

MSW1 Semester 1 SSLC

6/11/23

Representatives: Shayna D’Mello Britto, Sydney Kuczeryk, Jelani McGadney

Staff: Mary Mitchell (PD; CO: Social Work with Individuals and Families), Robin Sen (CO: Social Work in Communities), Sangeeta Chatterji (CO: Doing Social Work Research), Will Rennie (Student Adviser)

Apologies: Rona Gray

Intro

- MM: introduced participants and explained purpose of meeting.

Student Feedback

Academic

- start of programme: lots of unforeseen difficulties
 - getting up to speed on courses was challenging: could there be a central page with the relevant information?
 - **MM:** there’s the MSW Hub, which might not have had much information this year as MM wasn’t available to update it. It may be difficult to gather the various readings in one place as that’s what the course-specific Learn pages are for.
 - **Shayna:** links on the Learn page weren’t always consistent – links didn’t always link to what they stated. A central, guiding document would have been useful to ensure students always knew where to find info about the relevant tutorial readings and due dates.
 - timetables were inconsistent:
 - **RS:** have had issues with this in the past. Unsure exactly where the problem lies – between Teaching Office and central Timetabling – but rule of thumb is follow what’s listed on Learn.
 - **MM:** part of the issue also is that there are people listed on course who we don’t know for sure are attending. Random allocation of EAL participants means there are some non-attendees who are allocated to groups, which then need to be adjusted.
 - **Reps:** some groups also require more of a walk than it’s possible to make in time for the following class. We brought this up at the SPS meeting.
 - **SDB:** would also be good to have all deadlines as dates or as week numbers, rather than a mixture.
 - **SK:** one proposed solution was to further emphasise the use of Learn as a central hub, which might have been made clearer.
 - **MM:** would it be helpful to have a session in Welcome Week about how to navigate the timetable?
 - **Reps:** yes
 - pre-lecture work could be assigned with more notice: people work or have other commitments that 24-hour notice doesn’t always allow time for.
 - **JM:** the week before the lecture would be useful if possible.
 - **MM:** will raise this with staff team.

- **RS:** CO's can only reiterate this to lecturers - there isn't a good reason for this .
- lack of consistency across EAL briefings:
 - if these could be done more like the single essay briefing, which was very helpful, this would be better.
 - **MM:** aware that a couple of groups were given the wrong EAL assignments. Would suggest not starting EAL groups in week 1 going forward.
 - **JM:** as one of the students in those groups, thank you for listening and for ensuring the situation was resolved.
 - SWIC: knowing what's been needed week-to-week has been really helpful.
 - **RS:** that's useful to know. Could perhaps do more in the lectures but the lectures haven't been very well attended so the message needs to be repeated anyway.
 - if there could be a tutor hour between week 1 and week 6, as a check-in, that would prevent an overwhelming amount of feedback right before presenting. Maybe week 4?
 - **MM:** great suggestions. We can look into this.
 - **RS:** you can contact your facilitator for SWIC, and if you don't get a response please ask me.
- DSWR: students of many different backgrounds are coming into the programme, but the content is very theory-based which for some students already been covered in undergrad studies. Would like more intervention-based content if possible.
 - **SC:** that's a fair point and completely doable.

Financial

- could there be more funding for international students? No funding at all available either within or outwith the university.
 - **SK:** some students have benefited from the NHS bursary but it would be great to have something available for international students.
 - **JM and SDB:** Some funding opportunities are 'above' us, some are 'below' us but none for MSW students. This is a huge barrier to attracting other students of colour to the programme.
 - **SK:** students from lower-income families also. Placement being 5 days a week doesn't allow for work around commitment to studying.
 - **MM:** we've raised this with the School over recent years but perhaps some campaigning would help, e.g. writing a letter to myself and the Head of School. It may also be an issue for the Equality and Diversity Committee.
 - **SK:** I'll have to work weekends to cover myself financially – is there any flexibility around extending placement to allow time off during the placement?
 - **MM:** we'll take that back to the Practice Learning team but this proposal will have ramifications on marking and the other procedures on the programme which may be difficult to resolve.

- **SDB:** with the NHS bursary, is there any way we could advocate for ourselves?
 - **MM:** this is for English students and we only had 2 bursaries available this year. Also, SSSC haven't increased the number of available bursaries for 10 years.
 - **SDB:** some students in the cohort were able to receive this.
 - **RS:** perhaps they've lived in England and are eligible on that basis?
- fees for MSW are the highest in Scotland:
 - **RS:** this has been a regular observation and the response has been to the effect that this is a blanket fee.
 - **MM:** a letter to Head of School would be a good focus, and the subject area would be happy to support this course of action and help campaign for a change here.
 - **SC:** Learning Opportunity Fund available through the Student Development Office.
 - **MM:** this is more for cohort-building and similar
 - **Reps:** unfortunately can't use this on rent, books etc.
- a lot of links to funding on central pages are dead.
 - **MM:** this is also something to mention in the letter. Feel free to send us a draft of this and we'll take it to the subject area.
 - **RS:** institutional change can be difficult but that's no reason not to try. Having something from students may be more helpful than the perception that the subject area are asking the same question again.

Wellbeing

- self-care: we've noticed it's embedded into the curriculum but some more active participation (events, for example) would be an improvement.
 - **SDB:** e.g. the picnic and other community-developing activities – could these be implemented more throughout the semester? More events which are helpful for us to meet outwith lectures.
 - **MM:** have to admit that these were planned, but have unfortunately fallen by the wayside given the circumstances at the start of term.
 - **Reps:** we'd be happy to facilitate this if helpful. If we could be given the tools, it would be the sort of thing we could do (e.g. knowing how to check which rooms are bookable, whether funding is available, what we can and can't do on campus, who to speak to about these etc.)
 - **MM:** Possible that there's funding available through the student union. Jessie from the SDO is also a good person to start with for questions like this.
 - **RS:** SDO has some funds which have to at least be student-incorporated but ideally student-led. If we know you're interested, we could try to secure this. Do you mean MSW1 or MSW as a whole?
 - **Reps:** all of MSW would be ideal.
 - **MM:** you can send me the details of anything you've organised and I'd be happy to send out a cohort-wide e-mail. Try to organise something after recall days – something in the evening with the students alone would be a good chance to blow off steam.

Student Support

- response from some teams (e.g. Fees, Finance) has been disappointing:
 - one student seeking funding opportunities was told by more than one team that if they couldn't afford their fees that they should drop out.
 - **SDB**: deadlines for fees come very quickly, when students are still sorting out financial arrangements. October fees deadlines caused a lot of stress.
- good feedback on extensions and SCs – straightforward and to the point.
 - University has been more accepting of SCs and the need for adjustments than other institutions reps have attended in the past.
 - also helps that there's no obligation to disclose information to lecturers or staff members.
 - **MM**: great to hear.
- learning adjustments: very easy and helpful to use.

AOB

- **JM**: would be worth meeting sooner than next SSLC to discuss letter.
 - **MM**: please draft the letter, then we'll discuss the best place to address it (e.g. Head of Subject, Head of School) early next year. We'll then try to set up a meeting to discuss the subject of scholarships for MSW students. MM taking a sabbatical for next semester so whoever is taking on PD role can help facilitate this.