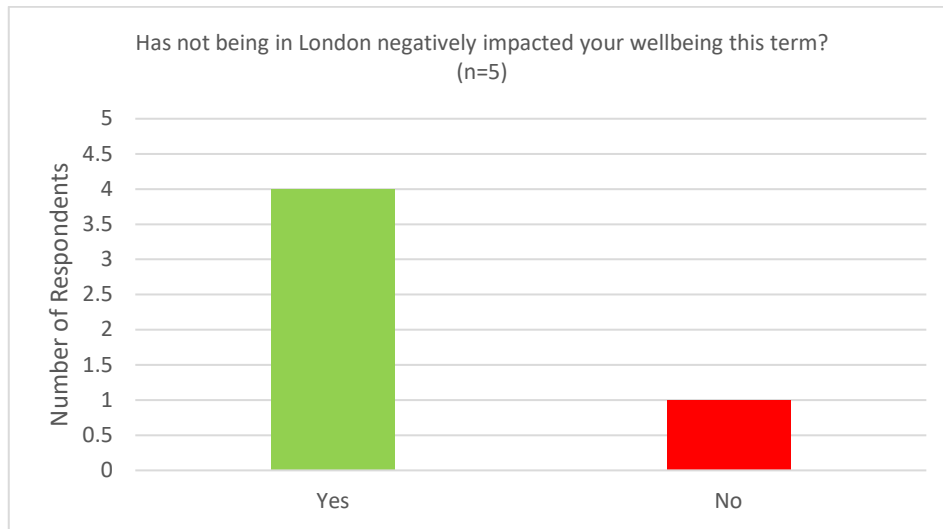
- Wellbeing outside learning
- Feedback
- Tutors

Welfare Vice Chair of Representatives: Mabel Prendergast

Year 3 Wellbeing Representative: Cristina Piñel



Focus 1 – Wellbeing during online-learning



Qualitative Feedback

Living arrangements

- “Uncertainty about whether assessments and further short modules classes will take place remotely or if needed to move there”

Isolation

- “I have felt very isolated and abandoned.”

Amplification of academic stress

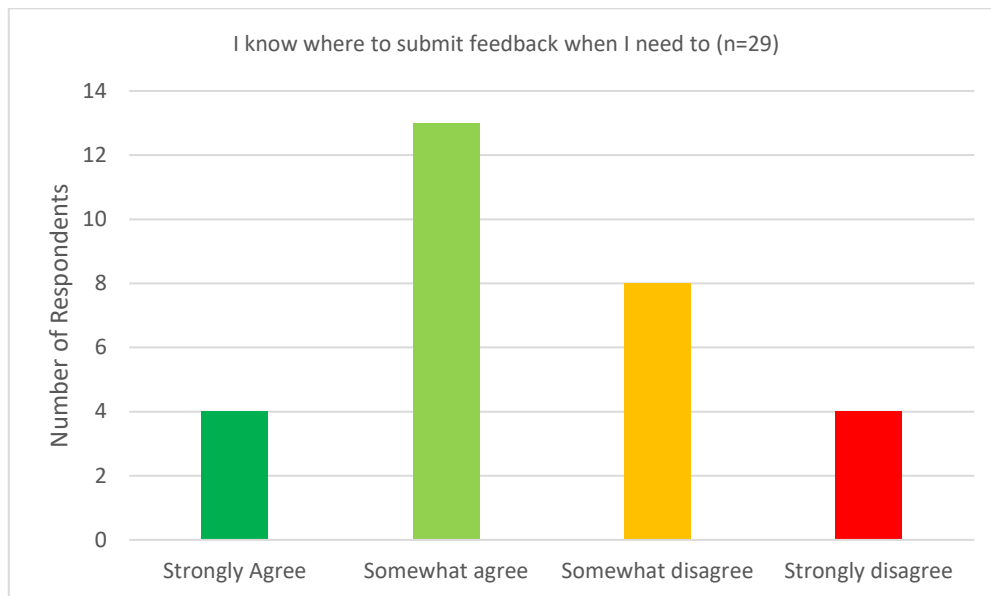
- “Living at home is a bit stressful for me as I can barely find quiet space to work”
- “Due to lockdown and having to work from home I feel very stagnant and there is no clear break from working during my day”

Action Points

- Inform tutors of those students who are not in London or in self-isolation and ensure that they are reaching out to these students more than once a term, ideally at regular intervals
- Emphasize the welfare role of a tutor in the next email/newsletter



Focus 2 – Feedback



Qualitative Feedback

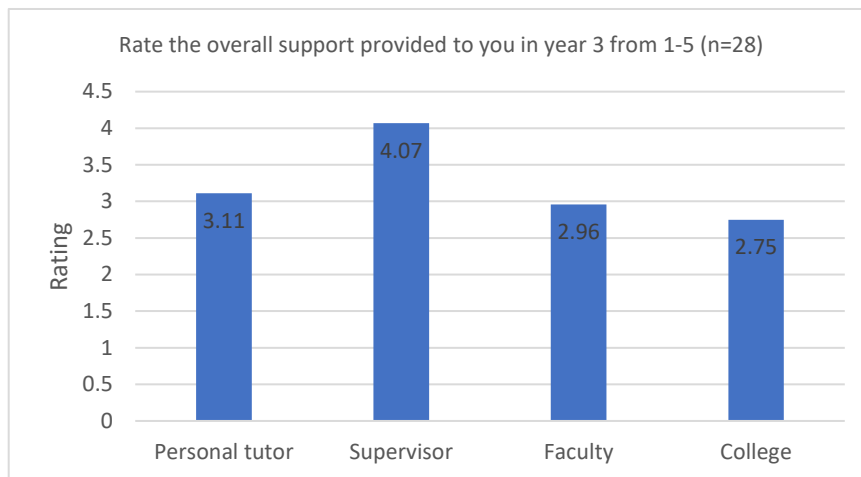
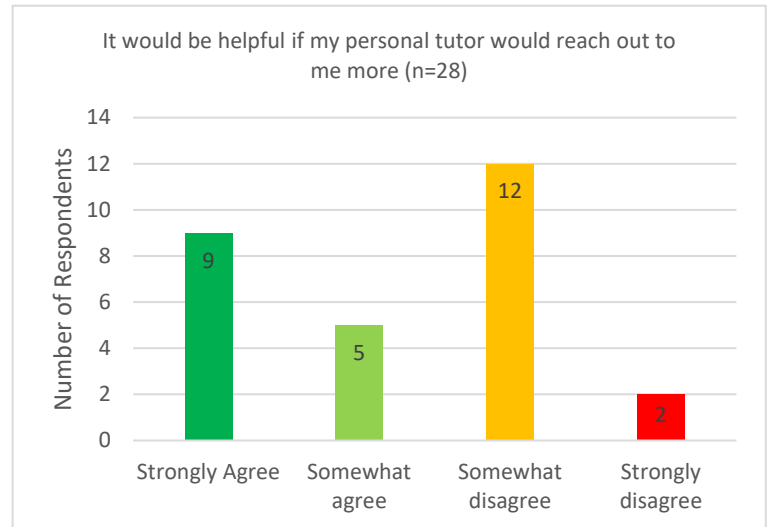
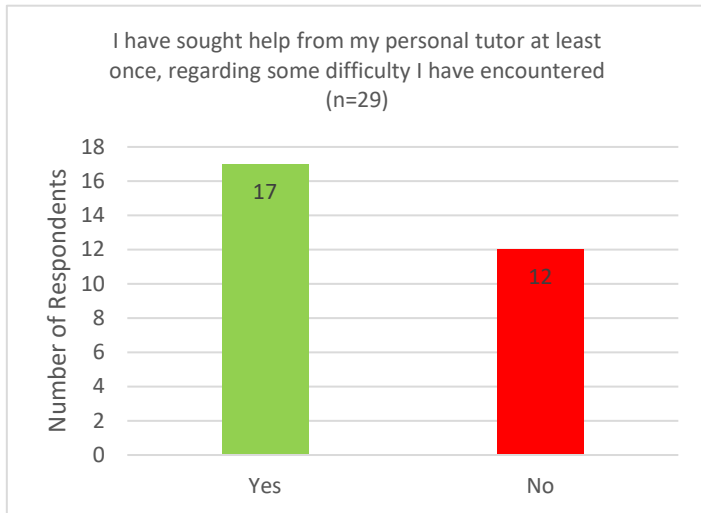
“We were given enough information regarding year 3 when the year started, but considering the changing situation, it would have been good to receive more information/instructions before the year started, even if it is just to update us that some things are still uncertain.”

Action Points

- Emphasize the feedback opportunities in the next email/newsletter
- asdf



Focus 3 – Tutors



Qualitative Feedback

Once a term is too infrequent

- "I think supervisors should be more involved and not try and take too much of a step back from helping despite needing independence from students. I also think personal tutors should reach out more instead of once every term- that is too infrequent."

Students feel they don't have a tutor

- "Provide me a personal tutor."

Having one consistent tutor

- "I didn't have a personal tutor for longer than one year, I would appreciate if the college/faculty could avoid such a situation in the future since it is proving to be quite a significant problem for me."
- Having clearer support channels (and not hundreds of links) and the same tutor would be very helpful.



Action Points

- Encourage tutors to meet up with their students more frequently than once a term throughout the period of online learning
- Explicitly instruct students who feel that they do not have a tutor to email the appropriate staff member and connect them with a tutor
- Avoid switching the tutors of students, especially for new students who may develop a close connection with their tutor throughout this period
- Consider welfare training for supervisors



To: SSLG BMB Year 1

Date: 11th November 2020, Term 1

Presented by: Academic Representatives for Year 1 BMB – Angellica Marta and Yuki Agarwala

Written by: Academic Representatives for Year 1 BMB – Angellica Mart and Yuki, ICSMSU Academic Officer for BMB – Jai Chapman

BMB Year 1 Student Report

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the findings from a survey sent to the BMB year 1 cohort on the 1st of November 2020. 63 students responded to the survey and were invited to give their opinions and concerns regarding modules and remote learning.

2. Recommendations

The committee is invited to:

- Consider formulating a list detailing Panopto recordings that students are expected to watch outside of sessions.
- Consider reviewing Blackboard functionality to fix issues with checking off sections / enabling students to manually check off sections.
- Consider organising more drop-in sessions for the STAT and MCB modules.
- Consider reviewing timetabling for face-to-face sessions to ensure sufficient time is provided to discuss questions students generally found particularly challenging.
- Consider holding additional consolidation sessions to cover questions about using RStudio for the STAT module.

General Feedback

The following is general feedback for all modules that came through from the survey or from students who approached the representatives individually.

On-campus sessions - with students traveling to campus to attend on-campus sessions, there was a consensus regarding the following:

- Students who live further away from campus often had trouble getting back to their homes before their Horizons classes.
- Many felt disheartened that they could not attend all on-campus sessions despite being on campus.
- Students wished for a dedicated Q&A time at the end of these sessions.
- Many students mentioned that they weren't specifically informed of the need to watch the recordings despite having attended the on-campus sessions for other modules.

From remote/self-isolating students particularly:

- The students' voices were not recorded, so many remote and on-campus students found them difficult to follow.
- The last few minutes of classes are often cut off by the recordings.

Suggested Solutions:

- Some students have suggested an email every week containing information on Panopto recordings that need to be watched as some students feel that they are not informed of various on-campus sessions taking place.

Syllabus

- Many students have commented that links to pre-session and consolidation material are often not shown on Blackboard, or that they link to the wrong sessions. Blackboard also does not change colours when some emodules are completed, making it difficult to keep track of progress.

Suggested Solution:

- Students have suggested being able to manually check off sections on Blackboard.

Module-specific feedback

Workload and content:

STAT:

- Students facing issues with RStudio found themselves without support as there is currently no dedicated time to resolve technical issues. Since the concepts are new for most students, many felt that they could not understand some TBL activities and found it hard to discuss such problems through comments on Padlet.

Suggested solution:

- During some on-campus STAT sessions, Dr Flower addressed the cohort whilst Dr Kerruth helped students with technical difficulties. We suggest that it could benefit a wide range of students if such drop-in sessions could be organised to solve content-based and technical issues for both on-campus and remote students.

CBI:

- There were mixed responses for CBI, potentially due to not everyone having studied chemistry in high school. Such students generally felt that emodules did not thoroughly explain each concept or key term in enough depth.

Suggested solution:

- These students have suggested that having recommended outside material or videos explaining certain concepts could be useful.

MCB:

- The general consensus for MCB modules is that they are more complex due to the numerous concepts that are difficult to comprehend. Students would appreciate more explanation on some of the content in emodules. Along with this, students also highlighted that many questions in the iRAT/tRAT were not in the emodule, so some students want to know more about the extent to which they need to know certain content.

Suggested solutions:

- Aside from having a syllabus as suggested above, drop-in Q&A sessions are also proposed by many students. Students are particularly concerned about their lack of understanding in MCB as this module is weighted as one of the heaviest, and they strongly feel the need for more resources in this module.

Feedback on TBL

STAT:

- Students find tasks during STAT TBL sessions to be very difficult, with insufficient time to read experimental data, understand it, and then write code. Students would like to go through a worked example or have practice questions done together as a class to prepare them before going off into groups. Some questions are gone through quite quickly and so some students have found it hard to keep up when they have not fully understood concepts.

CBI:

- Students were very satisfied with the clarity of explanations for iRAT questions, but some felt that too much time was taken for explaining these, leaving very little time to discuss tAPP questions in detail.
- Some burning questions regarding tRATs have not been addressed and students have suggested explaining these questions in detail, while more briefly going over the questions that did not pose as much of a challenge to students.

MCB:

- There were many comments regarding how questions from the chats or virtual hand-raises were not addressed during TBL sessions. The majority of students rated iRAT difficulty as 4-5 on a 5-point scale, with 5 representing extremely difficult. Students felt that the discussions for iRAT questions have been insufficient and that too much new information was being crammed into short sessions, making it difficult to understand new, complex concepts.

Padlet and Further Resources

STAT:

- There was a lot of praise for the prompt answers on the padlet for STAT. However, most students seem to work on the STAT emodules on Friday nights or weekends due to the schedule of other modules, so have found it inconvenient not being able to ask questions then.
- Students have appreciated the reference to 'Stats Without Tears' at the end of most emodules, but many would also like resources (such as videos) to understand the concepts more deeply, and also have an idea or where to research "elegant coding".

CBI:

- There were a lot of praise for the prompt answering of questions on the padlet.
- There was great appreciation for reference to the book "Chemistry for the Biosciences". However, some students found the book slightly easier than the emodule and asked for further resources to help clarify some of the content that was discussed in the emodule. Some students were also unsure if they were reading the correct chapter and requested for there to be references to particular chapters in the consolidation emodules.

MCB:

- Students felt that the MCB padlet has not been monitored frequently, and that many of the responses still left areas of doubt that were difficult to clarify over written comments.
- Students rated the padlet responses as 2/5 on a 5-point scale, with 1 representing 'Very disappointed'.
- Students were not sure of the exact chapters of the recommended book that correspond to the emodules. Many students also mentioned that they would appreciate it if they were provided with websites and further resources that explain the concepts in the level of detail that is required for the exams.

Preparation for ICAs

STAT:

- Students would like more personal feedback, especially regarding coding assessments in RStudio, since group assessments would not address individual problems.
- Most students indicated a 3/5 on a 5-point scale with 1 being 'No preparation'.
- Some students feel that peer feedback was insufficient for them to understand the expectations of the STAT reports. However, students appreciate being given the marking criteria and sample reports.
- Some students found the datasets and wording of the tasks confusing and difficult to understand and so are not confident to perform well in the ICA. They also mentioned that the ICA is scheduled too early, as many are still adapting to and learning to use RStudio.

MCB:

- Students would appreciate more practice instead of the MCB plus session on the presentations. Most students indicated a 2-3 on a 5-point scale with 1 representing 'No preparation'. The ICA practice carried out so far has not been content-based, so many students are unsure if they are well-prepared or not. Students would also like feedback from teaching fellows or an example to use as a guideline to ensure they are on the right track.

To: SSLG BMB Year 2

Date: 11th November 2020, Term 1

Presented by: Academic Representatives for Year 2 BMB – Cristina Riquelme Vano and Nitya Gupta

Written by: Academic Representatives for Year 2 BMB – Cristina Riquelme Vano and Nitya Gupta, ICSMSU Academic Officer for BMB – Jai Chapman

BMB Year 2 Student Report

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the findings from a survey sent to the BMB year 2 cohort on the 1st of November 2020. 61 students responded to the survey and were invited to give their opinions and concerns regarding modules and remote learning.

2. Recommendations

The committee is invited to:

- Consider releasing a general plan/timetable for terms two and three by the end of first term to aid the arrangement of travel plans for students currently studying abroad.
- Consider working to increase interaction with chat during online sessions, as well as allocating more time to go through tAPP explanations.
- Consider setting up short drop-in sessions for each module to allow students to speak directly with teaching fellows as opposed to focusing on the use of padlet.
- Consider reviewing online sessions for GEN by allocating more time to go over particular areas of difficulty for students, as well as shortening sessions to 2.5 hours.

General Feedback

The majority of students (88%) are happy with the timetable and how the Y2 module classes are spread through the week. 100% of the respondents said that the emodules are being released on time. 76% of the cohort found the recent careers session to be either 'useful' or 'extremely useful'. Students would really like to know the teaching schedule and general plan for terms 2 and 3, especially those who are not currently in London. Though we understand that the current situation is very dynamic and circumstances may change at any time, these students would need to not only book flight tickets but also arrange for accommodation and thus would greatly appreciate any guidance.

Feedback Relating to Remote Learning

When asked to rate their experience with online face to face sessions on a scale of 0 to 10, the mean was 6. Some students feel like it is easier and less daunting to ask questions during F2F sessions and receive quick responses. They are also able to have the slides on screen and sometimes even navigate through the slides themselves, which makes it easier to take notes. Another positive was that the BMB team has managed to keep the main structure of the F2F sessions intact.

Conversely, most students feel like sessions are more impersonal and that they are unable to interact with the teaching staff and ask them questions directly, making it harder to obtain help. Furthermore, interactions within groups are also more challenging as some students may be absent or have both their video and audio turned off, which makes it difficult to be effectively engaged especially in tRATs and tAPPs, where 'active learning' is supposed to be taking place. It is also more difficult to 'bond' with the team. Online F2F sessions make it more difficult for teaching staff to see how we are coping with the material. Students would appreciate it if teaching fellows checked the chat more often and stuck to schedule to avoid rushing through tAPPs and tAPP explanations. In general students feel like in person, they get more encouragement, motivation and support.

Students would really appreciate a 15-30-minute drop-in session for each module, where they can interact with teaching fellows face to face and ask questions. Padlet, is currently one of the main modes of communication that we have with teaching fellows and it can often feel impersonal and not allow for follow up questions or discussions about content. Furthermore, questions and responses can often get lost on Padlet and it can be difficult to find what we are looking for. In addition, perhaps these drop-in sessions in person during term 2, when the entire cohort is back in London.

There have also been frequent instances of students being unable to access the LAMS for the iRAT exercises. This can especially be stressful in the case of the PHAR module as the iRATs are assessed.

Module Feedback

GEN

Pre-session Material

In terms of length and time taken to complete the emodules, half of the cohort thought that the genetics and genomics emodules were too long (46%) but the other half thought they were just right (53%). The majority of the students thought the pre-session material was just right in terms of difficulty (75%). When asked to rate their experience on the padlet, the majority responded with 'okay' (48%), and 40% reported a positive experience.

Face to Face sessions

The majority of respondents (47%) said that the quality of online F2F sessions over MS Teams was 'okay', but a considerable proportion of students (27%) had a negative experience when compared to other modules. Half of the cohort felt that the F2F sessions were too long, while the other half reported that they were 'just right' in terms of length. In terms of quality of teaching, 40% of students responded with 'okay' and 30% responded with 'poor'. In relation to the iRATs, most of the students felt that the time limit (68%) and difficulty (90%) are 'just right'. 70% of students responded that the time limit for the tRATs is 'just right'. When asked about tAPPs, while most people (58%) reported that the length was 'just right', a considerable number of people (32%) felt that they were too long; they were left waiting for an extended period of time. Furthermore, while the majority (62%) reported that tAPPs were 'just right' in terms of difficulty, 38% felt they were too difficult. A proportion of students would like the consolidation material (sessions slides) to be released sooner.

Other concerns

Loosing time due to technical difficulties and struggles with technology (MS Teams) which could be avoided and that time could be used for learning. Explanations have been cut short as a result of this.

Whenever a concept is unclear for a large number students (such as NGS) or a question in the chat has been upvoted multiple times, it is worth dedicating some time out of the F2F session to explain it (if not offer other guidance or resources). Otherwise, students do not feel as though they are being listened to and well supported.

Students also recommend shortening the sessions to 2.5 hours instead of 3 as it is difficult to pay attention for such a long period of time without any breaks. Additionally, due to the time difference, these sessions run very late into the night for international students who then find it very difficult to concentrate.

PHAR

Pre-session Material

In terms of length and time taken to complete the emodules, the vast majority of the cohort thought that the emodules were just right (90%). The majority of the students thought the pre-session material was just right in terms of difficulty (92%). When asked to rate their experience on the padlet, the majority responded with 'okay' (51%), and 30% reported a positive experience.

Face to Face sessions

The majority of students (56%) responded that the quality of online F2F sessions over MS Teams was either 'good' or 'very good'. 83% of the cohort, felt that the length of the F2F sessions was 'just right'. The large majority of the students responded positively when asked about quality of teaching, and 68% responded 'good' or 'very good'. 63% of the students felt that they were not given enough time to properly complete the iRAT and 75% thought that they were too difficult. 80% of students responded that the time limit for the tRATs is 'just right'. When asked about tAPPs, the majority reported that the length (80%) and difficulty (80%) were 'just right'. A proportion of students would like the consolidation material (sessions slides) to be released sooner.

Other concerns

Overall, the students feel like the PHAR module runs very smoothly and effectively. The teaching fellows take time to answer all the questions, even when they are running over time and cannot discuss or explain answers, they make the effort to write out answers in the chat. As previously discussed, some of the questions on the iRAT were 'vague' and could be interpreted in different ways and 68% thought both correct answers should be accepted. The cohort would like some clarity on this matter. Furthermore, to avoid future complications such as this one, the cohort feels that iRATs should be proofread more carefully. Students also feel like some questions are very tricky and some questions test material that was not

covered in the pre-session material. Another suggestion was to count the 7 iRATs in which students scored best (instead of all nine) towards the final module grade.

SCRB

Pre-session Material

In terms of length and time taken to complete the emodules, the vast majority of the cohort thought that the emodules were too long (71%). The majority of the students thought the pre-session material was too difficult (68%). When asked to rate their experience on the padlet, the majority responded with 'good' or 'very good' (48%).

Face to Face sessions

The majority of students (69%) responded that the quality of online F2F sessions was either 'good' or 'very good'. 80% of the cohort, felt that the length of the F2F sessions was 'just right'. The large majority of the students responded positively when asked about quality of teaching, and 58% responded 'good' or 'very good', and the rest 'okay'. When asked about tAPPs, 90% reported that the length was 'just right'. While 60% felt that the tAPPs were 'just right' in terms of difficulty, 40% thought they were too difficult.

Other concerns

It would be useful to do a quick consolidation of the pre-session material and explain any particularly difficult topics before we begin the team-based activities, especially since most of the cohort find the pre-session difficult and the activities require a deep understanding of this material.

A lot of students have their I-explore modules from 4-6pm on Monday, and while all the students greatly appreciate the teaching fellows staying over class to answer further questions it runs into the short hour long break between SCRB and I-explore, which most student feel as though they need. We recommend holding a drop-in session on another day to answer questions.

MHD

Pre-session Material

In terms of length and time taken to complete the emodules, the vast majority of the cohort thought that the emodules were just right (88%). The majority of the students thought the pre-session material was just right in terms of difficulty (74%). When asked to rate their experience on the padlet, the majority responded with 'okay' (67%), and 30% reported a positive experience.

Face to Face sessions

The majority of students (57%) responded with 'okay' when asked about the quality of online F2F sessions over teams, and the rest responded with either 'good' or 'very good'. 86% of the cohort, felt that the length of the F2F sessions was 'just right'. The large majority of the students responded positively when asked about quality of teaching, and 67% responded 'good' or 'very good', and the rest 'okay'. In relation to the iRATs, most of the students felt that the time limit (83%) and difficulty (87%) are 'just right'. 78% of students responded that the time limit for the tRATs is 'just right'. When asked about tAPPs, the large majority reported that the length (83%) and difficulty (100%) were 'just right'.

Other concerns

Although students sometimes find the content challenging, MHD students are very happy on how online F2F sessions are running.

CTB

Pre-session Material

In terms of length and time taken to complete the emodules, the vast majority of the cohort thought that the emodules were just right (77%). The majority of the students thought the

pre-session material was just right in terms of difficulty (77%). When asked to rate their experience on the padlet, the majority responded with 'okay' (61%).

Face to Face sessions

The majority of students (57%) responded that the quality of remote F2F sessions over MS Teams was either 'good' or 'very good'. 94% of the cohort, felt that the length of the F2F sessions was 'just right'. The large majority of the students responded positively when asked about quality of teaching, and 61% responded 'good' or 'very good'. 85% of the students felt that the time limit for the iRATs is 'just right'. Most of the students felt that the time limit (61%) and difficulty (73%) of the iRATs are 'just right'. 78% of students responded that the time limit for the tRATs is 'just right'. When asked about tAPPs, the large majority reported that the length (86%) and difficulty (83%) were 'just right'. A proportion of students would like the consolidation material to be released sooner.

Other concerns

There have also been connection issues and so students are unable to hear what is being discussed and teaching time is lost. Students would also like the material in the emodules to be linked to what is being discussed during the F2F. Overall, the feedback was positive and the students are very happy, one student noted that CTB was 'fantastic' and that all the module leads are able to teach effectively despite the current situation.

To: SSLG BMB Year 3

Date: 11th November 2020, Term 1

Presented by: Academic Representatives for Year 3 BMB – Katherine Bethell and Kah Yan Ng

Written by: Academic Representatives for Year 3 BMB – Katherine Bethell and Kah Yan Ng, ICSMSU Academic Officer for BMB – Jai Chapman

BMB Year 1 Student Report

1. Introduction

This paper summarises the findings from a survey sent to the BMB year 2 cohort on the 1st of November 2020. 37 students responded to the survey and were invited to give their opinions and concerns about third year placements and remote learning.

2. Recommendations

The committee is invited to:

- Consider focusing on a larger variety of projects during welcome week, as opposed to a focus on wet lab projects. A catch-up session for all project types in the coming weeks would be appreciated by students.
- Consider signposting workshops and tutorials on programming skills to students undertaking dry lab projects now and in the future, to offer ease-of-mind to students undertaking projects in which they are required to learn new coding skills.
- Consider contacting project supervisors to clarify roles in marking student assessments, as well as ensure that they are aware of the workload students are expected to be completing throughout the two terms.
- Consider holding additional sessions hosted by BMB alumni regarding placement avenues as well as careers / post-graduate advice.

General Course Feedback

Final Year 2 Feedback

The cohort overall found Year 2 an interesting year allowing them to specialise in topics they found more interesting, Lab Pod 2 provided a great opportunity to learn valuable skills and techniques which have come in useful this year. It was a large step up from first year and the amount of content being taught was a struggle for some students; we would recommend providing more consolidation material in some of the modules (especially in SCRB and GEN) so that students can fully understand the course content and to prevent students feeling overwhelmed. We also believe it would be useful to offer catch-up sessions and extra resources throughout the year so that students can revise and not forget all the material from Term 1 modules.

Due to the high workload some assignments for optional modules overlapped which caused stress to students, it would be great if the timetable could be re-worked and module leads communicate with each other to avoid these issues for future cohorts.

A large number of students were pleased with how exams were handled and thought faculty dealt with the COVID-19 situation well, keeping students clearly informed throughout Term 3.

Welcome Week

It was really useful to have the plan for Year 3 laid out and the resources made available on Blackboard have already helped students complete the Placement Plan. This has allowed them to feel more organised and ready for the upcoming year, which is much appreciated.

When asked what welcome week event students found most useful, the largest number of responses (17) chose the Q&A with graduates. Students found it especially helpful to get an honest, reassuring opinion from alumni who were able to give tips for the upcoming year. We think it would be useful to organise more meetings with alumni regarding the different placement avenues, assessment advice and further post-graduate guidance.

Some students felt that welcome week was more focused on wet lab placements and lacked advice for the other placement strands. We would advise organising a short catch up session for each placement type this term to see how students are finding their placement and to provide an opportunity for them to ask placement specific questions. It would be also useful if you ran separate welcome talks next year for each of the project strands, as it could be tailored to be more detailed and specific.

Placement Feedback

Lab Based Project

The majority of students are enjoying their lab project and have found the content interesting. The projects which have changed slightly because of COVID-19 have adapted well and students have welcomed the open communication, the cohort feel that faculty have been honest and detailed in the changes which they appreciate. (27 responses for lab based projects).

Some students on a dry lab placement have found it slightly challenging over the first couple of weeks as the work is completely new and often involves learning a new coding language. We recommend students should be exposed to more than just R in the first couple of years of BMB as this would help students in third year dry lab placements and in future careers. To support the current third year students, it might be useful if BMB could organise help sessions with coding or signpost workshops to attend for students to learn the fundamentals of coding skills required for dry lab projects. Students were particularly interested in learning about Linux and MatLab.

Work Based Project

Students are finding it exciting to be working in a new environment where they are responsible for a variety of tasks. Supervisors have largely been welcoming and students feel part of the team already. (6 responses for work based projects).

Some students are finding it difficult to approach their supervisors and don't know who to share their problems with if they are feeling stressed, we believe the buddy system is an ideal chance to solve these issues and hopefully provide the support students need.

There have been some small problems with achieving a good work life balance, especially with students working remotely and lacking motivation. Students believe having a buddy system or personal tutors reach out will help as they can discuss any worries and try to come up with personal plans to prevent these problems from occurring.

Literature Project

All feedback received from students on the literature project were positive; they are enjoying the freedom of researching and learning in depth about their chosen question. Supervisors have been supportive and helpful in offering guidance to shape which direction their research taken them. (2 responses for literature projects).

Supervisors

Around 50% of students feel that their supervisors are unaware of the structure of BMB and its assessments, including their role in marking. However, the majority of the students (~70%) feel that their supervisors provide enough guidance for them.

In general, supervisors are very knowledgeable and patient in answering questions the students might have. A student found it incredibly helpful when the supervisor had gone through research papers with them. Some other useful attributes include providing clear schedules on what to work on whilst setting expectations for the students. Supervisors are doing an excellent job making students feel part of the community by involving them in lab work and meetings with the rest of the team.

Nevertheless, some students feel that their supervisors are too busy to offer more detailed guidance. There have been some minor issues raised where supervisors are less responsive and do not understand the placement project – how long it is and what their responsibilities are, especially when it comes to marking assessments such as the placement plan. Other supervisors do not have precise objectives for the project, which can cause confusion for students as they become unsure of how to approach tasks (i.e. what to read up on). This has also meant that some students feel like their project is “more difficult” and has a heavier workload than others in the course.

We would recommend the faculty contact supervisors to make it clear what the placement is meant to entail, how much work students should be undertaking and what the supervisor's responsibilities are.

Careers and Post-graduation support feedback

Most students are happy with the guidance provided regarding career and post-graduation opportunities. On a scale of 1 to 5, 78% of the students rated this academic support as three and above.

The careers service is particularly useful as they provide many resources, including links to useful websites, one-to-one consultations and other extensive information on making an application on their webpage. The postgraduate talk during Welcome Week provided the students with helpful information on research-based opportunities at Imperial College. Some students felt that their personal tutors or supervisors supplied them with a lot of information as well as insight into the different pathways available.

To improve career and post-graduation support, the majority of the students have requested more talks by BMB alumni and corporate employers such as GlaxoSmithKline or AstraZeneca. A student suggested for a careers 'week' to be organised earlier during the 3-year BMB programme as applications and deadlines are now looming. More details on the different pathways after graduation could be highlighted during this week – including academic (i.e. doctoral training programmes at Imperial and other universities) and non-academic (i.e. graduate programmes, consulting) pathways as many students felt the talk was too imperial focused.

During the careers week, it would be desirable if more support for the application process could be given. This includes guidance for writing personal statement (i.e. written example), information on postgraduate funding (i.e. scholarships) as well as more information on deadlines and requirements.

Additional Queries

Overall, students are asking for more guidance on the remaining assessments. The most pressing issue is related to the COVID-19 pandemic and whether the oral presentation will be held online or in-person as students have to decide on housing plans soon. It has also been asked whether it would be possible to have access to the short module material before Term 3 so that they can feel more organised and prepared as this will be a stressful time for all.

It was recommended an online feedback platform be set up where students can track their requests or for FEO to respond more promptly. We think the buddy system will be incredibly valuable for students to discuss their problems but also recommend the faculty run regular 'check-in' sessions to check on students who are struggling with remote working and finding placements challenging.