

Faculty of Humanities
Teaching & Learning Committee
Wednesday 6th November 2013, 2 - 4pm
Committee Room A, Whitworth Corridor

Present:

Christopher Davies	Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning & Students (Chair)
Matthew Jefferies	Assistant Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning & Students
Judy Zolkiewski	Assistant Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning & Students
Emma Rose	Head of Faculty Teaching and Learning Support Services
Lisa McAleese	Senior Faculty Taught Programmes Administrator
Fiona Smyth	Director of Teaching and Learning, SEED
David Williamson	Director of Teaching and Learning, School of Law
Veronique Pin-Fat	Director of Undergraduate Studies, SoSS
Rosie Dammers	Education Officer, Students' Union
Harriet Pugh	Faculty of Humanities UG Student Representative

Ex-officio members:

Ilias Petrounias	Director of Undergraduate Studies, MBS
Norma Hird	Director of Undergraduate Studies, School of Law
Emma Sanders	Faculty QAE Administrator
Hilary Garraway	PGT Manager, MBS (pp. Stuart Roper)

1. Apologies and Welcomes

Abi Gilmore (SALC), Iain Brassington (SoL), Katy Woolfenden (Library), Stuart Roper (MBS), Cath Dyson (eLearning), Cathy Cassell (MBS), Justin Kennedy (Students as Partners), Emma Dixon (Humanities Sabbatical Officer)

The Chair welcomed Harriet Pugh to HTLC, as one of Faculty's two UG Student Representatives.

Action: Rosie Dammers to forward Emma Sanders the name of the Faculty PGT Representative.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of 9th October 2013

Agreed: The minutes were approved subject to a correction to minute 20: *"There will be no PG award this year, but PGT and PGR awards will be introduced next year with the inaugural awards made at the December 2014 graduation ceremony"*.

Action: Emma Sanders – minute 20 should read: *"There will be no PGT award this round, but PGT awards will be introduced for the next round, with the inaugural awards made at the December 2014 graduation ceremony. (PGR awards will be made in December 2013)"*.

3. Matters Arising from the minutes**3.1 Timetabling**

Semester 1 problems should be ameliorated because the Simon Building was now operational. However, there were still delays in completing renovations to Zochonis and Dover Street Buildings.

Action: Chair to update HTLC on the timetabling scenario for Semester 2 at the December meeting.

3.2 Lecture Capture

Noted: Following October's meeting Cath Dyson had confirmed that it was possible to determine whether an individual lecture is captured or not (i.e. individuals may opt out within group-taught courses), but it was not possible determine when an individual lecture is released.

- Some staff in Humanities had taken up the option of delaying release for their course units.
- Members were reminded that if any member of staff had not been entered for specific timetabled slots in Campus Solutions, they would not be picked up by the Lecture Capture system. Where a member of staff is not identified for a timetabled slot, the default position is for the session not to be recorded. Clarity will be sort as to how such a slot can be enabled for capture if a member of staff wishes it but has not been recorded on the timetable as the teacher. **ACTION:** Cath Dyson.

Reported: In Law, 26 lecturers are ok but Law had to default to opt out at the start due to one or two not being happy, and it not being clear how to handle this scenario. SoL were also experiencing problems with delays uploading of podcasts.

Action: Norma Hird to contact Stuart Philipson to follow up on SoL's particular issues.

Reported: Hits to individual podcasts were being monitored. However, Lisa McAleese had requested overview figures on uptake in Faculty and been informed that the provision in Humanities is too complex for such data to be provided. Stuart Phillipson had agreed to investigate the feasibility of providing such data in future.

Queried: whether staff could be provided with dictaphones for classes that took place in seminar rooms where lecture capture equipment had not been installed, in response to student requests.

- Until recently, most recording of group-based teaching and learning activities had been undertaken by students themselves, using, for example, dictaphones and other mobile devices, or had been organised on their behalf through the Disability Support Office.
- The University's *Policy on the Recording of Lectures and other Teaching and Learning* (2013) states that students will be permitted, should they wish, to make audio (but not video) recordings of lecture and other group-based teaching and learning activities that may, or may not, be recorded by other means. Reasons for doing so may include: providing a study aid for review and revision; accommodating different learning styles; assisting students who do not have English as their first language; assisting students who have particular educational needs. The policy states that "3.8... Students wishing to make such [audio] recordings should seek the permission of teaching staff prior to doing so." However, if a students is registered with the DSO and a reasonable adjustment for their specific style of learning is the provision of recorded material, then recordings will be made. Recordings made by students will be subjected to the same constraints on distribution (see paragraph 3.4 of the Policy) as are imposed on those recordings made by, or on behalf of, the University.

- However, it was noted that the University and College Union (UCU) had concerns over recording lecturers, and indeed some students may object to being recorded themselves, so this should be handled sensitively and responsibly.
- MBS reported experience of staff independently using software that could capture powerpoint slides with no problems, at a cost of around £20 for Mac or PC software.

Action: Judy Zolkiewski to ask Guy Percival, Head of Faculty IT Services, whether Faculty have purchased, or can purchase, any of its own lecture capture kit, and to request an “FAQ” sheet detailing other possible means of capturing lectures or classes that take place in rooms where the standard lecture capture equipment has not been installed.

Secretary's Note:

The Faculty eLearning team was looking into alternative solutions for lecture capture, focussing on capturing lecture content “at desk” rather than in a classroom or lecture theatre.

Faculty IT Services had put in a tentative bid for equipment based on reported expressions of interest from Cath Dyson and MB, but purchase did not go ahead given that these expressions of interest didn't turn into concrete requests. If there was now concrete interest then the Head of Faculty IT Services could procure and commission a (limited) number of these ensure that a further number are included in next year's budget.

3.3 Teaching and Learning Showcase

Reported: SEED would host the next Humanities Teaching and Learning Showcase on 7th January 2014.

4. Chair's Report

4.1 APR 12/13

- Overall, Faculty was felt to be doing well, especially in Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience. Although Faculty did not hit its NSS target increase of 3 points for this session, we have gone up 6 points in a 2 year period.
- SEAPs for 13/14 had been received from all Schools, and a brief overview would be completed for discussion at DAG and HPRC.

Action: Judy Zolkiewski to complete a brief overview of School SEAPs for discussion at DAG and HPRC.

4.2 Recruitment

- 1st December HESA census deadline was pending. Faculty has done well to balance its books overall, and no significant change in student numbers was expected between now and 1st Dec.
- Recruitment for 2014 was looking very positive, with Manchester well ahead of every other university at this point in the recruitment cycle – the Oxbridge application deadline was mid-October, and Manchester appeared to be a fall-back application for Oxbridge applicants. However, it was not expected that many of these applicants would necessarily end up

coming to Manchester. The position in January will be a more important measure of success, but schools must keep up the pressure on conversion related activities.

- A dip in Law applications had been noted, but this mirrored a national trend. SEED appeared to be doing well in terms of recruitment, and MBS was reversing an early dip in offers.

4.3 TLO Restructure

- Members were informed that Emma Rose had been appointed to the new post of Head of Faculty Teaching and Learning Support Services.
- In consequence a restructuring of the TLO was underway.
- From Monday 11th November, Sarah Helsby would cover the role of QAE Administrator during Nicola Lord's 10-month secondment to MHS (from Monday 21st October to August 2014).
- One other fixed term QAE-equivalent appointment would be appointed to in due course.

4.4 Complaints and Appeals

Reported: the TLO was dealing with an increasing number of complaints and appeals.

Queried: why Faculty heard cases where students had missed the deadline for making a formal appeal.

- Reasons included: Students were not always aware of the date when a decision was made, and they have up to 20 days from that date to make their appeal or complaint; a student may have mitigating circumstances e.g. being hospitalised; there may be a delay in evidence coming in, e.g. a crime report.
- There were concerns that hearing late appeals and complaints could mean that a student missed the start of the next academic year.

Action: Ilias Petrounias to discuss any further concerns with Lisa McAleese outside of the meeting.

Reported: The OIA was being joined by the courts and the OFT.

- Whether the OFT would have a major influence on HE remained to be seen, but one of the things they had been looking at was additional charges to students, which Manchester had already looked at. Small, unexpected expenses were causing issues if they had not been made clear to applicants up front. One implication is that schools had to be extra careful over such things as coursework submissions where some students submit electronically at no cost, whereas students required to submit hardcopies incurred an expense.

Reported: SoL had recently experienced some difficulties in defining what should count as a mitigating circumstance.

- A review of the University [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#) was being conducted under Matthew Valentine, TLSO.

5. Faculty Prizes

Lisa McAleese spoke to the paper.

Noted: Appendix A listed all proposed Faculty Prizes, for discussion and agreement.

- There was an issue around how “performance” was to be measured – purely basing performance on marks was not adequate, as average marks differed between quantitative and qualitative subjects, e.g. Economics students typically scored high marks.

Agreed: TLC support the principle of Faculty awarding prizes to top performing students.

Agreed: It was very important that:

- a) Performance was not measured purely numerically
- b) Multiple awards were not awarded to a single student

Action: Lisa McAleese to circulate potential models for Faculty Prizes to T&L Directors for comment by email in advance of the January HTLC meeting (15th). A proposal would then go forward to HPRC, with a view to making the first awards in Summer 2014.

Noted: Appendix B listed all existing prizes that could be found on the internet (there were gaps e.g. some Schools listed prizes on intranet sites with restricted access).

Agreed: Schools could award whatever prizes they wished to, as long as they were not of higher value than the Faculty prizes.

Action: Lisa McAleese to clarify whether the Undergraduate Student of the Year Distinguished Achievement Award (DAA) could be awarded to a group of students (so each member of the group would receive the award).

Secretary's Note:

The award had to be restricted to an individual student. They are individual awards.

6. Risk Register

Emma Rose spoke to the paper.

Noted: As usual, HTLC were asked to consider the risk register in light of whether Faculty had identified: a) the right risks; b) the right score for each risk; C) appropriate mitigating steps.

Discussed: whether it was appropriate to categorise ‘failure to achieve an NSS target of 90% by 2020’ as having a major impact?

- SoSS had not perceived any correlation between NSS scores and recruitment levels.
- In contrast SoL had seen a correlation in terms of the effect of League Tables (which are influenced by NSS) on international student numbers, e.g. Law would lose 69 students from Singapore under collaborative ‘1+2 articulation’ agreements.

- NSS was also felt to be important in the sense of measuring the continuing validity of our programmes and how they appeal to students. NSS was the biggest, most comprehensive survey / dataset we had.

Agreed: Some mitigating actions were out of date.

Action: Emma Rose to update the risk register and report back to Faculty Planning Office.

7. Summary of External Examiner Comments 11/12

Emma Sanders spoke to the paper.

Noted: TLO have maintained a database of all External Examiner comments, year by year, to assist monitoring of issues and trends as part of Periodic Review.

From 13/14 the central TLSO will maintain a central log of all comments made by External Examiners, to enable common themes to be identified and addressed. This log will be made accessible to Faculty officers, so there will be no need to continue our practice of recording comments. Instead, we can focus our efforts on monitoring School and Discipline Area responses, and addressing any issues that appear to be common across the Faculty.

This summary was intended to provide an opportunity to address External Examiner comments with reference the University's Assessment Framework, and to identify areas where the guidance was unclear or where implementation was problematic.

7.1 Samples for moderation

Nothing in the University's "Policy on Marking" or the "Guidance on External Examiner Procedures" specified that levels of course unit should be treated differently:

"Marked examination scripts will be subject to internal processing that may range from simple checking to blind double marking, as appropriate... A sample will normally include:

- A. a sample of scripts from the top, middle and bottom of the range;
- B. scripts of borderline candidates;
- C. scripts assessed internally as first class/distinction or fail" (para. 24).

However, "Guidance on External Examiner Procedures" (Core Duties of Subject External Examiners) did imply that the level of scrutiny should relate to the impact of the assessment, *"all draft assessed core work that leads to the degree class, is to be considered by the External Examiner prior to it being completed by the students... This ensures the intended learning outcomes are being met."*

The Policy on Marking also had a section on "Scrutiny of marking" which elaborates on the principle that, *"The nature and intensity of the scrutiny should depend on the perceived risk"*.

Reported: MBS External Examiners did not look at 1st year work at all, neither did LLC's. Law did send first year work to External Examiners because it counted for QLD status, and influenced whether a student was likely to get an internship or not. SoSS felt it was important that first year work be moderated by External Examiners because of the impact on progression.

Noted: All work should be moderated internally.

Discussed: External Examiners usually had a heavy workload as it was, which they had to balance with commitments at their own institutions. In terms priorities, it was more important to focus on second and final year work. Alternatively the University would have to appoint more External Examiners. Feeling is that it would be ideal, but we would have to appoint more Externals because the load is too much.

Agreed: A good compromise would be to just send first year fails and near-misses .

Action: Lisa McAleese to check guidance on samples to be sent to External Examiners with the TLSO (noting the implication on load and requirement for additional External Examiner appointments) and bring back to HTLC for further discussion.

7.2 The Role of the External

Role of External in changing marks. If a mark causes concern, the External must check marks for the whole cohort and make a recommendation to the Board. (Of course, they can point out individual arithmetical errors or questions that have been missed).

Noted: Boards are not bound by the decision of an External Examiner. There is no expectation that all External Examiner comments should automatically be implemented. Rather, they should be a stimulus for reflection and debate by programme teams, and should be acted upon where appropriate and where they are in line with University and Faculty policy, procedures and guidelines.

7.3 Assessment Design

Noted: Some concerns about assessment design. Assessment schemes were approved by School committees for new course units, but what happens if an assessment model is changed on an existing course unit – how are these monitored by Schools? Schools and programme teams need to keep an eye on this.

7.4 Marking and Moderation

Reported: SoSS was undertaking a review of moderation practices and procedures to ensure consistency, in light of the new degree regulations.

Reported: The Chair would be conducting a review of marking systems and scales within Faculty, supported by a working group coordinated by Lisa McAleese.

7.5 Access to Blackboard

Reported: External Examiners had been given access to Blackboard.

Action: Emma Sanders to circulate the paper to Schools for reflection in their own TLCs.

Action: T&L Directors to bring back any issues arising from External Examiner comments to ECS for addressing at future HTLCs.

8. Teaching Excellence Awards

Reported: Formal notification to come out in next week or so, but here is advance notice of the criteria. More or less same as last year – 24th Jan deadline for submission of nominations to Faculty. Faculty will then select 5 to put forward to the TLSO.

Action: Schools should rank nominations before forwarding them to Faculty.

9. Placements/Work Experience/Interruptions

9.1 Interruptions Guidance

Noted: Current institutional “Guidance on Interruptions” did not include internships or work experience as valid reasons for granting an interruption. However, the AD (TL&S) was happy for this to be permitted, where such an arrangement was not a part of the programme (i.e. it was not assessed, or part of the way in which a student achieved the programme ILOs). Guidance on interruptions required students to provide evidence for whatever they wanted to do in that year. Schools should adhere to the same principles, i.e. it should be “related to the programme” or provide “an opportunity which promotes employability”. Financial reasons are not accepted as a rationale for interruption.

Noted: Terminology was significant. A “Placement” is understood to be a recognised part of a particular degree programme, and thus did not apply to the situation above.

Noted: UKBA imposed restrictions for students on a Tier 4 visa, which Schools need to bear in mind when encouraging internships or placements.

Secretary’s Note:

TLSO intended to discuss Principles for Interruption at the next meeting of TLMG.

9.2 Sandwich courses

On sandwich courses, a placement was part of the degree, and so the student still had to pay a reduced tuition fee to UoM for support, access to facilities, assessment etc. Such programmes usually require appointment of a dedicated administrative officer.

Discussed: Concern that this could be perceived as a way of companies exploiting students for cheap labour.

- Students were often paid for the work they undertook, which was often project-based e.g. a practice-based dissertation/report.
- MBS had programmes “with industrial experience”, where students were paid. Students tended to do better on return to study and sometimes got a job with the company following graduation.
- International Students were permitted to undertake paid work provided that it was part of a programme.
- International Students were not permitted to undertake paid internships within visa arrangements.

Action: Lisa McAleese work with Matthew Jefferies and the Employability working group to create some “FAQs” for Schools to support expansion of Internships and Sandwich courses.

Discussed: Concern that for subjects such as Philosophy, Art History, Archaeology etc. internships or placements could devalue the academic work the students are doing.

- Current placements in SALC were not felt to dilute the programme, but to provide extra experience that would be relevant to the subject, e.g. Art Gallery and Museum Studies.
- Non-placement options would remain, and would have different ILOs from those “with placement”.

- Other HEIs were doing this and maximising employability was equally important for our graduates.

Agreed: Emma Sanders to invite Jannine Andrew, Faculty's new Placements Manager, to speak to a future meeting of HTLC.

Agreed: MBS could propose new sandwich courses for Sept 2014 entry – the School must put through a Programme Amendment in the usual way, after which the programmes could be advertised.

10. AOB

10.1 Viewing Exam Scripts

Queried: Was there a policy on viewing of exam scripts? It was not clear to students how they could view a script or an essay in order to supplement the feedback that they have received, e.g. "Some issues with wording" was not very helpful unless you had the actual annotated essay in front of you.

The right to view scripts was contained in the [University's Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students](#):

"16 Schools must facilitate individual student requests to see exam scripts and coursework, without charge, although students will not be permitted to take the scripts away with them.

17 Written comments should be provided for all exam scripts and coursework and must be clear and legible. These comments may be provided in a separate document but should enable students to understand to which part of their work comments refer. Students should have the opportunity, within reason, to seek clarification and further feedback; however students are reminded that there can be no appeals concerning matters of academic judgment."

Action: Lisa McAleese to take up again with TLSO the question of why students cannot take away (copies of) examination scripts, and report back.

10.2 Tuition Fee charges for interrupting students

Students who are advised to interrupt due to illness post-hoc, had to have their last date of attendance updated retrospectively so that they did not get charged fees for tuition they had not received.

Action: Lisa McAleese to check the position with Student Fees.

Secretary's Note:

The University has produced a paper on Retrospective Interruptions which can be found at: http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/policyandprocedure/interruptions_withdrawals.html under the heading 'Dealing with retrospective interruptions'.

11. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11th December, 2-5pm, University Place Room 3.204