**Faculty of Humanities**

**Notes of the Teaching & Learning Administrators’ Network (TLAN) Meeting 1 October 2015**

**Present:** Lee Felvus, Morag Guilfoyle & Emma Wilson (School of Arts, Languages & Cultures – SALC); Janice Dodds (School of Environment, Education & Development – SEED); Abi Robinson (School of Law); Amanda Brereton, Amanda Bridgeman & Bernadette O’Connor (School of Social Sciences – SoSS); Jenny Brown, Gareth Hughes, Emily Marner, Chris McGlinchey & Madeleine Ryan (Manchester Business School – MBS); Sian Nash (Student System Office – SSO); Joanne Davidson (HERA); Lisa McAleese (Chair).

**1. Apologies**

**Noted:**  Apologies were received from: Sara Latham, Elizabeth Nolan & Louise Stewart (SALC); Melanie Crank, Jackie Kan & Lynne McCormack (MBS); Gail Divall, Nicola Lord & Emma Sanders (Faculty).

**2. Previous Notes**

**Confirmed:** The notes from the meeting on 2 July 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

**Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)**

**Reported:** Wayne Eden has checked if the HEAR is attached to the programme plan and would appear on an exit award. He’s confirmed that the Achievements aspect of the HEAR is attached to the Academic Plan only (and defined in HEAR Set Up in Campus Solutions [CS]; not against the Academic Plan Table). It is defined with a first term valid, so as long as the version of the plan, and its defined Exit Award in Degree Options, corresponds with that first term valid, then it would appear on an exit award.

Other aspects of the HEAR (Prizes/Awards and Activities) are defined against the student and the term (not against the Academic Plan). Therefore, considering all the above, HEAR information in its entirety should appear on an exit award.

**Ref 4. Academic Advisement (AA) Exception Report**

**Reported:** Sian Nash reported that Programme Enrolment (replacement for academic advisement) has a different set-up and has different rules to the Academic Advisement rules, however would be of benefit for course unit selection. A decision is being taken as to whether or not the University will continue to use CS as the student records system or will go with a competitor; a decision is expected in December 2015. If the University decides to continue to use CS then a strategic decision needs to be taken as to whether or not it would be worth the investment of time and resource to use the Programme Enrolment functionality.

**Noted:**  The University of Derby are using Programme Enrolment as an overlay to assist their students with course unit selection, but are not using the full functionality.

**Ref 5. Increasing Number of Students with Mental Health Issues**

**Reported:** Lisa McAleese was actioned to discuss the difficulties of supporting students with mental health issues with the Director of Student Life (Dr Paul Redmond). This hasn’t yet been actioned; there is an appeals, complaints and malpractice network meeting on 6 October 2015 and it will be raised there.

*Secretary’s Note: The above concern was raised at the Network meeting. It was discussed that the University has a Student Mental Health Policy and supporting* [*guidance*](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=11618) *for staff on how to practically implement the Policy. Training is also available for staff from the Counselling Service. The* [*Student Support Forum*](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-support-forum/) *provides an informal network of staff with student-facing roles where issues can be discussed. Staff can contact the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS, formerly Disability Support Office) for advice and refer students to the DASS, the Counselling Service or Occupational Health if they are concerned about a student’s mental health. It was noted that there are limitations to the mitigating circumstances procedure for students presenting with mental health issues i.e. that the best that can usually be expected is to be given an opportunity to take an exam or resubmit an assessment in the next examination period (or at an agreed submission deadline) as a first sit; marks wouldn’t be changed. Consideration will be given to providing information for staff in one place as part of the Student Life project.*

**Ref 7. Resit Process Improvement Project Update.**

**Reported:** As reported at the last meeting, the Humanities Policy and Resources Committee (HPRC) approved a number of recommendations, proposed by a Faculty working group of Professional Support Service (PSS) staff, to ensure the efficiency of the resit process. The Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning and Students), Dr Fiona Smyth has reminded Heads of School at the first meeting of HPRC of this. A paper will be going to 7 October 2015 meeting of the Faculty’s Teaching and Learning Committee so that Teaching and Learning Directors are aware. The document will then be circulated, via Heads of School Administration (HoSA), for implementation.

**Ref 8. PSS Staff Representing the Faculty on University Groups**

**Action:**  A reminder that if you are representing the Faculty on a University group and after three years wish to relinquish your role then let Lisa McAleese know so that discussions can take place re finding a replacement representative.

**Ref 10.3 My Schools tab in My Manchester**

**Reported:** All the Schools have now made initial contact to advise of their preferred approach to the development of the My School tab in My Manchester. Kirsty Hawksworth in the Web Team is leading on this and will now meet with each School individually to discuss their specific requirements and the timelines. Marie Gray has stated that it is anticipated that rollout will be staggered with a pilot School, possibly Law, beginning in Semester 2 2015/16, but this will be part of Kirsty’s discussions with each School.

**4. Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances of Students Taking Units Outside Their Owning School**

**Reported:** In accordance with the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances students submit extension requests to their home School. In MBS at PGT level, there is an inequity in the treatment of those students registered in MBS and those students taking MBS course units but registered in other Schools requesting extensions. MBS are strict in adhering to the deadline for extension request submission and mitigating circumstances submitted after the deadline are not considered (without a credible and compelling explanation as to why the circumstances were not, or could not, have been raised at the time).

**Noted:**  SALC and SEED don’t operate a separate extension requests process. Students have to submit a mitigating circumstances form requesting an extension to the submission deadline in advance of the submission deadline. Students submit the work late and if the mitigation / request is accepted any late submission penalty is waived.

**Action:**  **Morag Guilfoyle** to discuss, with Sara Latham, separating out extension requests from mitigating circumstances submission.

**Agreed:**  It was agreed that where a home School receives an extension request to a submission deadline or a mitigating circumstance submission, from one of their students undertaking a course unit in another School, prior to any decision being taken about the request the home School should speak to the administrator from the School delivering the course unit.

**Action:**  Members of TLAN to ensure that all Programme Administrators (or equivalent) in their School are aware of the agreement to discuss extension requests and mitigating circumstances submissions with the Administrator in the School delivering the course unit on which the student is registered prior to any extension request being approved.

**5. Opening Course Unit Selection for First Year Students**

**Reported:** SoSS do not allow their incoming first year students to choose their course units until welcome week so they can attend any subject talks that are being offered during this time, and this year have had lots of queries from students because they can’t do it in advance of their arrival.

**Discussed:** The practice in other Schools was discussed. A number of other Schools open up course unit selection to the incoming first year students at the beginning of September. Such practice spreads out the number of queries the School receives about course unit selection.

**Noted:**  The statistics, from across the University, show that a high number of first year students select their optional course units from 1 September.

**Discussed:** It was suggested that perhaps we could adopt an opt-out system of course unit selection, whereby the student drops the unit(s) rather than selecting.

**Reported:** Anthony Fargher (SSO) has modelled self-service in Programme Enrolment and this realises a lot of benefits for course unit selection.

SoSS reported that their first year students appear to be more confused than previous cohorts about what they need to do (i.e. between receiving their offer and turning up at Manchester).

**Discussed:** MBS no longer distributes hard copy information and sends the bare minimum of targeted emails to students. They also have posters with QR codes which they can direct their students to when they arrive at Manchester for relevant information. SALC distributes an electronic Newsletter through which they issue relevant information for the start of year; they have experienced a smoother welcome week this year. They are able to track which students have read the Newsletter and could target those who haven’t read it. It was suggested that the University could perhaps develop a ‘welcome app’.

**Noted:**  The Directorate for the Student Experience has developed a suite of communications, distributed through a number of channels, to communicate essential information to students who start in September. These communications are intended to work in parallel with specific course and induction materials from Schools. Further information about what is sent out centrally and when can be found on the website: <http://www.saa.manchester.ac.uk/welcome/communications/> .

**Action:**  Consideration to be given to cross-checking the central communications against School communications to incoming students to ensure that there is not overlap or potential for student confusion in the messages being sent.

**Reported:** The timetables can be confusing for students as the information contained in CS has the room ‘TBA’ where as the room information is published on the timetables. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the ‘TBA’ in CS was greyed out to minimise this confusion.

**Action: TLAN** members to send issues relating to course unit selection to Morag Guilfoyle ([Morag.Guilfoyle@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Morag.Guilfoyle@manchester.ac.uk)).

**Morag Guilfoyle** to collate responses and send these to Sian Nash.

**Reported:** In CS you cannot search for course units using e.g. AHVS, and have to select the course subject in full e.g. Art History and Visual Studies which can be confusing for students (although there is an appendix in the University’s Guide to Course Unit Selection which lists all course codes and subject descriptions). It was suggested that it would be helpful to be able to search using the four letter subject area codes. It could be that this is a relatively small development that is needed to enable searching by the four letter subject area code.

**Action: Morag Guilfoyle** to liaise with Sian Nash re submitting a change request to the change control board re searching via the four letter subject area codes during course unit selection.

**6. Issues with Exclusion of Students via the Resit Grid and via Program / Plan**

**Reported:** When you exclude a student via the resit grid and then exclude via Program/Plan, students’ access to IT and My Manchester is immediately de-activated so they are unable find out that they have been excluded. SALC uses the programme action EXCL (exclude from programme) as this is a more accurate record but was informed, by CS Records, that only the Programme Action WADM leaves students with access.

**Noted:**  It was reported in the SSO Bulletin (183 7 May ’15) that Students withdrawn due to academic failure shall now be given an extension to their IT Access of 28 calendar days. This is so that, in the event of an appeal, those students will still be able to access their email, login into My Manchester, access eProg, and access Campus Solutions self-service. This change does NOT cover Library, Building and Blackboard access. The extension will take effect from the Effective Date of the row added to the student’s Campus Solutions Program/Plan stack (Program Action of WADM / Action Reason of ACAD).

**Action: Sian Nash** to check if only the Program Action of WADM gives an extension to student’s IT access and report back to Lisa McAleese.

**7. Auto Extension for Disabled Students**

**Reported:** On 18 September 2015 Elaine Shillcock (DASS) sent an email to HoSAs which included information about reasonable adjustments and an automatic one week extension for students registered with the DASS.

It has been agreed that the support plans from the DASS will now inform Schools when automatic extensions of up to five working days should apply to disabled students. This change is effective immediately. The DASS hope that this will support disabled students more effectively and reduce the need for Schools to process individual applications for extensions or mitigation. Automatic extensions only apply to assessed written work; they do not apply to group work, presentations etc.

Schools will be able to easily identify whether or not a student is eligible for automatic extensions via the student’s University Support Plan. A report detailing the students who receive automatic extensions will also be available to Schools.

These students should not be asked by Schools to make individual applications for extensions of up to five working days.

**Discussed:** The report needs to be by programme / course unit codes. Currently the report is one long PDF. Schools need to manually check the report so that they are able to inform the academic members of staff which students will get the automatic extension.

When Schools are checking via Turnitin which students haven’t submitted their work by the submission deadline they will need to be able to readily identify those students who have the automatic extension so that these students are not penalised for late submission / chased. This will mean manual cross-checking.

Concern was expressed that Schools only receive information about students registered in their School and not for those students registered in other School who are taking their course units; this is problematic and could lead to dissatisfied students.

Concern was also expressed that the automatic extension doesn’t appear on the support requirement, so when a student informs the academic that they have an automatic extension it can be corroborated by checking the support requirement; this can lead to confusion and queries from both the academic and the student. This has been reported by MBS to Nicky Schofield (DASS) who is investigating the issue.

It was suggested that it would be useful if a positive service indicator (PSI) could be applied to the record of those students who are entitled to the automatic extension.

**Action: Lisa McAleese** to discuss the concerns re the automatic extensions for DASS registered students with Elaine Shillcock.

**8. Attendance Monitoring Project Update**

**Reported:** The following has been achieved by the Attendance Monitoring Project Group to date:

* Agreement of a 75% trigger.
* Best practice document developed for staff on producing a roster.
* Agreement that absences should be recorded as authorized or unauthorized. Where Schools have the resource the mitigating circumstances reasons should be assigned to the codes in CS (good practice).
* Discussions to take place with the SSO to develop a Discoverer report which is fit for purpose.
* Standard text being developed for inclusion in green, amber, red letters to be sent to students whose non-attendance has become a concern.

A discussion paper will be going to the 7 October 2015 meeting of HTLC which contains the following recommendations:

* Rosters (i.e. registers) in Campus Solutions to be produced by seminar leaders/GTA’s and completed on Campus Solutions within 72 hours of a class being held (documentation to be provided as to how to do this).
* PSS staff in Schools to then run reports to identify students to contact.
* Students to be emailed initially by PSS staff and if no reply and no improvement in attendance Academic Advisors to then email the student to request a meeting.
* In the event of no reply and no improvement in attendance the student to be contacted by the Programme Director. With a further warning letter to be sent by the Director of Undergraduate Studies after this if necessary.

The Group will be meeting again at the beginning of December 2015 to discuss progress / issues.

**Reported:** A business case is currently being written (by Pam Ransome & Paul Brierley) on how data can be better integrated from Syllabus+ to CS.

**9. Briefing Note**

**Received:** A briefing note for information and dissemination, as appropriate, containing information on:

* New Mitigating Circumstances Exam Board Notes
* Policies and Guidance for implementation from September 2015
* Policy on Advising Taught Students
* Revised Guidance on Examination Boards
* Policy on Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials
* Amended Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment
* amendments to Regulation XVIII: Student Complaints Procedure
* amendments to Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure
* Mark Review Guidance
* TLAN Meeting Dates 2015/16

**10. A.O.B**

**10.1 Change to Humanities SSO Contact**

**Reported:** Wayne Eden is currently the SSO contact for Humanities (having taken over from Gem Grimshaw). Wayne has been appointed, from December 2015, as the project officer for the Academic Advising project, in the central Teaching and Learning Support Office. The Humanities interim contact in the SSO from December 2015 will be Sian Nash.

**10.2 Academic Advisors Unable to See their Advisees in My Students**

**Reported:** In SoSS some Academic Advisors are unable to see who their advisees are in My Students (portal through which Academic Advisors can access data on their advisees), despite being attached as the Academic Advisor in CS.

**Discussed:** It was suggested that the Academic Advisor should possibly be linked to the discipline area rather than the School in Campus Solutions

**Action: Amanda Brereton** to liaise with Sian Nash about this issue.

**Sian Nash** to discuss the issue with Patricia Clift-Martin.

*Secretary’s Note: Subsequent to the meeting the School has checked the instructor table in Campus Solutions and two of the members of staff who raised the issue were linked to the School, so a new row for the discipline area was added and this seems to have resolved the matter. However the link for a member of staff who had access to their advisees was also only linked to the School and not the discipline area. The School will inform Sian Nash if they come across other cases which can’t be resolved. The above actions can be disregarded.*

**10.3 Central Authentication Service (CAS) Issues**

**Reported:** On 28 September 2015 the University experienced a problem with the CAS and Shibboleth login system which meant that any system which required login via these systems was not accessible; this affected both staff and students. Whilst the issue was investigated and partially resolved on the same day access was intermittent and slow running. On 29 September 2015 although most users were able to authenticate through CAS there were still some issues affecting users of MyView and student email on mobile devices. The incident was fully resolved at 15.00 hours on 29 September 2015.

**Discussed:** This issue caused a lot of disruption for Schools; they had to deal with lots of panicked students who didn’t know where they should be as they couldn’t access their timetables. The issue was compounded as staff were also affected by the issue. It was suggested that it would be helpful if staff have a ‘back door’ access or a staff portal (which didn’t require authentication) to the systems which they could use when such issues arise. This happened on the first day of the first teaching week and negatively impacted on the student experience.

**Noted:**  Information was sent out to the timetabling forum listserv on how to produce a copy of the timetable from Syllabus+.

**Reported:** Sian Nash raised the issue about having a contingency plan, for future instances, at the Start of Year Group.

**Summary Action List**

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| **Agenda Item** | **Action** | **By Whom** |
| Ref 8 | If representing the Faculty on a University group and after three years wish to relinquish the role then let Lisa McAleese know so that discussions can take place re finding a replacement representative. | TLAN Members |
| 4 | Discuss, with Sara Latham, separating out extension requests from mitigating circumstances submissions. | Morag Guilfoyle |
| 4 | Ensure that all Programme Administrators (or equivalent) are aware of the agreement to discuss extension requests and mitigating circumstances submissions with the Administrator in the School delivering the course unit on which the student is registered prior to any extension request / mitigating circumstance being approved. | TLAN Members |
| 5 | Consideration to be given to cross-checking the central communications against School communications to incoming students to ensure that there is not overlap or potential for student confusion in the messages being sent. | TLAN Members |
| 5 | Send issues relating to course unit selection to Morag Guilfoyle ([Morag.Guilfoyle@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Morag.Guilfoyle@manchester.ac.uk)).  Collate responses and send these to Sian Nash. | TLAN Members  Morag Guilfoyle |
| 5 | Liaise with Sian Nash re submitting a change request to the change control board re searching via the four letter subject area codes during course unit selection. | Morag Guilfoyle |
| 6 | Check if only the Program Action of WADM gives an extension to student’s IT access and report back to Lisa McAleese. | Sian Nash |
| 7 | Discuss the concerns raised re the automatic extensions for DASS registered students with Elaine Shillcock. | Lisa McAleese |