Faculty of Humanities
Notes of the Teaching & Learning Administrators' Network (TLAN) Meeting 15 December 2016

Present: Morag Guilfoyle (SALC); Abi Robinson (Law); Janice Dodds (SEED); Amanda Brereton & Amanda Bridgeman (SoSS); Jackie Kan (AMBS); Nicola Lord (Faculty); Lisa McAleese (Chair).

1.   Apologies

Noted: Apologies were received from: Lee Felvus & Sara Latham (SALC); James Walker (SEED); Bernie O'Connor (SoSS); Chris McGlinchey, Sharon Wilding & Michelle Morrison (AMBS); Joanne Davidson (HR); Emma Sanders & Rachel Walton (Faculty).

In attendance: Gillian Woodward (SALC); Katrina Clark (SEED); Jill Chandler, Lynn Dignan, Chantel Riley & Vickie Roche (SoSS); Kelly Salimian (AMBS).

2.   Previous Notes

Confirmed: The notes from the meeting on 12 May 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3.   Matters Arising

Ref 3 / 6 Examinations – A further report on potentially extending the examination period, and other proposals for managing the examination period was recently considered by the University's Teaching and Learning Group; the outcome of these discussions is not yet known.

Ref 8 Ethical Approval – The Head of Academic Policy has requested Guidance on Ethical Approval from Professor Nalin Thakkar; this has not yet been received.

4.   Moderation

Received: The Faculty's Moderation Procedure document.

Katrina Clark (SEED) gave a presentation on how the moderation procedure works in the Geography discipline.

Implementation of the Moderation Process from a PSS Prospective (presentation by Katrina Clark, SEED)

Setting Tasks – Timings

Received: The key examination dates for staff for the academic year 2016/17. These dates are, each year, formulated at the final examination board of the previous year. The agreed dates are put into the academic's outlook calendar by PSS staff.

- Call for finalised course outlines – linked with Pre-registration – July (8th)
- Call for Examination Papers and Assignment details including Resit Assessments for both Semesters – Early August (8th)
- Internal Examiners and Moderators final review date of assignment tasks (post final versions into staff area of BB with completed Internal Examiners and Internal Moderator Form(E&M Form) – August (22nd)
- Assessment tasks, E&M Form, course outlines and associated programme documentation forwarded to External Examiners for comment (via BB or by Email) - August (24th).

- External Examiners' deadline to return comments via BB or by email to PSS (via BB or email, then internal examiner comments or implements) – September (9th)
- Internal Examiner to review comments returned by External Examiner – September (14th)
- Assessment tasks review completed – Welcome Week/Week One of Teaching

Setting Tasks – The good, the bad and the uphill struggles…

| Pros	Cons
- Structured transparent process	- Academic buy-in
- Quality Assurance	- New staff (Academic and PSS)
- External Examiners – feedback	- New course units/late programme changes
- Efficient	- Availability of staff/Externals

Marking and Moderation – Timings

Exam Period 16-27 January	Exam Period 15 May – 9 June
Final Marking and Moderation Date for Semester I – 8 February	Final Marking and Moderation Date for Semester II – 9 June
Semester One Moderation Board – 16 February	Internal Examination Boards UG 16 June, PG 22 June
Semester One Results Release 20 February	External Examination Boards UG 19/20 June, PG 26 June
	Marks Published – 29 June

Marking and Moderation – Process

- Creation of Spreadsheets (including formulas, by PSS staff – need to include 0% as if removed this causes issues with the upload)
- Input of assignment marks (upload into spreadsheets)
- Upload of spreadsheet into staff area of BB for Internal Examiner
- Internal Examiner inputs examination marks
- Internal Examiners review spreadsheet, completes E&M Form, re-uploads into staff area of BB and notifies moderator to commence (PSS and Exams Officer are cc'd in correspondence)
- Moderator completes process uploads final Spreadsheet and E&M Form onto BB and notifies Internal Examiner, Exams Officer and PSS of confirmed marks or issue (Scaling)
- PSS download spreadsheet from BB and upload marks into Campus Solutions (Gradebook) and proceed to undertake CS tasks.

Blackboard Space

Each course unit has a Blackboard area which is restricted to staff only; it is not visible to students.
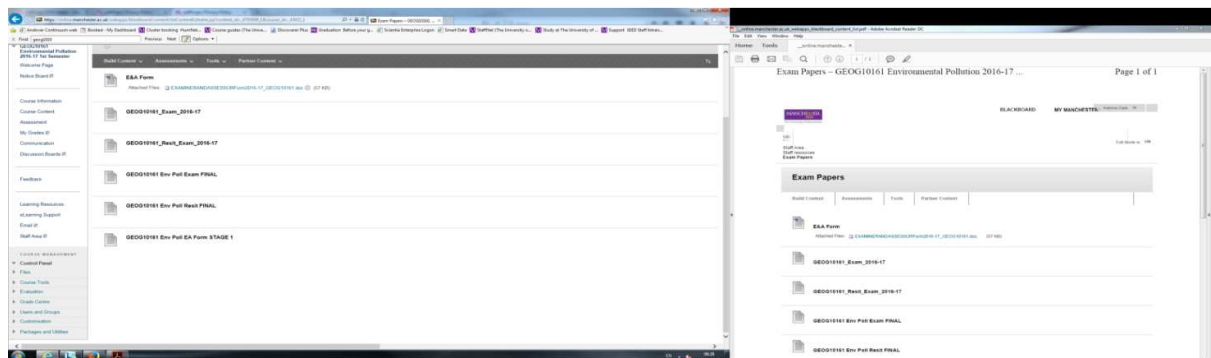
Marking and Moderation – Operational issues

- Delay - spreadsheets (late marks impacts on the statistics the examination board looks at; it is essential that training is provided to ensure built in resilience).
- Assistance required on input of examination marks into spreadsheets (Programme Administrator, UG assistant, intern & apprentice all support the full marking & moderation process; moderator & internal examiner check marks have been input in grid correctly).
- Timings of examinations (especially if it is the last one in the schedule; SEED had an examination for c250 students and the marking – 6 markers – and moderation was turned around within 48 hours).
- Marking volume.
- Staff availability (especially over the summer).
- Team marking (it is advisable for marking standard setting to be undertaken i.e. all mark a piece of work independently and come together to discuss and harmonise the marking).
- Delay- Examiner and Moderator form completion (the PSS / Exams Officer undertakes a 'quality check' and if incomplete they are returned to the marker / moderator).
- System Issues (e.g. statistics cannot be produced by Campus Solutions at time required).
- IT failure (recommended that everything is downloaded and saved as a backup).
- Scaling (if undertaken have to change each student's mark individually and re-upload).

Key to Success

- Examination Officer (a strong officer who understands and advocates the moderation process is key).
- Review timings (year on year).
- In build dates for semester II setting assessment task timings.
- Ensure a degree of flexibility within all timings set if possible.
- Communication (essential to keep all parties in the loop at every stage of the process: PSS; markers; moderators; external examiners; exams officer).

Discussed: Academic buy-in for the process may be difficult, as it requires actions over the summer period, when they are undertaking research; putting the agreed key examination dates in academic's diaries is beneficial. Ease of access by the academics (both markers and moderators) to the material has helped with this issue (facilitated via a staff Blackboard space on each course unit so they can remote in). Having a strong Examination Officer is also key to the success of this process. It is essential that new members of academic staff are inducted into the process. Communication is also key; alternative deadlines should be set for any new course units / late changes which should be communicated to all parties (including the External Examiner). PSS staff also send email reminders to staff about the various stages / deadlines. Concern was expressed that this process is resource intensive. Concern was also expressed about getting assessment questions moderated and published (if required) to students; SEED overcome this by restricting the release in Blackboard of the course unit outline to week 1, when they are placed under the assessment tab. Concern was expressed that staff may see scaling as the third part of the process; this should be the exception and not the norm.

Agreed: It would be helpful if the Geography Examination Officer would be willing to speak to Examination Officers in other Schools.

Action: **Katrina** to discuss with the Examination Officer whether s/he is willing to meet with other School's Examination Officers and inform Lisa McAleese.

Action: **Katrina** to develop and share a guide for academic staff to the Blackboard space.

5. **A.O.B**.

5.1 **Humanities Computer Cluster use for On-line Examinations**

Reported: SALC reported that Jill Antonie (Student Service Officer, Exams) can't timetable the on-line examinations which are scheduled to take place in the Humanities Computer Clusters.

Discussed: AMBS World Wide hold on-line examinations on the students own laptops (under controlled conditions). SEED have a time test on Blackboard for one of their students (DASS related).

Action: **Lisa McAleese** to raise this issue with Guy Percival (IT partner).

5.2 **Graduation Issues**

Reported: SEED had experienced issues pertaining to graduation during the July 2016 ceremonies. These issues were discussed with Sarah Beer (Director of Student Admissions & Administration) and Rita Kenwright (Student Services Manager) in November 2016 to prevent a repeat during the December 2016 graduation ceremonies. Unfortunately their four ceremonies were impacted by many of the same issues which led to all of the ceremonies starting late.

The Head of School Administration will, in the New Year, be again meeting with the Director of Student Admissions & Administration to discuss this matter further. Below are some of the key issues that SEED think need to be addressed and would welcome feedback from other Schools to determine if others have been similarly affected:

• The lists provided prior to graduation by the SSC are incorrect and (SEED believe) are being pulled from the wrong area of Campus Solutions (this wasn't an issue previously when Katie Britton was managing graduation prior to her maternity leave).
• The changes requested by the School to be made in the programmes are actioned inconsistently and need to me amended manually on the day; this has led to incorrect information (e.g. programme) in the programme and on the degree certificate (which has led to complaints from the graduands).
• The row checkers that the graduation team are employing are poorly trained, in some cases could barely speak English and weren't aware of their responsibilities (i.e. not re-opening the doors), which led to SEED's first ceremony being twenty minutes late as School staff had to double and triple check seating and students.
• (In Mike Mercer's and Katie's absence) there appears to be a lack of understanding of processes by the graduation team and, at times, a total unwillingness to accept responsibility. At times there was no visibility from anyone in their team and lackadaisical attitude to resolving problems.

Discussed: All Schools reported that both at the June (apart from SALC) and December ceremonies they had experienced the same issues articulated above. There was a general feeling that this year the training was inadequate and that this could account for some of the issues; it is understood that Mike Mercer (who is on long-term sick leave) delivered this previously. One member attended one of the training sessions and reported that it was diabolical. One School conveyed the unprofessionalism of the students in the academic procession as when they sat down they then got a book out to read during the ceremony. A number of PSS had to keep going on the stage during the ceremonies to sort things out. All Schools reported issues with the row checkers not doing a proper job, and not seeming to care. They also reported that people were let in and out during the ceremony, resulting in delays.

Action: **Lisa McAleese** to report the above discussion to James Walker.

Secretary's Note: Lisa McAleese has canvassed the other faculties to establish whether or not they too had experienced any issues; these will be fed back to SEED's Head of School Administration for her meeting with the Director of Student Admissions & Administration.

6. **Notes of Central Committees**

Received: The notes of the Teaching and Learning Management Group (TLMG) meeting, held on 14 November 2016 were received for information.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 2 February 2017, 10am-12 noon, room 3.212 University Place.

Summary Action List

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom
4	Discuss with the Geography Examination Officer whether s/he is willing to meet with other School's Examination Officers and inform Lisa McAleese.	Katrina Clark
4	Develop and share a guide for academic staff to the Blackboard space.	Katrina Clark
5.1	Raise the issue re Humanities computer clusters with Guy Percival.	Lisa McAleese
5.2	Report the graduation issues discussion to James Walker.	Lisa McAleese

Best wishes for the festive season, from all of us in Teaching and Learning Support Services.