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Education Committee

St Andrews Students Association

**Meeting Date:** 6th February 2025 (18:00 – 19:00)

Large Rehearsal Room (Student Union Building)

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Meeting called by**: Education Executive Committee

**Type of Meeting**: Education Committee

**Chair**: Faculty Presidents

**Note Taker(s)**: Sharanya Gupta

**ATTENDANCE**

**Attendees:**

Alicia, Cole, Oliver, Sara, Vic, Christie, Erin, Jeremy, Georgia, Tasha, Paul, Ariane, Nick, Sydney, Finn S, Hugo, Donald, English, Hayley, Kiera, Stephanie, Jimmin, Tom, Millie,Sebastien

Hitanshi, Emily, Phoebe, Sharanya

**Online**:

**Apologies**: Fleur, Josephine, Finn Bender

**Absences**: Anisha, Shona, Olivia,

**Guests**:

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

* Rip Chase

**First Agenda Item:** **MEQ discussion** (DoEd)

* Overview:
  + Last year’s MEQ format worked for some, didn’t for others.
  + It won’t look like this next semester as we’re getting the new MEQ software
* Discussion:
  1. General thoughts and consensus
  + **Maths SP:** Happy with the current model. Have a Meeting with DoT next week so could we have a template by then. Our SSCC is in week 5.
  + **Mod Lang SP:** Qualtrics didn’t work for us. It took out the need for class reps because they couldn’t view the form. Most students preferred google forms for survey, as you could only view one language at a time.
  + **IR SP:** It was a learning curve for us, hopefully, will be better this semester. Could it be customizable to apply to different modules? Last semester, it could be customized only up to the first couple blocks, then it doesn’t seem as flexible. Could also include a feature to identify what modules the question is about. It’s Hard to find which module people are talking about because you can’t automate the name of the module.
  + **Med SP:** It was quite a positive experience for us. All years got what they wanted. We got the highest number of responses in all the years I’ve been class rep.
  + **DoEd:** In the new software that’s built for feedback, there will be more usability. On project board, hopefully next year, you’ll have a better software to work with. Currently, how many people want Qualtrics for this semester? For the rest we want to maintain central oversight and I’m happy to work with y’all to retain information (names collected). Sharon from the Associate team wants feedback on what the questions read like, so I will send the MEQs form around on Teams.
  + **Comp Sc SP**: Could we get the same one from last semester with different module names for Qualtrics?
  + **Maths SP**: Us too
  + **Chem SP**: Who came up with MFQ?
  + **DoEd:** The central team (SLT) I think they’re trying to rebrand. What are everyone’s thoughts and opinions about the 7 questions?
  + **Phys SP**: in this new format, will the SPs and CRs have the same level of control?
  + **DoEd:** Not for this but yes in the software.
  + **Med SP:** Would all questions about professors’ marking be taken out?
  + **DoEd:** Yes
  + **Med SP**: People can’t express opinion freely about marking issues unless they are anonymous.
  + **DoEd:** In the new end of module MFQs, they’ve gotten rid of questions where we specifically ask for experiences with lecturers. That was to reduce the length of the survey. It was a space for targeted space for feedback.
  + **Hist SP**: That doesn’t work for history cause it allows us to spot where tutors are going rogue.
  + **DoEd:** The module coordinator can see responses from a specific module and could technically do that.
  + **IR SP:** For IR, it will be too simple. In subhonours we have a new lecturer every week and it’s important to receive pointed feedback. Honours is fine but in subhonours there are a lot of students and, hence, tutors.
  + **Chem SP**: We have 30 odd tutors in every single module, so we’ll have click to every option. Perhaps there can be an option to choose your tutor?
  + **Bio SP**: There could be a drop down with names. For biology, there are different people who do just labs or just lectures. A drop down list may help if someone had specific feedback.
  + **DoEd**: MEQs are for holistic feedback. Specific feedback is meant to be escalated to class reps.
  + **Classics SP**: People don’t want to cause a fuss. MEQs are their way of raising concerns anonymously and quietly.
  + **Med SP**: We also can’t just call people out at SSCC, so this has helped
  + **Psych SP**: If it were up to reps and SPs, it would so much work to do. Plus, not everyone is comfortable talking about it to actual people.
  + **Chinese LC:** Could we perhaps have a table format in contrast to whatever this long-winded thing is.
  + **Phys SP**: For the upcoming season, is it okay to make MS forms and not use Qualtrics?
  + **DoEd**: Yes, I just want to let the university people know what we will be doing. However, wait until next week for a green light.
  + **Phys SP**: Our SSCC in on the Thursday of week 4. So, we need to start the survey next week.
  + **DoEd:** Okay tell your reps to start making the survey then but I’ll still confirm. Can everyone just fill in the forms we sent so we can see how it will present?

**Second Agenda Item:** **Reading list Standardization** (DoEd)

* Overview:
  + Reading lists and their use varies across departments – which is messy, and uni wants to standardize it by putting it in policy.
* Discussion:
  1. What happens to reading lists in your modules?
  2. What works best for your schools in reading lists?
  + **G&SD SP:** helps having the reading list broken down into weeks
  + **Film Studies SP:** Like having it standardized across modules, so there is a similar break down
  + **Arts and Div SP:** Is the amount of reading for each module similar?
  + **Film Studies SP:** Yes – both for videos and readings
  + **Hist SP:** We have them standardized across modules as well. In honours, they make sure you have roughly the same number of readings for each class. The reading list on Tallis are a bit messy. Lecturers tend to fill them with material you can use for the course, which is what reading lists are used for.
  + **French LC:** It depends on the tutor on how extensive they want the reading list to be. Our department has been experimenting, where students decide what gets covered in each seminar. This is to make classes more student led. Our reading lists also link to subject specific databases to encourage self-research and go beyond what’s given in the module.
  + **DoEd:** Some schools use it as a weekly topic breakdown with every possible source you could consult, while some have more specific reading lists. One can also apply for alternate formats but the debate is between the academic database vs reading list approach.
  + **IR SP:** Is the university trying to push the schools in a particular direction?
  + **DoEd:** Not that I know
  + **French LC:** Reading lists are changing in June cause of the different library software. They will be more streamlined. The library is doing its own survey, and most of the students want more consistent formats. The new system will also sort the issue of outdated readings lists. We’re expecting lots of new improvements.
  + **Comp Lit LC:** We never get through all the texts in the reading lists. It gives everyone a chance of using the reading list as they’d like.
  + **DoEd:** Another issue is the inconsistent information between the module handbooks and Tallis. It’s apparently confusing and students can’t tell the difference between required, recommended, and optional readings.
  + **Divinity SP:** I agree, but this flexibility between the two is a strength. An extra step of standardization might be frustrating for module coordinators.
  + **Spanish LC:** If the specific concern is the reading list in isolation, then Spanish has a big issue with that. We just have a big document for disability officers to access with all the texts we use.
  + **Medicine SP:** Most people don’t end up reading the list. So, updating just that might useless for disability officers.
  + **IR SP:** If format are the issue, increasing communication between schools and disability teams might be more effective than mandating standardization of reading lists.

**Third Agenda Item:** **Progression to in-person exams** (Psych SP)

* Overview:
  + Some 2nd and 3rd year modules are witnessing a sudden change from online to in-person exams. We’re particularly worried about 2nd year students who have to attempt a 90-MCQ test, that was previously held online, in person. They are promised support, but I don’t trust my department. I believe they’re doing it cause of increase in AI use amongst students.
* Discussion:
  1. Is any other school experiencing this sudden shift?
  2. A lot of schools already transitioned back to in person exams. Is there any advice?
  3. What does your exam format look like? Does it differ across years or modules? We, currently, don’t have that kind of consistency.
  + **Music SP:** (context: also takes Psych) A warning in advance would be great for modules transitioning to in person exams.
  + **Psych SP:** Was it in the module handbook? Just asking cause some modules didn’t have this update.
  + **Music SP:** It wasn’t made clear to us whether the exam would be online or in person.
  + **Hist SP:** Hist went all in-person for Subhonours. I have no complaints about going in person, lecturers’ AI point is undeniable and in any case the standard of marking is so low for in-person exams. No one is expecting anything profound from Subhonours.
  + **Psych SP:** Are the formats different between Subhonours and Honours?
  + **Hist SP:** There is a certain level of consistency but the details of the exam depend on tutors.
  + **Russian LC:** We didn’t get a lot of support when transitioning but lecturers made it clear that the marking standard won’t be something to worry about.
  + **Management SP:** We have hybrid exams and depending on module, we were told which topics will be reviewed. Basically, we were given a sense of which specific topics will definitely appear.
  + **CS SP:** We didn’t get any support in our school. We were in fact told to write code by hand – on paper. So, make sure you get the right support.
  + **DoEd:** I took psych as well. It’s interesting they are going back in person that too with the same format. At the time, they explicitly had open book exams because they wanted exams to check critical thinking skills instead of memorization. If they are changing the format, they should also make their expectations clear. Make sure they clarify that.
  + **Psych SP:** I was discussing this with our DoT, and MCQs are good but when they are 90 it’s hard to deny it as a memorization test.
  + **Econ SP:** For us most exams are very quantitative, and lecturers often underestimate how much time it takes to answer questions in person. We don’t get a lot of support here, so make sure they test how long it takes to do an exam. We also scale grades based on class scores.
  + **Psych SP:** Are they transparent about that?
  + **Econ SP:** Yeah, they almost always tell you.
  + **Med SP:** The school could consider a safe exam browser where you sit the exam in person but attempt them on the computer. It solves some problems, but you still have to memorize.
  + **Music SP:** Circling back to my initial remark, there was no update to the marking criteria in the module.
  + **Phys SP:** Lecturers write the exams for their own module because they have to show that the test can be completed in the time allotted. It helps when they tend to underestimate time taken.
  + **Psych SP:** I actually don’t know if our school does that.
  + **Arts and Div FP**: We could discuss this further and potentially raise standardization of assessments as a motion during UAF.

**Fourth Agenda Item:** **SP Elections** (Arts and Divinity FP)

* Overview:
  + School presidents who are graduating, start seeing who you would want as a successor and drop hints – don’t be subtle, push them to run.
  + The following roles will also be open – DoEd, Arts/Div FP, and Sci/Med FP.
  + Notions open on the 17th of Feb and close on the 27th
  + Elections will be on the 12th and 13th of March and results will be announced on the 13th of March
  + DoEd: Last year, most of the campaigning happened during dissertation season and the feedback was to either delay or prepone them. So start entertaining questions or invite people to ask questions about your role.
* Discussion:
  + **Arts/Div FP:** In your role, you can’t endorse people but under your name, you can.
  + **Maths SP:** Yeah so like don’t say it in your weekly email
  + **G&SD SP:** How will campaigning work over spring break
  + **Arts/ Div FP:** Nominations open 3 days before and 3 days after, so there is a week apart from spring break.

**Fifth Agenda Item:** **AOCB** (5 mins)

* Teaching Awards:
  + **DoEd**: We’re hard launching teaching awards. Daniel (PG ARI) will send some marketing drafts. It’s fun to chat with winners from last year. Teachers get excited. Please push for nominations within your respective schools.
  + **G&SD**: Do SPs attend?
  + **DoEd**: You can if you volunteer to shortlist winners or if you nominate someone and they win.
* SP Elections:
  + **Med SP**: In terms of SP elections, is there no room for changes in the timeline?
  + **Arts/Div FP**: It’s being discussed but we’ll let you all know if there any changes.
  + **Med SP**: Could we have a VP role? (a) cause SPs have way too much work and (b) we have to spoon feed work to class reps anyway.
  + **Arts/Div FP**: Yeah it’s a bit late but this could be something to advocate for during Class Rep elections.
  + **Music SP**: I have two VPs. In Music, we do like a job interview process for these admin-intensive roles. I can confirm that it is helpful to have a team.

**Observers**

**Resources Requested**