DEPP Student-Staff Meeting (2-3pm, 4th November 2026)

Attendants: Yin-Fang Zhang, Xinyao Xiang, Ralitza Dimova, Emmanuel Frimpong, Katsushi Imai, Madison Fowler, Gauri Gupta, Syarifah Muslimat, Salauddin Tauseef, Cristobal Ruiz-Tagle, Upasak Das, Satveer Kaur, Yuhua Bai, David Lawson

Meeting notes:

- **Timetabling Constraints And Improvements:** Yin-Fang, student representatives Satveer, Syarifah and Yuhua, and staff including Ralitza, Katsushi and David discussed overcrowded teaching days, back-to-back quantitative sessions and the limits of centrally managed timetabling, agreeing that programme directors should review provisional timetables and raise programme-level conflicts earlier.
    - **Student Timetable Feedback:** Satveer reported that DEP students experienced computer classes scheduled in ordinary classrooms without computers or sufficient charging facilities, while Syarifah highlighted PPM students' back-to-back Monday lectures, particularly the demanding quantitative Research Skills for Economic Development session followed immediately by Economic Development. Yuhua reported that DF students shared the heavy Monday schedule, with nearly three lectures and fatigue during later sessions; students had mixed preferences between concentrated and more evenly distributed teaching.
    - **Central Timetabling Process:** Yin-Fang explained that timetabling is managed centrally, giving individual lecturers limited control over allocated days and times. David explained that planning begins in January, covers roughly 2,800 modules, incorporates staffing constraints and goes through several iterations; preliminary timetables are normally available around June or July for staff and programme-director feedback.
    - **Programme-Level Review:** David advised that programme directors can review core-module conflicts and excessive workload when preliminary timetables are circulated, although they cannot submit requests on behalf of individual staff. Yin-Fang recommended that programme directors inspect timetables before they reach individual colleagues and submit programme-level recommendations to the Timetabling team.
    - **Future Timetabling Requests:** The group agreed that requests should focus on identifiable programme problems, such as difficult combinations of compulsory modules, rather than requiring all modules to be separated. David noted that module type and learning demands matter, since some consecutive modules complement one another while others, such as quantitative sessions followed by another demanding class, create a heavier burden. Ralitza agreed to consider conflicts, meal breaks and balance in future reviews.
- **Quantitative Learning And Academic Support:** PPM and DEP representatives reported that students without prior statistics, economics or quantitative experience need additional support, while Katsushi and Salauddin discussed computer-room limitations, oversubscribed office hours and better promotion of existing surgery sessions.
    - **Statistics Support Needs:** Emmanuel reported that 52% of PPM survey respondents had no statistics background and found some statistics and economics teaching challenging. Emmanuel proposed continuing support

through Research Skills and Economic Development, while students were also directed towards academic-writing provision for essay preparation.
    - **Computer Class Facilities:** Satveer clarified that DEP econometrics students use R Studio but sometimes attend ordinary classrooms without computers. They must follow demonstrations from a presentation board, making it difficult to keep pace and leaving students at different stages. Katsushi said they would forward the facilities and teaching-support concern and seek additional help with technical material.
    - **Mathematics and Economics Support:** Satveer said students generally found the lecturers interactive and reported weekly quizzes and checks of understanding, but some students struggled with mathematical content in econometrics and Development in Macroeconomics. Office hours and open-hours appointments were fully booked, leaving insufficient capacity for students needing help; Katsushi said they would raise the possibility of additional hours.
    - **Surgery Sessions:** Ralitza clarified that separate surgery sessions are available for quantitative support, and Salauddin confirmed that they run three times per week. Attendance was steady but limited to the same small group, so Salauddin requested that programme directors remind students about the sessions. Students can attend without signing up, but emailing Salauddin in advance with specific questions is preferred so appropriate materials can be prepared; Salauddin shared the times, location and email details.
- **Induction week(s) and Information Clarity:** Emmanuel and Syarifah reported inconsistent timetables, multiple online systems and unclear registration and academic-calendar information during the induction week, while David acknowledged the need for earlier staff involvement in Welcome Week planning and clearer communication.
    - **Conflicting Timetables:** Emmanuel reported that My Manchester, SEED and Canvas sometimes displayed different timetable information during the first weeks, causing confusion and, for some students, missed or overlapping lectures. Students requested a clearer and more consistent source of timetable information.
    - **Registration Communications:** Students found that the volume of websites and arrival information made it unclear where to begin, and registration communications contained unfamiliar terminology. Emmanuel recommended a more streamlined onboarding process and simpler explanations, particularly for Super Friday and registration-related instructions.
    - **Academic Calendar Clarity:** Syarifah reported that some students interpreted the Christmas period shown in the academic calendar as a full break and were unaware that deadlines fell within it. The group identified this as a communication issue requiring clearer explanation of teaching breaks, assessment deadlines and submission windows.
    - **Welcome Week Planning:** David said the next Welcome Week timetable should involve programme directors and cluster conveners earlier, with planning beginning in March. He noted that the feedback would support requests for earlier staff engagement so onboarding information is more coordinated.
- **Assessment and Academic Writing Guidance:** PPM students requested more essay examples and clearer preparation for written assessments, and David clarified that

January deadlines are fixed around the examination period but usually provide a submission window before the final deadline.
    - **Essay Examples:** Emmanuel reported that some students had limited experience of essay-based assessment and wanted examples or model structures. The programme is signposting students to university academic-writing sessions to support preparation for end-of-year assessments.
    - **Assessment Preparation:** Ralitza said lecturers are providing assignment guidance, including special tutorial sessions for Economic Development and support for quantitative components. Students should use these sessions alongside academic-writing provision when preparing assessments.
    - **January Submission Window:** David explained that examinations begin around 12 or 13 January, so assignments must be submitted before that period. Although deadlines may fall between approximately 4 and 12 January, students can generally submit earlier because the deadline is the final date rather than the opening of the submission period; programme teams will reiterate this distinction.
- **Attendance and Classroom Access:** DEP students raised unreliable SEATS attendance recording and unsuitable classrooms, and David advised students to email lecturers when the system fails so attendance can be corrected manually.
    - **SEATS Attendance Issues:** Satveer said that when SEATS or classroom equipment does not work, students may fail to register attendance and the issue can affect their attendance record if they do not remember to contact the lecturer. David advised students to email the lecturer when SEATS fails so they can be signed in manually.
    - **Classroom Equipment:** Satveer reported that some computer-based teaching takes place without suitable computers, charging points or classroom facilities, preventing active participation. The concern was linked to the need for appropriate rooms for econometrics and other software-based teaching.
- **Prayer Space Provision:** Syarifah reported that some main teaching buildings lack prayer spaces, creating difficulties for students with back-to-back activities, and David said the matter is beyond local control but should be raised through SEED and addressed through reasonable teaching flexibility where possible.
    - **Building Provision:** Syarifah requested small designated prayer spaces in each main teaching building because students sometimes have insufficient time to travel to another building between activities. They reported that the absence of suitable space creates practical difficulties when lectures are scheduled consecutively.
    - **Escalation Route:** David said building capacity and estates decisions are outside the immediate authority of the programme team and encouraged students to raise the issue through the SEED meeting. Until a facilities solution is available, David suggested that lecturers accommodate reasonable lateness or provide help with missed content, while acknowledging that this is not a complete solution.
    - **Student Voice Follow-Up:** Syarifah confirmed that the prayer-space issue would be raised at the forthcoming Student Voice Committee meeting so it can be considered beyond the programme-level discussion.
- **Follow-Up Actions and Communication:** Yin-Fang asked student representatives to share their presentation materials and advised students to raise emerging concerns first with programme directors, while programme directors were tasked with reminding students about academic-writing and surgery support.

    - **Feedback Materials:** Yin-Fang asked Syarifah to send the PPM feedback slides after the meeting so staff could investigate issues requiring action and determine which concerns could be addressed at programme, school or university level.
    - **Student Communications:** David stated that programme directors should send reminders about academic-writing classes and DEP surgery sessions. Yin-Fang also asked student representatives to inform study fellows and classmates about the available support sessions.
    - **Escalation Process:** Yin-Fang said students should contact their programme directors first about new concerns, either by email or through a direct discussion. Staff will follow up issues identified during the meeting through the relevant programme, school, SEED or central university channels.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Programme Feedback:** Send the PPM feedback slides to Yin-Fang for review and follow-up. (Syarifah)
- **Timetabling:** Escalate student concerns about concentrated and back-to-back compulsory lectures to the school-level team for consideration by the Central Timetable team. (Yin-Fang and programme directors)
- **Timetabling Review:** Review programme timetables for workload, conflicts and unsuitable sequencing when provisional timetables are circulated, and submit programme-level feedback to the Timetable team. (Programme directors)
- **Surgery Sessions:** Remind students across the programmes about the three weekly surgery sessions and ask them to email Salauddin in advance with specific questions. (Yin-Fang, Programme directors, Student representatives)
- **Academic Writing Support:** Send programme-wide reminders about the academic writing classes and available surgery sessions. (Programme directors)
- **Assessment Deadlines:** Clarify to students that January assignment deadlines are final submission dates and that submissions can be made during the preceding submission window, including the impact of deadlines during the Christmas period. (all academic staff teaching in semester 1)
- **Attendance Recording:** Tell students to email the lecturer when SEAtS fails to record their attendance so that their attendance can be corrected manually.
- **Welcome Week Planning:** Engage programme directors and cluster conveners earlier in the planning of the Welcome Week timetable to improve onboarding and reduce conflicting or unclear information. (programme directors, cluster convener)
- **Prayer Facilities:** Raise the lack of prayer spaces in main lecture buildings at the forthcoming Student Voice Committee meeting and pursue an estates-level response. (student reps, teaching director)
- **Timetable Information:** Investigate the inconsistent timetable information across My Manchester, SEED and Canvas and identify a clearer single source of information for students. (Yin-Fang)