



The Department of Health Sciences

STUDENT-STAFF FORUM (UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 1 June 2022

Present:

Student Representatives

Ben Allen (UG Departmental Rep, chairing)
Claudia Collins (BSc Nursing Sept20)
Andrew Delahunty (MNursing Sept21)
Kheira Haffiane (MNursing Sept18)
Kirsty Shaw-Williams (BA Midwifery Practice Mid21)

Departmental Representatives

Mike Parker (Chair, UG Teaching Committee – covering Chair, Board of Studies)
Matthew Jacobs (Head of Student & Academic Services)
Amanda Perry (Chair, Athena Swan Working Group)
Helen Recchia (Programme Leader, BA Midwifery Practice)

SSF/Jun22/01

Apologies for Absence

Anita Savage Grainge (Chair, Board of Studies), Rob Allison (Subject Group Lead, Nursing), Sophie Godfrey (SASS Office Coordinator), Beth Hardy (Programme Leader, MNursing), Emily Hemmings (Director of Practice Education), Danielle Simpson (Student Support & Engagement Manager), Russell Yates (Chair, UG Teaching Committee)

SSF/Jun22/02

Notes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the meeting of the Undergraduate Student-Staff Forum which took place on 27 January 2022 were **approved**.

SSF/Jun22/03

Matters Arising

SSF/Jan22/06 Car Sharing for Practice Placements

The group was reminded that there had been an action from the last meeting for EH to lead on the development of a platform to facilitate lift-sharing for travel to practice placements. MJ reported that a system had been set up and was available for use: details had been circulated by the Practice Learning Link team. CC added that NurSoc would also be publicising the system.

SSF/Jan22/08.02 Wearing Uniform in CSU & Laundry Costs (Mid21)

MJ confirmed that he had raised concerns about the cost of on-campus laundry facilities with the Registrar's team as discussed: however at the time of the meeting no response had been received. MJ reported that he had followed up the original enquiry and would continue to do so until a response was received.

AD reported that some students were organising a washing machine sharing system between themselves to help keep laundry costs down. KSW enquired whether it would be possible to increase the amount of uniform provided to students from four sets to five, to accommodate a full week for students working in the community. MJ explained that

the University received funding from Health Education England to support the provision of uniforms for students: however this was reducing year on year and did not now cover the cost of the uniforms provided. A decision had been taken before the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the number of uniforms from five to four, and it was very unlikely that it would be possible to increase this again. It was highlighted that students could purchase additional uniforms if they wished to do so.

KH suggested that graduating students may have uniform in good condition that they would be able to pass on. MJ reported that a uniform recycling/exchange system had existed previously in the Department, but that it had become impossible for the SASS team to manage because the need to launder and store the uniforms had resulted in infection control concerns. MJ proposed that it would be necessary for Reps to gauge interest in this option in the first instance, to avoid a repeat of these difficulties. CC suggested the NurSoc could help to promote or facilitate a uniform exchange, as something similar had existed previously via their social media.

SSF/Jan22/08.03 CSU Equipment (Mid21)

The group was advised that David Graham (CSU Manager) had responded to the issue raised at the previous meeting regarding equipment in the CSU. It was reported that the issue had been about IV trainer, where one relatively new trainer had got blocked: this was resolved. DG had also reported that more skin and veins had been purchased to replace the ones that were starting to look older; and more kit was being updated all the time. DG had highlighted that the Department was careful to spend students' course fees wisely to get the most out of the kit that was purchased, repairing where appropriate and buying new where needed.

HR added that an order had recently been placed for additional equipment for student midwives, for which delivery was awaited.

SSF/Jan22/08.05 Applying for Job Roles (Sept19)

The group was reminded that there had been an action from the last meeting for MJ to collate information on application processes for first posts for graduating students and feed this back to students. MJ apologised for not having completed this and the action was carried forward to the next meeting.

ACTION	BY WHOM
To collate information on application processes for first posts for graduating students, and feed back	Matthew Jacobs

SSF/Jun22/04

Standing Item: Student & Academic Support Service Update

SSF/Jun22/04.01 SASS Staffing

MJ reported that the SASS team was experiencing significant challenges with staffing at the current time, and thanked students for their patience when awaiting responses to enquiries. It was noted that the team was prioritising travel and dual accommodation expenses claims, which were being processed within an average of 7-14 days. The team was also working to process applications for students starting in September; and mandatory programme requirements for students preparing for registration.

MJ also advised the group that a new Student Well-Being Officer would be joining the Department. Their contact details and information on how to make an appointment would be circulated shortly.

SSF/Jun22/04.02 On-Campus Summer Accommodation

The group was reminded that students in need of on-campus accommodation over the summer period should contact Accommodation Services to lodge an expression of interest. The Accommodation Services team would then liaise directly with students about availability and options.

SSF/Jun22/05

Standing Item: Athena Swan

AP reported that the Department was aiming to submit its application for silver award in July. AP gave an overview of the submission report. The group was advised that data for the report came from a number of sources, including data on staff and student numbers available centrally from the University; survey data collected by the Athena Swan Working Group; and qualitative comments and feedback. It was explained that there was a requirement to provide data covering the five years prior to report submission, to demonstrate changes made and to support further actions which had been identified. Reps were asked to contact AP if they were aware of any further surveys which had taken place which may be useful for the report.

AP also reported that the Athena Swan Working Group was exploring how to promote an inclusive approach for male undergraduate nursing students, given that the majority of the Department's undergraduate students were female, as was typical for the nursing and midwifery sector. It was noted that previously an event specifically for male nursing students had taken place to promote inclusion; and work was also being done on the webpages to ensure that these represented a gender balance. Feedback from male nursing students indicated that a key remaining issue was comments and assumptions made in the practice environment (e.g. that male nursing students must be working to become doctors). It was acknowledged that changing perceptions in practice was beyond the scope of the Department alone: however AP reported that the Department was exploring involvement in the 'I'm A Scientist' online project, with the aim of addressing common preconceptions about nursing job roles at school level. MJ suggested that the MINT (Men Into Nursing Together) project at Sheffield Hallam University may have helpful resources or data relevant to this issue.

CC highlighted that the report referred to actions around female and male students and staff, and enquired whether action was also being taken towards inclusion for trans and non-binary people. AP confirmed that action was inclusive of all gender identities. AP explained, however, that the numbers of survey responders in these groups were too small to allow effective reporting without risk of identifying the individuals concerned. It was hoped that the Department would be able to move towards action such as having trans staff available to meet with trans students at open days: however again this relied on staff coming forward to do this.

MJ reported that work was underway to create a group for trans students to meet and discuss core issues in clinical practice for support. It was noted that the experiences of trans students in clinical practice had raised a range of questions which the Department was looking at addressing. MJ advised that it was hoped that the support group would be in place by September, and that it would include some students who were willing to act as ambassadors, as well as retaining options for students to be involved anonymously.

SSF/Jun22/06

Standing Item: Undergraduate Programme Issues

SSF/Jun22/06.01 Student Engagement Meeting (Sept18)

KH noted that the Department ran a variety of different meetings which Reps were invited to attend, including the SSF and Student Engagement meetings. This meant it was not always clear what issues should be raised at which meeting. It was acknowledged that this could be confusing for Reps. MJ advised that the Student Engagement meetings were being restarted and that it was anticipated that there would be formal terms of reference which would give clarity about the kinds of issues which should be raised at that meeting. MP suggested that the UG Teaching Committee could liaise with SASS and Programme Leaders to ensure that clear information was provided to Reps about the purpose of each meeting. Reps agreed that this would be helpful going forwards. BA noted that he had found the SSF to be the most effective meeting for raising issues and getting feedback: however the SSF only took place three times a year where other meetings were more frequent.

ACTION	BY WHOM
To liaise with SASS team and Programme Leaders to provide clear information for Student Reps on what issues should be raised at which meeting	Mike Parker

SSF/Jun22/06.02 Midwifery Placement Blocks (Mid21)

KSW reported that an issue had been raised within the Mid21 cohort regarding placement blocks and there not being a clear pattern or schedule for where students would be situated. Students had reported being moved frequently between clinical areas, which they had found challenging. HR advised that this was likely to be a result of the recent changes with regard to continuity of carer, and that if this was the case it should settle down as the changes embedded. HR requested that students stay in close contact with their Practice Assessors, and that they highlight any concerns via the practice evaluation process. HR advised that theory and practice blocks overall were unlikely to change as they were already 3-6 weeks long and had been published on the timetable and course plan.

SSF/Jun22/06.03 VLE Upgrade (Sept20)

CC reported that concerns had been raised regarding the scheduled downtime for the VLE upgrade in July, as this coincided with two assessment submissions for the cohort. MJ advised that the Department shared students' frustration about this, and that the matter had been raised with the IT Senate committee as a problem; it had also been raised via the Departmental Management Team to Vice-Chancellor level. It was confirmed that YUSU had also been involved and the matter raised at Sabbatical Officer level.

SSF/Jun22/06.04 Support in Practice (Sept18)

KH reported that the Sept18 cohort had suggested that more support in the practice environment would be helpful, especially for students in their first and second years. KH acknowledged that the Department provided a high level of support for the theory aspects of the programme; but suggested that support in practice could be more proactive than was currently the case. MP explained that it would be helpful to have more information on what support students would like to see, above what was already available, in order for the Department to explore meeting those expectations. KH reported that a key issue would be reminding practice partners about the role of student nurses, as there seemed to have been some blurring of this especially following the employment of student nurses during the pandemic. MP suggested that this would be something for the Practice Learning Link team to address, via the practice newsletter and in training for Practice Assessors and Practice Supervisors. MJ confirmed that a new poster was about to be sent out to all practice areas with a request to replace any previous versions. Students were also encouraged to let the PLL team (dohs-pll@york.ac.uk) know about any issues of this sort that they may be experiencing in practice.

ACTION	BY WHOM
To refer concerns about expectations of students in practice to Practice Learning Link team	Mike Parker

SSF/Jun22/06.05 Maths/Calculations Support (Sept19)

The group was informed that the Sept19 cohort had requested additional support for the summative numeracy assessment in Knowledge Applied to Nursing Practice 6. Students were aware of the support available from the Maths Skills Centre but would like more support from within the Department. MP reminded the group that students had access to SafeMedicate from the time they started the programme with no restrictions on using it formatively. In addition, calculations exercises were included in practice modules. It was

agreed that MP would refer the matter of integration of maths into the curriculum back to the Programme Leader.

It was also noted that the cohort had reported a lack of certainty regarding their current module (Professional Development in Nursing: Leading & Managing Change), as the module was largely self-directed and quite complex. MP advised that students with queries about the assessment should use the assessment discussion board on the module VLE site, or contact their seminar lead. It was also highlighted that the module leader had included a video on the VLE site discussing what was expected in the assessment.

ACTION	BY WHOM
To refer feedback about integration of maths/calculations support within the nursing programme to the Programme Leader for consideration	Mike Parker

SSF/Jun22/06.06 Practice Hours (Mid21)

KSW reported that students at other institutions were allowed to include their lunch breaks in their practice hours, and were also allowed to work part-time in practice: the cohort had therefore queried whether the same would be permitted at York. HR confirmed that part-time working would not be an option as it would make it impossible for students to achieve the required practice hours within the timeframe of the programme. It was noted that part-time working in practice would only be possible within a part-time programme over a longer timeframe, which the University did not currently offer. MP advised that the Nursing & Midwifery Council specified that practice hours should be 'hours worked' and that this would therefore preclude counting lunch breaks as practice hours.

KSW also reported that a concern had been received regarding theory and practice taking place in the same week. HR clarified that there should be very few instances of this occurring for any cohort, as the programme team recognised that it was challenging and had reorganised the programme to avoid it. It was acknowledged that there may be occasions when assessment submission deadlines fell during practice blocks: however these were published well in advance to allow students to organise their time.

SSF/Jun22/06.07 Promotion of Extracurricular Events (Sept18)

KH noted that she had attended a number of non-University conferences and events and had noticed that there were very few other York students present, whereas there appeared to be larger groups attending from other Universities. KH suggested therefore that extracurricular events, such as the Royal College of Nursing Congress or those run by the Florence Nightingale Foundation or Council of Deans of Health, could be better promoted within the Department. It was agreed that NurSoc and MidSoc could play an important role in publicising these events to students.

SSF/Jun22/07 **Standing Item: Board of Studies – Reporting Arrangements**
No issues were identified as requiring escalation to Board of Studies.

SSF/Jun22/08 **Standing Item: Chairperson Arrangements – next Student-Staff Forum**
It was agreed that the new Departmental Rep would be invited to chair the next meeting.

SSF/Jun22/09 **Any Other Urgent Business**
None.

SSF/Jun22/10 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
TBC once Autumn Term timetable released.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

AGENDA ITEM AND TITLE	ACTION	BY WHOM
SSF/Jan22/08.05 Applying for Job Roles (Sept19)	To collate information on application processes for first posts for graduating students, and feed back	Matthew Jacobs
SSF/Jun22/06.01 Student Engagement Meeting (Sept18)	To liaise with SASS team and Programme Leaders to provide clear information for Student Reps on what issues should be raised at which meeting	Mike Parker
SSF/Jun22/06.05 Maths/ Calculations Support (Sept19)	To refer feedback about integration of maths/calculations support within the nursing programme to the Programme Leader for consideration	Mike Parker
SSF/Jun22/06.04 Support in Practice (Sept18)	To refer concerns about expectations of students in practice to Practice Learning Link team	Mike Parker

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