

Meeting 3/23

30 August 2023

For general publication

ACTION

Present: Miss Larissa Chan, A/Prof Marloes Dekker, Mr Vishaak Gangasandra, Miss Sarah Khor, Miss Rebecca Leonard (Chair), Ms Raghavi Shankara Guhan, Mr Ben Smith (minutes), Mr Patrick Sutton, Dr Simon Worrall

Apologies: Mr Noah Bertram, Ms Annalise Kerr, Miss Emma Sheehan, Ms Saher Tinwala

Absent: Nil.

1. Welcome and apologies:

Rebecca Leonard welcomed members to the third CSAG meeting of the year and noted the apologies.

2. Recognition:

An Acknowledgment of Country was spoken by the Chairperson, in recognition of the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting was taking place.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 2 May 2023:

The minutes of the meeting held 2 May 2023, having been circulated to group members and published on the School website with SCMB constituent students notified via email that the minutes were available, were taken as read and were confirmed by those who had been present.

4. SCMB Honours and Postgraduate Information Session:

Marloes Dekker shared that the SCMB Honours and Postgraduate Information Session would be held on 1 September 2023 from 12:30pm – 2pm. This event was open to anyone interested in Honours and Postgraduate studies and may also be useful for postgraduate coursework students looking to undertake research projects. Representatives from different research groups and institutes will be present at the event.

Raghavi Shankara queried if students could attend later in the session if they had other commitments preventing them from being present at 12:30pm.

Marloes confirmed that attendees were free to attend any time between 12:30pm – 2pm.

5. Art of Science Competition:

Ben Smith confirmed that advertising for the 2023 Art of Science competition was ongoing, with entries closing on 30 November 2023.

6. Learn.UQ course information maintenance:

Patrick Sutton queried who was responsible for maintaining Learn.UQ course sites (Blackboard). Patrick gave an example of a course site from semester 2 2022 where the assessment rubric had been incompatible with the assessment information listed in the electronic course profile (ECP).

Simon Worrall replied that course coordinators maintained Learn.UQ sites, and if there is a discrepancy between different sources of information the ECP is the definitive source.

Rebecca Leonard stated that one of her courses Learn.UQ sites referred to a criteria sheet, but no criteria sheet was available to students. Rebecca queried if there was an expectation that students be provided with a marking rubric for all assessment items.

Simon responded that marking rubrics are not necessarily provided, but course coordinators are required to provide criteria and standards by which tasks will be assessed.

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Marloes stated that coordinators try to ensure that all information on their course Learn.UQ sites is accurate, but sometimes inaccurate or outdated information can inadvertently be missed when courses are being set up.

Ben Smith asked Patrick if he had shared his feedback on the inaccurate course information via SECaT.

Patrick responded that he had spoken to the course coordinator about the issue.

Ben responded that changes had been made to the rubrics for the 2023 offering of the course, which was an example of how feedback was important and could result in meaningful changes.

7. Experimental Chemistry course loads:

The following feedback was passed on concerning the workload of experimental Chemistry courses CHEM2054 and CHEM3016 for the group to discuss:

The issue, and this is an opinion shared by all the classmates I've spoken to, is that those courses are too much work for the units they are worth. With a 1-2hr lecture each week, 6 hours in the lab, a weekly risk assessment and a weekly report (or for CHEM3016, 4 weekly reports and one large one (I wrote approximately 12000 words for mine)) they each take approximately 20 hours per week to complete, twice what a 2-unit course should take, and my experiences are on the low end of what some students I've spoken to put in.

Marloes agreed that the workload for these courses seemed heavy and resolved to discuss this with the course coordinators. Rebadging these courses to 4 credit points was likely not possible.

Marloes

Rebecca asked if there was any leeway for restructuring these courses.

Marloes responded that the Chemistry courses are part of accredited programs, so there are key metrics and content that must be covered.

Vishaak Gangasandra added that CHEM2054 had weekly lab reports, but suggested considering spacing the reports out to one report per fortnight.

Larissa Chan responded that this may not be viable for CHEM3016 because of the course structure. Larissa continued that CHEM2054 provided a very enriching lab experience, but there were a lot of repetitive elements in the lab reports themselves. Larissa suggested focussing on specific elements for individual reports instead of requiring students to complete a full report.

Vishaak shared his experiences with BIOC2000, where in lab experiments outcomes are measured in addition to lab reports. This is effective in testing lab skills and competencies more comprehensively.

8. Open Discussion:

Rebecca stated that several of the courses she was undertaking in semester 2 2023 had a lab component, but only one course had a lab report. Rebecca queried if there had been too much of an over correction away from lab reports towards other forms of assessment.

Simon responded that lab reports present issues for academic integrity due to the nature of the assessment items. There had been problems with collusion, and if experiments were not altered between offerings in different semesters plagiarism was also a potential issue. Simon added that traditional lab reports had been split into different tasks and assessment items.

Marloes added that the idea behind this was to establish a more diverse skill set for graduates who would not necessarily be working in labs directly.

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Simon agreed that the majority of science students would not end up practicing science directly, and the assessment design was intended to deliver a broader skillset for students.

Vishaak raised an issue with the timetabling of courses, identifying that the cohort of students undertaking medicinal chemistry experienced unavoidable clashes across multiple courses.

Raghavi added that her core courses had a clash for a single week, but this prevented students from being able to register themselves to the clashing sessions for the full semester.

Ben undertook to discuss this with the SCMB timetable coordinator.

Rebecca expressed difficulty in course progression planning for the Advanced Science programs, which was shared by other students in the cohort.

Marloes acknowledged that Advanced Science course offerings were a known issue and that there were plans for an additional 6-7 courses, but adding new courses was a lengthy process.

Ben

9. Next meeting:

The next CSAG meeting will be held 12 October 2023 1pm-2pm.

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