Math School Reps Updates (2025 Jan)

This is a report from the School Representatives of the School of Mathematics, providing regular updates on our work and info regarding the Faculty FSSLC. For any questions or further details about this report, you may contact the us using the following details:

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1. **Actions for Our School of Maths Community**

Updates	Description	Recommended follow up actions for Reps
Establishment of the School Reps Website	- We are setting up an unofficial School of Mathematics Reps website, which will serve as an information hub for course representatives. The website will provide useful reports and updates to keep students informed. - At the current stage, the website will be hosted in Google Spreadsheet format. Once we obtain approval from the School and address publicity and privacy concerns, we will promote it to all students in the School of Mathematics.	**1. We plan to include the email contact information of Reps on the contact page. If you are interested in sharing your details, please send your Preferred Name, email, and units taken to us via WhatsApp or email.** **2. Feel free to suggest any additional information you would like to see on the website!**
Creating the Anonymous Message Box	- As part of our effort to establish a case-referral model among Course Reps, the School, and the Faculty, we have designed an anonymous message box for students in our school to share suggestions and concerns.	**3. Please help promote this message box to students in your cohort.** **4. Feel free to use this message box to raise concerns or feedback regarding our school policies and issues!**

	- School Reps will manage the message box regularly, and any cases received will be referred to the appropriate representatives or bodies for further action.	
About the TB2 Reps Election Arrangements	- The TB2 Election will take place this March and will elect Faculty Reps as well as Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 Course Reps. - There is also a possibility that the School of Mathematics Reps will be elected during this election cycle. - We are currently reviewing the number of Course Reps available for each cohort. You may refer here for further details.	**5. If you have any suggestions regarding the number of Course Reps for your cohort, please contact us via email, including an explanation of why the number should be adjusted.**
Addressing the School Policies	We are collecting different school policies or concerns that are worth discussing at the Faculty level but require further evidence or elaboration from students in their cohorts.	**6. Please refer to Part 3 of this document to see if you can provide support for the issues we have raised in this document.**

2. Updates from the Faculty FSSLC Meeting

By representing our School at the Faculty level, we attended the first Faculty Full SSLC meeting on 22nd November. During this meeting, we discussed issues related to Assessment and Feedback, the new SAY arrangements, the Faculty Merger, and concerns specific to our School (please refer to the Faculty FSSLC minutes for details). We are aware of the following concerns and have raised issues regarding them:

Faculty Level Issues	
1. Impacts Regarding the New Structure of the Academic Year (SAY) Arrangements	Background Information: To improve students' learning experiences and increase flexibility in developing their study plans, in this academic year, the university implemented a new SAY reform, which includes changes such as scheduling TB1 exams before the winter vacation and introducing consolidation/exam preparation weeks. Concerns: While we agree that the new arrangements benefited students by providing an extended winter vacation and allowing consolidation weeks to help students catch up, we are aware of potential drawbacks to these changes, particularly in the following areas: - Traditionally, students have relied on the winter break as a crucial period for TB1 exam revision. The absence of this time window has been a substantial adjustment, especially for final-year students, for whom this year significantly impacts their overall degree classification. - Under the new SAY arrangements, students taking 60 credits in TB1 face significant challenges in meeting the required study hours. Balancing lectures, tutorials, independent study, assessment preparation, and exam revision during this compressed timeframe demands an average of 46 hours per week, amounting to approximately 600 hours of study over 13 weeks. This creates an intense and demanding phase in the academic calendar and may lead to wellbeing issues. - Weeks 10 and 11 of a syllabus typically cover the most advanced material, leaving limited time for students to comprehend and revise complex content.

	Follow Up measures: - The School Representatives will attend the Rep Forum on 20th January to express their opinions on the impacts of the new SAY practices. - Currently, The university and the Student Union will conduct a survey regarding the new SAY arrangements. Once released, we encourage other student representatives to actively promote the survey to gather comprehensive feedback. - During the upcoming January School SSLC, we will collect feedback from our reps and convey these opinions at the next Faculty meeting on 30th January.
2. The Faculty merger	Background Information: In 2024/25, the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering have been merged into the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Concerns: While we are concerned about the potential impacts of this Faculty merger on student life (where the Faculty has responded that there likely won't be significant changes), we also recognize the following potential long-term benefits of the merger: - Whether the merged Faculty could benefit students by increasing the flexibility to take elective units that are interrelated to their major. - Whether the Faculty could strengthen the mathematics community by increasing support for societies (e.g., Matrix and BDSS), particularly in terms of funding and subsidies, or providing networks and resources to help organize activities and build stronger connections within the community.
3. The Data Science Coding Course Issues	Regarding the existing problems with the coding courses for Data Science majors, such as the requirement for extensive Physics and Chemistry knowledge from SCIF courses and content overlap within courses, we submitted a detailed report to the Faculty last year, outlined the problems along with specific plans and suggestions for addressing them. In general, we believe a long-term curriculum restructuring would be the most effective solution to tackle the issue. Understanding this requires significant time and effort, making it difficult to achieve in the short term. We believe short-term measures, such as modifying the Assessment in SCIF20002 and SCIF30005, could help alleviate the problem.

3. Possible Agenda To Be Examined

The following issues are school-level/ joint-honour concerns that have been discussed in previous SSLC meetings, and we believe they could be raised in Faculty Meetings. **However, we require further evidence from affected Reps to ensure that follow-up measures can be effectively implemented.**

Issues	Description and Details
Restrictions on elective choices for Joint Honours programs	Description: In the last Maths FSSLC meeting, reps from Joint Honours programs highlighted the restrictions they face when attempting to transfer to a programming-focused course, particularly regarding elective options. Additionally, as the transfer deadline for non-cognate programs is set before the end of Week 2 in TB1, prevents students from enrolling in certain TB2 courses, potentially impacting their future module selections. They also noted that transfers between programs require approval, and prerequisites can significantly influence Year 2 module choices for students switching from joint honours to single honours. According to administrative staff, students wishing to transfer after the Week 2 deadline must first complete Year 1 of their joint honours program before making the switch. This restriction further limits their unit choices, such as access to Statistics modules.
Enhancing Transparency and Support for Unit Selection	Description: To help Year 2–4 students make well-informed decisions about their unit choices, it is crucial to provide useful sample lecture notes (covering at least one non-introductory chapter) and an updated peer unit description every year. Additionally, it is strongly recommended to provide updated information about potential module changes each year, including but not limited to: ● A shift in the module's band or teaching block. ● A change in the lecturer, which may impact the content. ● Adjustments to the module's content, such as additions or removals. ● The introduction of new modules or the removal of existing ones.

Impact of New SAY Policy: Crashes of Deadlines During the Assessment Period	Description: It has been observed that some **courses outside the School of Mathematics**, particularly coursework-based courses offered, have coursework deadlines during the assessment period. This creates a serious time conflict with the assessment period and distracts students from adequately preparing for their exams.
Impact of New SAY Policy: TB1/2 AND TB4 Units restrictions	Description: To ensure that students do not have more than two exams during TB1, some TB4 courses have been shifted into TB1 under the university's restrictions. However, certain courses, such as coding-related courses (e.g. MATH10017), are unsuitable for this compression. Currently, the Faculty has acknowledged that if the "no more than two exams" rule is maintained in TB1, there could be exemptions regarding the number of TB4 courses to ensure greater flexibility for the School.