**Faculty of Humanities**

**Minutes of the Teaching & Learning Committee meeting of 4th May 2016**

**2pm – 4pm, Hanson Room, Bridgford Street Building**

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| **Item** | **Noted** | **Action** |
| 1. **Welcomes and Apologies** | **Present:** Fiona Smyth (Chair); Mark Baker (SEED); Becki Bennett (SoL); David Brown (SALC PGT); Ken Clark (SoSS); Sharon Clarke (MBS); Anna Goatman (MBS UG); Liam Harte (SALC UG); Norma Hird (SoL UG); Nicola Lord (TLSS); Lisa McAleese (TLSS); Guy Percival (IT); Carol Rowlinson (Head of TLSS); Emma Rose (TLSS); Ally Routledge (UG Student Rep); Anna Verges (HeLM); Rachel Walton (TLSS); Katy Woolfenden (Library); Judy Zolkiewski (AAD); Emma Sanders (Secretary).  **Welcomes:** Sarah Rayner (BRHRN project).  **Apologies:** were received from Fred Craig (UG Student Rep); Paul Gratrick (Faculty Careers Manager); Elinor O’Connor (PGT, AMBS); Guy Percival (Faculty Head of IT); Bruce Wardhaugh (SoL PGT) |  |
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| 1. **Minutes of the last meeting of 9 March 2016** | Approved as a correct record. |  |
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| 1. **Actions and Matters arising from the previous meeting of 9 March 2016** | **Actions**  **3.1** *Secretary’s Note: Arising from Item 8. Humanities IT Priorities - Updated (Guy Percival)*  *“the next steps have been agreed at DAG and will be going to May HPRC for formal agreement. Essentially we have identified an owner for each requirement, typically the Head of Faculty Function though I have yet to meet with Carol to confirm she is happy with this for TLS, who will take forward each action – be that monitoring that core University projects deliver what we need; fully articulating and prioritising local needs which could become projects in their own right; and working with me to keep the list of requirements current through an annual round of stakeholder discussion. Additionally, there are a few issues within SALC that relate to School owned teaching space and I have opened discussion with Steve as to how best to take those requirements forward.” [email of 04/05/16]*  **3.2** Arising from Item 7. Reduced scale marking – look into issues with Bb and Tii.  Anna Verges explained that Campus Solutions is not currently set up to use letter grades. In addition to the change of settings, a conversion system would need to be put in place to cater for units which have more than one assessed component so that the system could calculate final grade results in an automated manner.  As regards the return of letter grades through the VLE, the Bb Grade Centre WILL accept the recording of letter grades and therefore the return of these grades to students through the VLE. The difficulties reside in the grading tools, both Grademark and Blackboard (Bb).  As regards grading, Grademark does not currently accept letter grades but WILL allow to return a null mark. Originality checks and feedback could still be handled through Turnitin/Grademark, but letter grades would need to be recorded separately by makers e.g. on a spreadsheet for direct upload to Bb Grade Centre and return to students. Basic Grademark rubrics could be used to return letter grades but a 19 grade points scale would be the limit.  As regards grading in Bb, the Bb Assignment tool does not allow the use of letter grades OR return of a null grade. When marking essays using the Bb Assignment tool, you must award of mark of 0% and, as in Grademark, record letter grade separately e.g. in a spreadsheet or directly in the Grade Centre  **Matters Arising**  **3.4** Paper on PGT Attainment  To come back to HTLC discussion – the data set is smaller so it is harder to draw conclusions, but this is still an important issue for discussion.  **3.5** University’s Revised Policy on Advising Taught Students (2015)  Lisa McAleese had circulated a proforma to Senior Academic Advisors for them to return their feedback for annual reporting purposes.   * HTLC queried why the University was asking us to report on this specifically each year, outside of the Continual Monitoring process. * AMBS requested that any feedback or good practice was shared amongst committee members. * University training was supposed to be part of the policy, in addition to the toolkit. HTLC queried what was happening regarding the provision of training.   *Secretary’s Note:*  *The* [*Guidance on Advising*](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24225) *states:*  ***“Role of the Head of School***  *To ensure that appropriate training is provided for all Advisors…*  ***Role of the University***  *…the University will provide easily accessible information regarding relevant student support services as well as training and*  *guidance on the areas expected to be covered by the Advising system.”*  Discussed:   * AMBS give WAM credits to Academic Advisors – there is still variability in quality, but the WAM is a way of saying that advising is a legitimate and valued part of an academic’s remit. * Also, School-based training is delivered in AMBS by Anna Goatman as head of relevant course unit with involvement from Careers and Library staff. * Schools could educate students more about what consultation hours are legitimately for, to encourage them to turn up. | ACTION: GP to meet with CR re: Humanities IT Priorities and assigning “owners” for each requirement.  ACTION: ECS - bring PGT Attainment paper back to HTLC.  ACTION: TLSS to organise a workshop on Academic Advising.  ACTION: JZ/FS – ask the centre for an update on the development of training for AAs. |
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| 1. **Chair’s Verbal Report** | Report from TLG:  **4.1.1** Timetabling  In the average university there are 4-500 changes made to the timetable per annum. Here around 7,000 changes are made to the timetable, originating mainly from SALC, SEED and SoSS. Although the sheer number of students / programmes in these Schools is a factor, nevertheless the gap between 500 and 7,000 needs investigation.  Discussed:   * Syllabus+ actually functions as a room booking system, not a timetabling tool. * PSS have reported that requests are based on historical data for Syllabus+. Requests are therefore made based on last year’s numbers, so the number of sessions may have to be increased or cancelled based on actual registrations per course unit for that particular year. * Sometimes rooms are booked weekly, when sessions are actually delivered fortnightly. * SALC is one of several Schools that do not have their own teaching rooms, so every small booking thing has to go through CTU. * It was suggested that if these changes are made over the course of a year, they could include one-off bookings. This could muddy the data.   **4.1.2** Manchester Advantage  Discussions were ongoing at the centre about Manchester Advantage. This could be similar to an award that students would receive at the end of their programme, focussed initially on UGs and possibly linked to the HEAR.  **4.1.3** Guidance on Late Submission Policy  Fiona is a member of the Working Group looking at implementation of late submission penalties as part of the revised Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment.  **4.1.4** DASS automatic extension of up to 5 working days  Last year DASS introduced an automatic 1-week extensions to certain disabled students. The Head of DASS is liaising with Ewan Hannah to agree a time to meet with Fiona Smyth (DASS was encouraged to speak to all ADs).  **4.1.5** Student Charter  Proposal to work with the Student Union to revamp and possibly change the title to the “Manchester Charter”, to reflect the fact that it sets out our mutual responsibilities as a single academic community. | ACTION: Fiona Smyth will report back to HTLC following a 1-to-1 meeting with Elaine Shillcock. |
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| **4.2 Briefing Note\*** | See: HTLC/6/15/4.2 |  |
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| 1. **Student Matters** | No issues raised. |  |
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| 1. **Distance Learning (DL) Update (Rebecca Bennett)** | Becki Bennett was able to report on DL: negotiations with Pearson are still ongoing. Impacts on AMBS WW need to be considered.  Regardless of what the centre are doing and whether or not they can help, SoL will launch:   * The revamped Healthcare Ethics and Law – Sept 2016 * The New MSc International Law - Sept 2017   However, due to central negotiations questions remain over the business cases for these programmes, so resources need to be carefully deployed based on anticipated income.  The plan is to have multiple entry points, with differential fee rates. |  |
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| 1. **Report on “Books Right Here, Right Now” (Sarah Rayner)** | Received: An update to the BRHRN Project. [HTLC/6/15/7]  Reported:  The project is scheduled to complete in 9 months’ time.  The aim is to improve the student experience through improving their access to core texts. The project is scoping out options for new and innovative models for the identification, purchase and provision of access to recommended text books.  A general endorsement has been secured from TLG in March, on condition that Faculties were consulted on the detail of recommendations: 2017/18 and beyond e-book provision A major objective of BRHRN is to increase the provision of electronic core texts available to students and to make recommendations for future models for e-book provision across the University. Standard terminology for reading list items The introduction of a set of standard terms to describe reading list items. (This would enable the Library to develop a robust purchasing policy). The BRHRN update notes, *“Academics in Humanities are more likely to use the terms ‘required reading’, ‘set texts’ or ‘core reading’ whilst academics in FLS and MHS were more likely to use ‘directed reading’. 62% of respondents agreed that a standard set of terms would be something they were willing to adopt (with a further 23% being neutral).”* However, HTLC members thought that the core text idea worked better for other Faculties than for Humanities – academics are wary of encouraging the idea that there is a single text, when students should read widely. ‘Select bibliography’ is used in English Literature, rather than a single core text. Reading strategy and purchasing policy The reading strategy is the key output of the project, the purpose of which is to ensure a coherent institutional approach to the provision of reading list materials from academic staff to students and to enable the Library to meet student information resource needs.  Discussed:   * A couple of PG courses have been included in the pilot. * The way in which academics order books online would be amended to reflect the new standard reading list terminology. * Link2Lists terminology will also be updated accordingly. * Rollout of Reading Strategy and Purchasing Policy scheduled for 2017/18: the Library is seeking guidance from TLG/Faculties on the processes and timescales required for implementation in 2017/18. * Students will continue to have access to core texts across subsequent years provided that that they download them. * Use of digital texts within Vitalsource allows the student/staff member to annotate a text, providing some great pedagogical opportunities. * eBooks are interactive, so – with practice - students need can highlight and annotate them as they would a hard copy book.   HTLC gave tentative assent to the recommendations, BUT the proposed reading list terminology must be brought back to HTLC for consultation and approval. | ACTION: Sarah Rayner to bring back proposed Reading Iist Terminology and Strategy to HTLC.  ACTION: Sarah Rayner to look into copyright and see whether it is possible for a downloaded text to be shared. |
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| 1. **Humanities Report on Appeals and Complaints 14/15 (Lisa McAleese)** | Received: Annual Report on Appeals and Complaints cases received by Faculty [HTLC/6/15/8]  Noted: The University-Level Annual Report is referred to in the TLSO Bulletin for March and the HTLC Briefing Note [HTLC/6/15/4.2]  Reported:  A number of appeals had been upheld by Faculty because the appellant had not been referred to DASS, so had not had an opportunity to prove him/herself with appropriate University support in place.  In terms of retrospective disclosure of mitigation, it was acknowledged that there are grey areas about disclosure and what is legitimate for the student to withhold.  *“****Recommendation****: Retrospective Evidence - If the evidence provides a medical diagnosis of a condition which might have affected performance and there is also good reason for non-disclosure (for example the condition could not be known or shown before), then consideration should be given to providing a further attempt at affected assessments. This is especially important in cases where the evidence confirms that a condition might have prevented a student from engaging with the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.” (p4 of the Annual Report).*  HTLC were asked to consider in particular the Procedural Notes (para 5, p4):  *“Informal Stage*   * *Remember there is scope for appeals to be resolved informally.*   *School decision to uphold Faculty level appeal*   * *When Schools receive a Faculty level appeal for consideration and conclude that there are grounds to overturn a decision or implement an appropriate solution, Schools can respond back to the Faculty with a decision to uphold the appeal. The Faculty will then issue a Completion of Procedures letter outlining the decision of the School to the student.*   *Responding to Appeals*   * *When a student submits a formal appeal to the Faculty, the School is given the opportunity to comment on the case and these comments are sent to the student. The student then has an opportunity to comment on the School’s response before a final decision is made. Good practice has shown that responses which address all of the points made in the appeal reduce the need for further enquiries / investigation and more timely decision making.”*   Discussed:   * T&L Directors fed back that it is impossible legislate for everything - every year you will see things that you have not seen before, so judgment calls will always be necessary. * In a lot of cases the Faculty takes legal advice before upholding a case – it is not necessarily a reflection on the way the School has handled the case – in most instances it is clear in most cases that Schools have taken a lot of care in handling cases. * Dyslexia: it is DASS’s responsibility to decide what kind of adjustment – if any - is suitable for a student with dyslexia. * SALC felt that the recently proposed changes to Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Panel Terms of Reference should be discussed at HTLC, not just TLAN/TLMG. It was argued that academic staff should see and discuss the changes at this stage as some were significant, e.g. Code Recommendation A1 now proposes that students be given a deferred assessment rather than the mark being discounted, if a mark is out of line. | ACTION: Lisa to report to TLMG that academics want the new Mitigating Circumstances Policy discussed at TLC. |
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| 1. [**Policy on Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials**](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24540) **(Lisa McAleese)** | To discuss, after 6 months, to gather any issues that Schools are facing regarding implementation of the new policy.  Reported: The Disability Consultative Group has received negative feedback on the Policy from staff, and in response has set up a small working group to look at it.  The TLSS had received written feedback AMBS about the Global MBA, as it is a Distance Learning programme in the process of being revamped for 2017, and so there was a huge workload:   * The main issue seems to be with videos and subtitles.  This is not something we could cover in the team - is there a University department that can assist with subtitles and transcribing of DL course units? * Putting **subtitles** onto a video would lengthen the post-production time considerably as it is not a straight-forward process. There are automated plug-ins/software etc. that could possibly be purchased for Final Cut Pro but results are often inaccurate and the wording incorrect. I will investigate what the standpoint is re subtitles/captions with Vimeo (where all new video content is held). * **Transcripts** are easier to produce…but by whom? This is a painstaking process. * **Reading Lists** they should be with the library 8 weeks before the start of the course, and with students 4 weeks before for core materials. * SoL asked for an update on adaptive release of podcasts to DASS students. It was reported that the group was still working on this. |  |
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| 1. [**Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment**](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=24561) **(Lisa McAleese)** | To discuss, after 6 months, to gather any issues that Schools are facing regarding implementation of the new policy.  Members were reminded that the policy stated, *“4.9 All typed summative assessment, including dissertations, should be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software, where appropriate”* i.e. wherever possible. If hard copy submissions are required, students must be provided with print credits to cover the cost.  Discussed:   * SoL reported that BB was down for 2 weekends in addition to the planned downtime, which has meant that staff on a huge first year course were unable to complete the marking of work submitted online: 55 hours’ worth of marking now needs to be fitted into a working week in order to meet the feedback deadline. * T&L Directors again requested that BB updates not be scheduled over Easter, and were unclear why this had not been addressed. Back in 2010 this was first argued for when scheduling the two required upgrades per annum: * 1 over Easter * 1 over the Summer * The eLM explained that downtime takes 3 days: 1 is a Friday + Sat and Sun; therefore the “15 working day” turnaround for feedback only affects the Friday “officially”. However, in practice staff do mark over weekends, so 3 days are lost. * eLearning will push at next OLSG for the big upgrade to be done in Summer and the smaller upgrade in Easter. However, there is a lot of Distance Learning-related activity over the summer. Furthermore a large amount of preparatory work was required before each upgrade, and staff did not want to have to do this over the Christmas break. * SoL queried the lateness penalty: *“4.5 Work submitted after the deadline will be marked but the mark awarded will reduce progressively for each day, or part thereof by which the work is late”* - SoL queried whether this was intended to include weekends.   *Secretary’s Note:*  *The DRAFT guidance on late submission penalties issued by Emma Hilton-Wood, Head of Academic Policy, refers to calendar days, so includes weekends.* |  |
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| 1. [**Regulation XVIII**](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1893) **(Student Complaints) and** [**Regulation XIX**](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1872) **(Academic Appeals) (Lisa McAleese)** | To discuss, after 6 months, to gather any issues that Schools are facing regarding implementation of the new regulations.  Discussed:   * The changes extended the amount of time to issue a response, so were beneficial to Schools. * SoL requested more guidance on what should happen within a School when a student makes an appeal. * Members were reminded that Schools are able to uphold an appeal if they think the case merits it. |  |
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| 1. **Marking and Assessment Initiative: Guidance on Design and Use of Grade Descriptors (Lisa McAleese)** [HTLC/6/15/12] | * + - 1. Received: Marking and Assessment Initiative: Guidance on Design and Use of Grade Descriptors[HTLC/6/15/12]   T&L Directors had been asked to consult within Schools, in advance of the AD (TL&S)’ attendance at TLG on 09/05/16:   * SEED approved the paper on condition that the descriptors were examples, and that Schools were allowed discretion depending on context. * SALC felt consistency was preferable and should be enforced wherever possible. * Members thought that more staff would feel able to award marks within the top range if they knew that markers across all disciplines were using the same scale. * Members thought that use of a common scale would be beneficial for the experience of Joint Hons students in particular. * It was felt that the descriptors should be used for formative work as well as summative, so that students are helped to reach an appropriate standard. * The AD (TL&S) suggested that Schools should adopt the proposed descriptors as is for 2016/17, as a starting point/framework. It was felt that they were an improvement on the descriptors currently in use in some areas   Queries/issues:   * The generic advice within the descriptors on what to improve may be misleading, as this will depend on the type of work and the individual student’s performance – some of the descriptors sound more like feedback. Should the ‘describing a grade’ element be separated from the ‘giving of feedback’ element, so the descriptors become more general? Then feedback can then be personalised. * The language was quite personalised – “your work” might this be upsetting for students at the lower end of the scale? (It was reported that the descriptors were changed in response to feedback from students that they wanted the feedback to seem more personal). * How would you penalise work that is too long within a grade descriptor? (Wordcounts cannot be checked with online submission. So how can you enforce a penalty)?   + - 1. Reduced scale marking   The AD (TL&S) had drafted some potential reduced marking scales in order to prompt discussion at the March meeting of HTLC:   * Model A (15-point non-linear scale model) * Model B (20-point linear scale model) * Model C (20-point non-linear scale model)   Discussed:   * SALC, SEED and SoL preferred non-linear scales (SALC favour 15 points, SEED and SoL favour 20 points). * AMBS was divided. * Staff in Economics had subsequently pointed out that there are significant conversion issues with a non-linear scale, and favoured marking out of 100%. * The AD (TL&S) thought that three marks should be available within each band. * There were concerns about making a non-linear scale understandable by students. * Within SoL, Law already use (non-linear) step-marking, but only at the first class level. The other levels tend to be divided into X2% / X5% / X8% (as a rule, but not exclusively). * An alpha/letter scale is not possible technologically.   AGREED: To effect a change in marking practice we need both a new marking scale and new grade descriptors.  AGREED: No new scale could be implemented until 2017 at the earliest.  AGREED: Any communication to students about a change in marking scale would be need to be clear and carefully managed so as to avoid anxiety or confusion. | ACTION: TLSS will pull together a paper that sets out the latest HTLC position for internal discussion within HTLC. |
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| 1. **Update on Admissions (Fiona Smyth)** | Nothing to report. |  |
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| 1. **Retention (Judy Zolkiewski)** | Carried forward to the next meeting. | ACTION: ECS/Judy Zolkiewski |
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| 1. **Opportunities for students to undertake client-based projects (ECS)** [HTLC/6/15/15] | Received: Opportunities for students to undertake client-based projects (ECS)[HTLC/6/15/15]  Reported:   * This is an area that needs coordination across Careers, Business Engagement and T&L. * While some approaches from businesses or organisations will be beneficial for us, some may not be appropriate as placement learning either due to timescales or the type of project (but could still provide work experience etc.) Schools will need to make judgments on a case by case basis. | ACTION: Nicola Lord to take forward through HESG. |
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| 1. **Pilot: e-Exams** **(Anna Verges)** | Received: eFeedback Initiatives[HTLC/6/15/16]  1. A pilot in SoL to test and evaluate:   1. A process for delivering efeedback on hard copy exam scripts through the VLE 2. Staff experience of marking and returning grades and feedback through Blackboard 3. Students feedback experience 4. PSS experience   2. Investigation student preferences and attitudes towards the use of technology in exam settings, in particular when examinations are essay-based.  Discussed:  At a recent Staff-Student Liaison meeting students were mostly (c.75%) in favour of online exams, whereas the data in the paper indicated that fewer students wanted to do online exams. |  |
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| 1. **AOB** | None. |  |
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| **18. For Information\*** | 18.1Interruption Requests,January 2016 [HTLC/6/15/18.1]  18.2 Interruption Requests, March 2016 [HTLC/6/15/18.2]  18.3 KIS HEFCE Audit 1516, KIS data collection for 2017 entry [HTLC/6/15/18.3]  18.4 KIS HEFCE Audit Action Plan [HTLC/6/15/18.4]  18.5 AP(E)L Requests – NO AP(E)L requests have been reported from Schools. |  |
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| 1. **Next Meeting** | Wednesday 8th June, 2-4pm, Hanson Room, Humanities Bridgford Street |  |