

Staff-Student Action Log



Purpose	The core purpose of the academic representation system, which aligns with the revised UK Quality Code, is to achieve positive change that improves the educational experience of students at Royal Holloway and engages students as partners in the development, assurance, and enhancement of their learning.
Reports to	School Education Committee – UG and PGT School Research Student Oversight Committee - PGR
Department	Biological Sciences
Regular meetings per year	3-6
Quorum	5

List of Department Reps:

Year 1 Reps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casey Cooper Yasmina Debieche Del Rio Harneet Dhillon Amelia Murphy Xinyao Qu 	Year 2 Reps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naema Abdi Nabiha Atlas Claudia Carter Daria Chernovolenko Noorsath Chowdhury Holly Clark Elysia Dent Michelle Doa Duque Andre Joseph Safa Khan Anna Laricheva Emily Robnik Suha Sultana 	Year 3 Reps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber Bulley Eva-Mae Hart Safy Irwin (Senior Course Rep) Allison Pizzo (Senior Course Rep) Ceylin Surmeli Isabelle Talbot Amy Webb (Senior Course Rep)
---	--	--

Attendance Monitoring

	Date and Time	Location	Attendance
November Meeting (compulsory)	13 November 2024 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	<p>Attendees: Naema Abdi, Claudia Carter, Lucy Davidson, Lydia Hanna, Brett Harmony, Eva-Mae Hart, Jenny Murdoch, Debbie Phillips, Allison Pizzo, Noorsath Chowdhury, Safa Khan, Elysia Dent, Yasmina Debieche Del Rio, Michelle Doa Duque, Emily Robnik, Claudia Carter.</p> <p>Apologies received from: Dominika Biel, Harneet Dhillon, Safy Irwin, Andre Joseph, James McEvoy, Ceylin Surmeli, Isabelle Talbot, Elaine Turton, Anna Laricheva, Amy Webb.</p>
December Meeting (optional)	11 December 2024 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	<p>Attendees: Amy Webb, Allison Pizzo, Eva-May Hart, Amber Bully, Safa Khan, Emily Robnik, Claudia Carter, Xinyao Qu, Casey Cooper, Lydia Hanna, Jenny Murdoch, Lucy Davidson.</p> <p>Apologies received from: Naema Abdi, Noorsath Chowdhury, Holly Clark, Yasmina Debieche Del Rio, Elysia Dent, Harneet Dhillon, Brett Harmony, Safyr Irwin, Debbie Philips, Elaine Turton.</p>
February Meeting (compulsory)	5 February 2025 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	<p>Attendees: Michelle Doa Duque, Holly Clark, Elysia Dent, Noorsath Chowdhury, Yasmina Debieche Del Rio, Emily Robnik, Claudia Carter, Allison Pizzo, Amber Bulley, Eva-Mae Hart, Dr Jenny Murdoch, Dr Cristina Garcia-Perez, Elaine Turton, Brett Harmony, Eva Garcia Grau.</p> <p>Apologies received from: Casey Cooper, Lucy Davidson Lydia Hanna, Safyr Irwin, Safa Khan, James McEvoy Debbie Phillips.</p>
March Meeting (optional)	12 March 2025 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	<p>Attendees: Attendees: Amelia Murphy, Allison Pizzo, Yasmina Debieche Del Rio, Claudia Carter, Emily Robnik, Debbie Phillips, Dr Jenny Murdoch, Lydia Hanna, Dr Cristina Garcia-Perez, Holly Clark</p> <p>Apologies received from: Noorsath Chowdhury, Lucy Davidson, Elysia Dent, Safah Khan, James McEvoy, Elaine Turton</p>

April Meeting (compulsory)	8 May 2025 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	
May Meeting (optional)	13 June 2025 2-4pm	Wolfson 130A	

Actions

Action No.	Agreed Action (Include reason for agreed action)	Date Action Agreed	Responsible	Due	Date Action Completed	Outcome
1	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd year course reps to remind more students to fill out the end of term survey (gain more feedback from students). Also highlight positive Feedback form the modules.	13/11/2024	Y2 and Y3 Reps	Week 12	Ongoing	
2.	Advertise the library drop-ins (Referencing drop-ins in the library coming up 10-12 on 3 rd and 11 th of December, advertised on Instagram and through email)	13/11/2024	Student Reps	ASAP	Ongoing	
3.	Advertise CEDAS lab report support sessions- information available on the Moodle page	13/11/2024	Student Reps & Brett Harmony	ASAP	Ongoing	
4.	Remember Student to download past papers before and make sure the VPN works living campus and making	11/12/2024	Student Reps	ASAP	01/01/2025	No issues with accessing past papers reported
5.	Curriculum review	11/12/2024	Student Reps & Academic Staff	05/02/25		
6.	Removing 'other' folder in outlook inbox	11/12/2024	Dr Lydia Hanna	05/02/25		
7.	Biosoc & Medsoc running more events during the day for commuting students.	11/12/2024	Allison & Saffy	05/02/25	Ongoing	Biosoc has pub nights and Crosslands board games on alternating Tuesdays.

Action No.	Agreed Action (Include reason for agreed action)	Date Action Agreed	Responsible	Due	Date Action Completed	Outcome
8.	Make a form asking students about their thoughts about lectures drop-in hours and if they haven't been using them why?	11/12/2024	Casey Cooper	05/02/25	04/02/2025	Most students don't know the times of the drop-ins, some don't find them necessary, others don't know what the drop-ins should be used for. Overall students would prefer if both in person and online option were offered for the drop ins.
9.	Organising session support for year 2 immunology lab reports next year.	12/03/25	Dr Jenny Murdoch			
10.	Follow up about Microbiology lab reports and when the marks will be returned.	12/03/25	Dr Jenny Murdoch			
11.	Follow up about supervisors telling students the questions they will be asked for their third-year project presentations.	12/03/25	Allison Pizzo			
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						

Notes:

Feel free to use this space to make note of anything of importance, in addition to the actions above, that don't require an action.

	Notes
Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Reminded more students about CEDAS resulting in more students attending-Best response for Mid-term survey from first year students- year 2 and 3 course-reps to advertise more-Student handbook has extension information now-2 ecology/biology/zoology course reps (1 first, 1 second year)-Reminded of graduation ceremony-Study spaces in the library for students with varying accessibility needs-CEDAS member of staff for statistics- bookable through Moodle hub either in-person or online-CEDAS brochure for past work (for staff- could be adapted for students as well)-CEDAS trialling sessions specifically for lab report support- can offer individual feedback as well as group feedback. Dates not yet available.-Annual review available on Teams-Not too many changes for next year-1st year students- 17 responses in survey: majority feel they made good choices for modules, 50% feel satisfied with tutorials, some feel workload is manageable, resources satisfiable, challenge to balance academic commitment with other commitments, difficult to receive feedback on lab reports and assignments, generally happy with professor relationships, learning new content, community, negatives include workload-Year 1: not enough guidance for lab report for BS1021, Becoming a Bioscientist- more tutorial sessions to discuss the project, not enough information for housing (could tutors remind students about this?- direct this to SU), more students would like more optional quizzes-Year 2: majority of feedback according to BS2570 Physical Biochemistry- write-up instructions are vague as specific formatting is needed yet guidance is brief (there is a detailed template on Moodle as well as marking criteria available under general information- this can be shared with second year students)-Year 2: Timetabled additional session for BS2570-Year 2: Ecology module to do a podcast as a high percentage of the grade, module over the summer suggested as having a higher workload than expected-Suggested to make amount of hours expected for modules clearer?

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Year 2: some modules follow one another on the timetable- a lot of content to take in in one day (receive timetables in advance?) -Year 2's not received feedback on the haematology lab from year 1 (Fundamental Biochemistry) -Year 2 Protein Structure and Function- slides very word-heavy, students asking for pre-lecture recordings/ quizzes, Vevox/ live questions to be used during lectures? -Re-opening of past quizzes for revision purposes -Pre-lecture recordings for Developmental Biology? -Human Physiology- connect reminders through timeline on Moodle? -Genetics module- no follow-up quizzes post lecture -3rd year: exam-preparation and essay-writing, BS3530: confusion over content, module selection for 3rd years not as interesting, examination structure (closed book) too based on memory- cheat sheets suggested -Mid-term quizzes -Variety of assessment types between modules -Other lecturers offer term 3 projects? Indication of when they run could be added into the handbook -Information could be passed on through the General Teams channel
Meeting 2	<p>Library update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library opening hours changing for Christmas break – refer to update from Debbie on Teams. During term time, library will continue to be open 24 hours. • Student Reps encouraged to continue advertising library drop-in hours. • Students encouraged to download past papers from exam repository before leaving campus. • The week before the January exams, there will be CeDAS 121s and online sessions. Times and dates are listed on update from Brett on Teams. <p>Academic Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term surveys were released this week. Students encouraged to complete and remember that you can also provide positive feedback in addition to constructive feedback. It's helpful to know what students enjoy and what's working. • RBS accreditation was approved

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept considering bringing in Y2 mandatory module focussed on employability/finance. The module would be informed by employers and prepare students for employment. To bring this in, mandatory modules on some of the degree courses might have to change (e.g. BioMed/Ecology). • The University is generally considering reducing the number of available optional modules. Reps encouraged to go away and think about it, feedback at next meeting or let Jenny know if you'd like to be on the working group. Any changes would be for 26-27. <p>Year 1 – 25 responses to survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback for layout of BS1031 • Students felt lectures were engaging • Students would like access to more past paper questions to support revision • Students requested more revision MCQs for BS1071 which are tied to the lecture content (similar to BS1072) • Cell Biology textbook – students have found it difficult to understand and would like some extra resources to help their understanding of the textbook. Lydia recommended using Sidava (sp?) textbook to aid with understanding. • There was a discussion about the use of AI – students can use it as a revision tool, but please be mindful to not upload other people's work (e.g. a lecturers slide) to external AI sites. AI usage for coursework should be explained in the assignment brief. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BioChem students have lab report overlap (BS2570 & BS2520) – students querying why 5-day extensions are not permitted. Jenny responded that it's too late to change the extensions on a module at this stage, as this would be unfair on those who have already taken an extension and to those on other modules which only permit 2-day extensions. Lydia suggested that maybe it needs to be highlighted to students that they need to complete their work as they go along, following each of the workshops (e.g. a structured timeline). • Students have been surveyed about timetabling (teaching and exams) – unclear what's going to be the result of the survey, but it's being discussed.

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study sessions or drop-in sessions with lecturers to ask questions. Staff have office hours, but they're under utilised by students. General agreement that Padlet is preferable to the Moodle Forum for student questions to lecturers. • There's a concern that some lab demonstrators may not have sufficient knowledge about the subject to support student learning (e.g. Protein Structure module). • Will Operation Wallacea be available to use as a third year project? There have been discussions in the department about the EDI issues of using this opportunity as a basis of BS3010. This opportunity is only available to students who can afford to go. This year's cohort will be permitted to base a project on Op Wallacea, but it may not be permitted in future years. Jenny will consider if the process for signing up for this sort of project could be more formalised e.g. a list of possible supervisors provided. <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>BioSoc & Academic Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BioSoc will change and become an academic community that students are automatically enrolled to join. The BioSci Academic Community will include course reps. It's a positive step that the community will be built in the department, but previous experiences working with the SU have been mixed. • Revision sessions didn't go well – they were difficult to arrange as the room was only booked for an hour and a member of the committee needed to devote their time to it. They will try to arrange this again in Term 2.
Meeting 3	<p>Library update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referencing drop in - 18th Feb 10 to 12 • Library still open 8-12am – is changing at the end of term 2/term 3 to 24 hour. • Information available in 'Welcome to the library' <p>CEDAS update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths and stats cafe drop-ins – 1st-16th May 2025 (venue tbc) • 30 mins meeting to discuss assignments are available • 6 workshops – essay writing, stats (how to do an ANOVA), etc. • Can discuss setting up an R studio workshop – need to see demand.

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still running report writing course <p>Staff update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSS open – ask 3rd years to take part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lecturers advertising this in lectures • Student update meetings – lack of participation from 3rd years but successful for 1st and 2nd years. • End of modules survey – participation was low (less than 10%). • Modules changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One of the clinical modules has been removed for next year ○ 3rd year marine biology has been removed – more options made available to zoology and biology. ○ Changes being made to practical field ecology and Millport trip. ○ Bringing in an employability and professional skills module – details tbc. • Pre-registration sessions – made in-person which was a success. • Term 3/Term 1 research project is continuing to run this year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussion about splitting the module form and project form into different ones. • Disappointment with the 3rd year marine course not being run – would like access to the lecture recordings. <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites on documents (module spec and grid) contradicted each other for the Millport field course – 1041 and 1052 are the correct prerequisites. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People liked layout of modules of term 2. • Developmental biology – exam was difficult to read, and mistakes needed to be corrected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mistakes were spelling, etc and questions were made to challenge. • Lecturers are spending time on first half of lectures and are rushing/not finishing the second half. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cell dynamics, immunology, molecular biology. • Microbiology is running very well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ However, lab report was challenging in areas – R studio stats.

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not all the stats tests were covered in the stats summer course for biomed/biochem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans made to make one of Cristina's R workshops next week catered to helping with this. • Making the 2nd year stats module available to everyone – not just biology/zoology. <p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differing answers on completing the 300 hours for project. • A few students were confused about the midterm meetings. • Infertility lecture was majorly liked.
Meeting 4	<p>Library update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referencing drop-ins 10am-12pm 29th April till 6th May. • 29th March library open 24 hours. <p>Staff update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National student survey has reached 50% submissions but is still open. • Mid module surveys forwarded to the module leaders, however not many responses. • January exam provision results released. • Proposed drop-in sessions to review provisional marks from the January exam scripts. <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental biochemistry haemoglobin labs, instructions missing information which was also the case last year but has now been sorted by James McEvoy. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microbiology lab report was due a month ago and still hasn't been marked despite brief stating marks will be released 25 days after lab. • Immunology lab report brief had missing information about extensions. • Immunology had labs separated into groups over three weeks, once the first group had submitted the lab report, the other two groups were not allowed to ask questions. The first group had the full three weeks to ask questions whereas the other groups did not. <p>Year 3</p>

	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition and medical biochemistry, didn't know much about course work until last Friday and didn't have rubric, had a rough marking criteria but not an actual rubric. • Specific supervisor informing students on what questions they will ask them during their presentations, while giving feedback in meetings before presentations take place. <p>BioSoc & Academic Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology society boat party will be on the 30th May from 6:45/7pm, now from Westminster Pier. • Medical society having pub night Thursday. • Biology society alternating Tuesdays having pub nights and then Crosslands for board games in the afternoons. • SU elections voting ends tomorrow.
Meeting 5	
Meeting 6	