

Faculty of Humanities

Notes of the Teaching & Learning Administrators' Network (TLAN) meeting 06/02/14

**Present:** Elizabeth Nolan (School of Arts, Languages & Cultures - SALC); Janice Dodds (School of Environment, Education & Development – SEED); Abigail Robinson (School of Law); Melanie Crank, Lynne McCormack & Madeleine Ryan (Manchester Business School - MBS), Gemma Grimshaw (Student System Office – SSO) and Lisa McAleese (Faculty, Chair).

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from James Walker (SEED); Sharon Wilding (MBS); Amanda Brereton & Bernadette O'Connor (School of Social Sciences - SOSS).

**2. Previous Notes (3 October 2013)**

**Confirmed:** The notes from the meeting on 3 October 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

**Noted:** There were no matters arising.

**4. Attendance Monitoring (Tier 4 students)**

**Reported:** It was reported that in SALC students had started a campaign against the monitoring of their attendance in terms of the international student census; especially in relation to the issuing of a warning 'letter' if they haven't attended one of the census points.

**Noted:** Sophie Hargreaves (Student Recruitment and International Development – SRID) has been notified of this student campaign.

**Discussed:** The timings and activities in relation to the census points were discussed. In MBS second and final year undergraduate Tier 4 students are checked in October; first year Tier 4 students attend International Check-in. During January and May exam attendance is used to confirm the student is in attendance; this is an onerous task for the Professional Support Service (PSS) staff as the School has c. 700 Tier 4 students for which the spreadsheet with the exam attendance has to be checked and the Campus Solutions checklist. The attendance of Tier 4 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students in MBS are also checked via exam attendance. The two week window for checking students comes at the wrong time of year for using certain activities as the census point check i.e. examinations. Where a student is not undertaking an examination MBS calls the student in for a face-to-face check. Given the volume of students that need checking the two week window for reporting can be extremely tight and the School receives emails every day from the International Advice Team (IAT) / Tier 4 team adding to the pressure.

SEED reported that:

- the timing of the census (ending on the first day of teaching) does not work for PGT students who do not have exams and may use the opportunity in January to see some of the UK and may therefore not be in Manchester. This cut-off date just adds pressure on PSS staff chasing students incessantly (because of daily emails received by the School from the Tier 4 team).

- communication between the IAT and Tier 4 team (and Schools) is not the best; e.g. a student had an agreement from the Tier 4 team/IAT that he didn't need to attend a census check, but his name wasn't removed from the report sent to the School. The School then chased the student due to non-attendance only to be informed by the student of the agreement, which the Tier 4 team/IAT assumed the School was aware of.
- the report itself giving the details of which students needed to attend in January was released three working days before the census opened, which is too late and at a time when PGT students are not expected to be in attendance (many don't check their emails during term time let alone out of it).

**Noted:** SEED will be feeding these issues back to the review currently being undertaken (see section below).

**Reported:** In SALC there are a number of Tier 4 students who are on their year abroad and it is therefore known that they won't be able to attend a face-to-face census check point; these students are assigned a specific code to record this absence on the Campus Solutions checklist. The School is in contact with these students via email and via the staff visits.

**Reported:** The Directorate of the Student Experience is currently undertaking a review of how it ensures compliance with the University's responsibilities as a Tier 4 sponsor and how it provides immigration advice to students.

The Steering Group directing the review (chaired by Sarah Beer) is seeking the views of colleagues involved in the delivery of Tier 4 activity or who have regular interaction with the T4 (PBS) or International Advice Teams (IAT). To this end, they have asked for comments on three main areas, (although we can provide views on anything else):

- Awareness of what the IAT and T4 (PBS) teams deliver
- The quality of the service delivered by the teams
- The extent to which the teams operate efficiently and effectively

The notification was sent by Claire Mansbridge (SRID) to Heads of School Administration on 31 January 2014 with a deadline for responses of Friday 14 February 2014.

**Noted:** The questions being asked are in relation to how well the IAT and Tier 4 Compliance Teams operate and the promotion of their service, rather than a review of the process for monitoring Tier 4 students.

## 5. **Welcome 2013**

**Received:** The report on the Review of the Welcome activities and recommendations for 2014 were received.

**Reported:** In general it was agreed that Welcome Week had been successful and that there were a lot of activities being undertaken / co-ordinated by the Centre which had been communicated to the wider community well. There were issues with the Welcome website as it was launched late and was not working properly.

**Secretary's Note:** *The recommendations for Welcome 2014 are:*

- *earlier publication of proposed schedule for Welcome 2014 to enable Schools and faculties to better plan their local activities around the key events and earlier promotion to students of the key events;*
- *earlier and closer integration of the start of year business processes with Welcome;*
- *Whitworth Hall be considered for use for the Start of Year Fair and some evening events and that University Place becomes the hub for student processes & support (registration & international check-in);*
- *reduced frequency of some of the activities;*
- *greater promotion pre-arrival with a clearer booking and ticketing system (via the Welcome website) and removal of ticketing for some of the activities (e.g. City Bus Tour);*
- *set up of Welcome Publications Working Group to co-ordinate all publications reviewing their purpose, relationship with digital resources, print runs and distribution models;*
- *reduction of the staff/student ask me guides to 8,000;*
- *improved communications for North Campus;*
- *wider distribution of responsibility for projects and events during the welcome period from across the Directorate for Student Experience;*
- *further co-ordination of budgets for Orientation and Welcome.*

**Noted:** The next meeting of the Student Communication Sub-group will be held on 12 March 2014.

**Action:** **Schools** to send comments on the above report and the recommendations for 2014 to Lisa McAleese ([lisa.mcaleese-2@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.mcaleese-2@manchester.ac.uk)) by Friday 7 March 2014 at the latest.

**Lisa McAleese** to collate the comments received and forward to Rosie Williams / Marie Gray (Faculty representatives on the Student Communication sub-group).

## 6. **Timing of the Administration of Resits**

**Reported:** The timing of the administration of resits is at an extremely busy period when other priority activities are taking place e.g. pre-induction fieldwork, planning welcome week activities etc. There is insufficient time for staff to undertake the marking of resits (at a time when they are not normally around), to hold the resit board, get the results on the student system and notify the students prior to the start of the next academic year; last academic year this resulted in some students in SALC who had been excluded turning up for the next academic year.

**Noted:** Clive Agnew (Vice President Teaching, Learning & Students) is chairing a 'Marking and Assessment' working group; Dr Chris Davies and Norma Hird (School of Law) are representing the Faculty on this group. One of the specified objectives of the group is to '*consider the experience of students with resits, including that of an overseas student*'. Although, from the project charter, it appears that the Group will be looking at this from the students' perspective it was agreed that the issues raised above should also be considered.

**Action:** **Lisa McAleese** to inform the Faculty's representatives of the issues surrounding the timing of resits.

**Lisa McAleese** to circulate the 'Marking and Assessment' Project Charter to TLAN members.

## 7. Policy on Additional Costs

- Received:** The University's 'Policy on additional costs incurred by students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes' was received.
- Reported:** The Policy will have implications for Schools in terms of ensuring that students are able to complete their programme without incurring any significant additional study costs over and above the tuition fee for that programme.
- Noted:** The Policy states that '*any compulsory printing should be avoided but if necessary made explicit e.g. printing of a dissertation*'.
- Discussed:** The practice of Schools issuing printing credits to students was discussed; there are currently variances as to whether or not these are issued and the amount. It was noted that with the Faculty's introduction of online submission for assignments that the requirement for a printed copy of an assignment was being phased out. It was acknowledged that there may be instances where it is not suitable for assignments to be submitted online e.g. for pedagogic reasons or because Turnitin does not support certain file types.

SEED will be looking at some anomalous costs previously charged by the School of Education.

**Secretary's Note:** *The central Teaching and Learning Support Office sent the Policy on Additional Costs to Heads of School / Heads of School Administration, on 20 January 2014. Lisa McAleese sent T&L/UG/PGT Directors (cc'd to T&L Managers) a copy on 30 January 2014. The Directors were asked to collate information on any adjustments that have been made in their School in order to be compliant with the Policy and be in a position to report these (as well as confirm that the Policy will be implemented by September 2014) to the 11 June 2014 meeting of the Faculty's Teaching & Learning Committee.*

## 8. Distinguished Achievement Awards

- Reported:** Ibrahim Olabi (School of Law) has been selected by the Faculty to receive the UG Student of the Year Award. The nomination has been forwarded for consideration at the April 2014 meeting of the University's Award and Honours Group.

All nominations for the UG Student of the Year should be kept in the strictest of confidence until the winner has been announced by the University.

**Secretary's Note:** *All the nominees submitted by Schools receive the Faculty Award for Distinguished Achievement (£100) and a letter of congratulations from the Dean (on his headed paper), counter signed by the Head of School. Susan Rowe handles the administration for this after the winner has been announced by the University in April. The nominees are: Chloe Knibbs (SALC); Sian McKenszie (SoSS); Portia Bailey & Stavros Polycarpou (MBS).*

## 9. Any Other Business

### 9.1 Mitigating Circumstances

- Discussed:** Whether or not Schools accepted letters from the Counselling Service as supporting evidence for mitigation requests was discussed. Schools do accept the letter however some Schools only accept the letters where the student has been to see the Counselling Service prior to the submission / examination and have not just been to the Counselling

Service once and reported that they have been experiencing difficulties. It was rumoured that the Counselling Service are reviewing the number of times a student has to be seen by them before they will issue a letter of support.

**Action:** **Lisa McAleese** to contact Sarah Littlejohn (Director, Counselling Service) to ascertain whether or not the Counselling Service is to review the practice of issuing supporting letters to students.

## 9.2 Course Unit Selection

**Reported:** Concern was expressed that the University's common date of 31 July 2014 for course unit selection for returning undergraduate students will place a strain on Campus Solutions in terms of the potential heavy volume of users and the other processes which will be running at the same time e.g. term activation; matriculation / enrolment; class enrolment; graduation etc.

Concern was also expressed that the deadline is too early and that the room allocations won't be known, which may, as happened last year, lead to core units having to be rescheduled resulting in a poor student experience.

Melanie Crank had attended a course unit selection mapping meeting which was facilitated by the University's change management team; each faculty is to have one. These Faculty workshops were actions arising from the Course Unit Selection Steering Group which is chaired by Louise Walmsley; Melanie Crank and Louise Stewart (SALC) are members of this group.

**Noted:** The Faculty's annual course unit selection planning meeting will be held on 10 February 2014. Sian Nash will be in attendance.

No other business was considered.

### Summary Action List

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom
5	Schools to send comments on the Review of the Welcome activities and recommendations for 2014 to Lisa McAleese by Friday 7 March 2014 at the latest.	TLAN Members
5	Collate the comments received on the Review of Welcome activities and forward to Rosie Williams / Marie Gray.	Lisa McAleese
6	Inform the Faculty's representatives on the Marking & Assessment working group of the issues surrounding the timing of resits.	Lisa McAleese
6	Circulate the 'Marking and Assessment' Project Charter to TLAN members.	Lisa McAleese
7	Report to 11 June 2014 Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee outcomes of discussions on the Policy on additional costs	Teaching & Learning / UG / PGT Directors
9.1	Ascertain whether or not the Counselling Service is reviewing their practice of when they will issue letters to students.	Lisa McAleese