

Faculty of Humanities

Notes of the Teaching & Learning Administrators' Network (TLAN) meeting 03/10/13

**Present:** Elizabeth Nolan (School of Arts, Languages & Cultures - SALC); Abigail Robinson (School of Law); Melanie Crank (Manchester Business School - MBS), Amanda Brereton (School of Social Sciences); Gemma Grimshaw (Student System office – SSO) and Lisa McAleese (Faculty, Chair).

**In Attendance:** Morag Guilfoyle (SALC); Sarah Tiffany-Dodman (Law); Katrina Clark & Emma Moores (School of Environment, Education & Development - SEED); Sarah Featherstone, Svetlana Budyakova & Lucy Filmore (MBS).

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Fiona Fraser (SALC), Janice Dodds (SEED) and Sharon Wilding (MBS).

### 2. Previous Notes

**Noted:** Due to time limitations, the previous notes were not discussed.

**Action:** **TLAN members** to forward any inaccuracies in the notes from the meeting on 2 May 2013 to Lisa McAleese.

### 3. Matters Arising

*Secretary's Note: Ref 5.2 SharePoint*

**Received:** *The following information was received from Clare Turner about the progress of the SharePoint projects:*

- *Research Collaboration. We are currently running some research pilot areas on the live SharePoint infrastructure. These pilots will run for another couple of months to allow us to resolve some of the issues that have been highlighted. Once the pilot is complete we will make this type of site available to researchers across the University.*
- *Team Areas. We have started a consultation phase with people from around the schools and faculties with a view to providing 'team sites' to the wider university community. It is hoped that we will have some pilots in this area running through the summer with a view to starting a wider rollout in the Autumn.*
- *Student records. Currently in design with a view to starting in September 2013.*
- *Staff Records. Pilot phase starts this month.*

*An email outlining the above was circulated to TLAN members on 4 June 2013.*

### 4. Timetabling

**Reported:** Russell Ashworth had asked Heads of School Administration to provide examples of the difficulties being encountered around the whole timetabling process (rather than the allocations system only) which would be sent to Professor Agnew, Vice-President (Teaching, Learning & Students).

**Discussed:** TLAN members discussed the following concerns / issues in relation to timetabling.

### **Training**

Training was delivered late.

On-line training was insufficient; it would have been preferable if this was interactive. It was too 'techy' and the screenshots were not the same version as those in the actual system.

Campus Solutions (CS) integration wasn't included in the guides; the data in CS had to be re-worked in order for Syllabus+ (S+) integration to work.

*Secretary's Note: Andy Stephens is currently working with the SSO on an integration guide.*

The training documentation had to be interpreted by staff in Schools, who then produced their own versions.

Notifications of updates to training material were issued via email in amongst other information and weren't clearly highlighted.

It would have been preferable to allocate resource to train up staff in Schools / central functions rather than the Timetabling Assistants (PhD students).

Only one Scientia consultant, holding limited book-in sessions was not sufficient.

### **Communication**

Emails sent out by the Timetabling Project were confusing, too in-depth and technical, and had crucial actions embedded within the volume of other information; it would have been preferable if the communications separated out the operational system information from the implementation information.

There was no central (University) email issued to students about the initiative and how to access their timetable.

Schools asked students to log-in to My Manchester so they could see the students' view and it was noted that there were misleading messages which said 'no timetable available' and 'your timetable is available and will be complete in time for week 4'. This resulted in students not logging in, generating lots of queries.

It would have been helpful if there had been a clear button / link saying 'timetable' in My Manchester.

Some staff were advised by the Timetabling Project to add computer cluster requests to S+ which they did; they were issued with flat rooms and when reported this they were informed that they should have booked the clusters through IT and not S+; as a result there are no computer clusters available.

Timetables need to fully specify the room not just an abbreviation (e.g. HBS for Humanities Bridgeford Street).

No guidance was given about the non-allocation of rooms and what to do (until the tagging system was introduced).

It was unclear as to who was responsible for undertaking certain procedures e.g. Central Timetabling Unit (CTU) don't remove tags therefore there are sometimes duplicate rooms. Admin aren't notified of room changes.

### **Systems Issues / Implementation**

Staff were locked out of the system over the summer. Access was reinstated mid-August when staff were involved with resit examinations, induction and registration preparations.

Reporting of issues sent via [timetabling@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:timetabling@manchester.ac.uk) have been logged as 'resolved' when the issues haven't been.

**Noted:** It would be interesting to establish how many of the individual queries were from the same Faculty and whether or not there was any pattern to the individual issues being reported.

**Action:** **Lisa McAleese** to ask the Head of the Timetabling Project whether it would be possible to undertake such an analysis.

Not all computer clusters have been added to S+ and therefore don't appear on the timetable.

S+ doesn't recognise where inter-connecting rooms can be combined to increase capacity; therefore these rooms can't be booked for large cohort teaching.

The lecturers' offices are not on S+ (where small PGT teaching is undertaken).

Staff / GTA names are not available if they are not from the same School / discipline area as the course unit.

Semester two has not been prioritised; students are on a wait list and Schools can't confirm they have a place until room bookings are confirmed. There appears to be no recognition that students choose courses for the whole year and not just the first semester.

Different weekly patterns are used on CS (0-52) and S+ (1-52), creating confusion; these need to be amended for next year.

There is no audit / reporting available on a meeting pattern; an ARS request has been submitted, which has gone to the top of the action list.

It is not yet clear why data goes missing in CS (meeting pattern information within the class schedule is being removed/alterd without human intervention); the SSO need to understand the reasons for this to enable a fix (this is currently being investigated).

*Secretary's Note: The Head of the Timetabling Project issued a message (11/10/13) to those Schools using CS to say that the SSO and the Application Support Development Team are working together to investigate this issue. It was reported that this is an intermittent/random issue and has not affected the majority of class meeting patterns. From 27th September onwards a temporary safety net was put in place while the problem*

*itself is being investigated. Staff using CS were informed of two implications for changes in practice as a result of the implementation of the safety net.*

### **General Issues / Observations**

Some Schools previously used CELCAT timetable software to create and publish timetables to students; this software won't work on the Windows 7 platform and couldn't be used in some Schools as a contingency plan.

Blackboard and Turnitin don't work with S+, they have to be synchronised via CS.

There are a number of activities which rely on information in CS and can't be undertaken via S+ e.g. attendance monitoring; exam result processing; transcripts; eProg etc.; if S+ can't replicate these activities then two-way integration of the systems is required (if not more staff resources will be required).

There have been issues with student access to the various corporate systems.

**Reported:** Gemma Grimshaw reported that Sian Nash had circulated an email (01/10/13) to staff in the SSO stating: *'No major Campus Solutions (CS) performance issues were reported last week. However, it was observed that there was a logon issue related to the CAS authentication process. It was considered that this problem occurred because students were provided with access to Office 365. In doing so, this created a significant additional load on the authentication process. The effect of this was that many students attempting to log in failed. As a precautionary measure students were given a temporary alternative route of access from MyManchester which allowed students to access key systems separately, such as Campus Solutions and Blackboard.*

*Whilst it is unclear as to why Office 365 has created such an increase in authentication load the problem is being addressed by relocating this aspect of authentication onto separate hardware which should provide the extra capacity required for responsive access. This was undertaken last week. The exact nature of the problem however is still being investigated further.'*

It was questioned as to whether or not the estates strategy / programme of work had been fed into the project.

Management of free-choice units has been a nightmare to organise.

It was suggested that the pilot undertaken in an area which didn't use scheduling was a mistake and that if a pilot had been undertaken in such an area the majority of the issues currently experienced could have been foreseen and mitigated.

TLAN members agreed that the CTU had been very supportive throughout this project.

It was agreed that it appeared that the infrastructure within the University to support such a vast and major project had not been sufficient.

Staff who use CS (labelled as 'CS Managers') to undertake and manage activities felt as if they had been treated as 'second class citizens' during the implementation of the project.

As a result of this project the workload for Professional Support Staff has been excessive and as a result of 'fire-fighting' a back-log of work has built up.

Due to different rooms being allocated for a scheduled two hour lecture staff had to be creative in what was being 'taught' during this period e.g. orientation and practicals were built-in.

### **Moving Forward**

Integration of CS and S+ is critically needed for next year.

Training and resources will be key for successful implementation.

Drop-in sessions don't work; staff need support as and when they need it not at a pre-scheduled time; it would be helpful to have a manned help-desk for trouble-shooting.

Better change management of key initiatives such as this project need to be implemented.

**Noted:** An article had appeared in The Mancunian (30/09/13) entitled '*Students miss lectures in MyManchester mess*'; all students who had provided comments for the article were Humanities students.

**Reported:** The Head of the Timetabling Project wishes to hold face-to-face feedback sessions in each Faculty.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that a meeting should be set up to which key staff should be invited; June Finch, Louise Walmsley, Russell Ashworth, Sian Nash, Andy Stevens, TLAN members and timetabling staff.

*Secretary's Note: On 9 October 2013 Russell Ashworth chaired a meeting which June Finch, Louise Walmsley, TLAN members and timetabling staff attended.*

### **5. TLAN Meetings**

**Discussed:** Last academic year members of TLAN took turns to host and chair these meetings and the Faculty's Senior Taught Programmes Administrator took the notes; it was discussed whether or not TLAN 2013/14 should continue to operate in the same way.

**Agreed:** For the 2013/14 academic session TLAN will be fully serviced by the Faculty's Senior Taught Programmes Administrator.

*Secretary's Note: Following previous schedules the proposed dates for the 2013/14 academic session are: 19 November 2013, room 4.210 University Place; 6 February 2014; 3 April 2014; 15 May 2014; 3 July 2014.*

**Action:** **TLAN members** to put the above dates in their diaries. Rooms will be confirmed early 2014.

### **6. Common Dates for the Publication of Results**

**Reported:** The idea of setting up University-wide common dates for posting and publication of results was raised last week at the University's Exams Board Practice working group. The Co- Chair, Emma Hilton Wood, will be discussing this with relevant parties and will also be discussing

the possibility of having a page on the intranet where all the exam board dates across the University are published.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that, in advance of University-wide common dates, it would still be useful to set appropriate deadlines for Schools within the Faculty of Humanities.

**Noted:** In order for Masters' level students who were exiting with a PG Certificate or PG Diploma to be included on the graduation lists (July ceremonies) their results need to be entered on Campus Solutions by the same date as final results for UG students.

The following deadlines were agreed:

Results	Date for posting results
Final Year UG course unit marks	17 June 2014
PGT course unit marks (progression)	17 June 2014
UG resit marks	5 September 2014
PGT final results	22 November 2014

**Action:** **TLAN members** to circulate the agreed dates to the relevant staff within their School.

**Discussed:** The timing of the administration of resits is at an extremely busy time of the year when other priority activities are taking place e.g. pre-induction fieldwork, planning welcome week activities etc.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that this topic needs to be discussed further at TLAN and the issues discussed fed back to the University's Exam Board Practice working group.

## 7. Registration, September 2013

This item was not considered.

**Action:** **TLAN members** to report any registration issues / observations to Fiona Fraser (the Faculty's representative on the University's Admissions and Registration sub-group); [fiona.fraser@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.fraser@manchester.ac.uk)

## 8. Business Process Management Groups

This item was not considered.

**Action:** **Lisa McAleese** to carry forward this item to the next meeting.

## 9. Admin Teams Pro-active Role in Assessment Management

**Received:** A document entitled 'The supportive role of administrative teams in the deployment of e-submission, marking and return of coursework via Turnitin / Grademark' (prepared by Anna Verges-Bausili) advocating for greater involvement and ownership of eAssessment (when it occurs within Blackboard and Turnitin) by administrators in Schools.

**Discussed:** Currently administrative teams in Schools handle operational eAssessment tasks such as: enrolling academic staff and second markers to Blackboard courses via Campus Solutions;

identifying and contacting non-submitters; setting and selectively releasing Turnitin submission inboxes for students with agreed extensions; distributing assignments to external examiners; uploading grades to Campus Solutions; archiving work etc.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that who does these tasks and how they are undertaken (i.e. overall ownership and management) should be determined by the School.

**Noted:** Taking a Faculty position whereby Administrators are required to take on the overall ownership and management of eAssessment processes (as outlined in the document) was not approved.

**Action:** **Lisa McAleese** to notify Anna Verges-Bausili.

**10. A.O.B.**

No other business was considered.

### Summary Action List

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom
2	Forward any inaccuracies in the notes from the meeting on 2 May 2013 to Lisa McAleese.	TLAN members
4	Ask the Head of the Timetabling Project whether it would be possible to undertake an analysis to determine how many of the individual queries (reported via <a href="mailto:timetabling@manchester.ac.uk">timetabling@manchester.ac.uk</a> ) were from the same Faculty and whether or not there was any pattern to the individual issues being reported.	Lisa McAleese
5	The following dates from TLAN 2013/14 to be put in diaries - 19 November 2013, room 4.210 University Place; 6 February 2014; 3 April 2014; 15 May 2014; 3 July 2014.	TLAN members
6	Staff in Schools to be informed of the Faculty's agreed dates for posting student results for the 2013/14 academic session. Final Year UG course unit marks - 17 June 2014 PGT course unit marks (progression) - 17 June 2014 UG resit marks - 5 September 2014 PGT final results - 22 November 2014	TLAN members
7	Report any registration issues / observations to Fiona Fraser ( <a href="mailto:fiona.fraser@manchester.ac.uk">fiona.fraser@manchester.ac.uk</a> )	TLAN members
8	Carry forward item on Business Process Management Groups	Lisa McAleese
9	Inform Anna Verges-Bausili that taking a Faculty position whereby Administrators are required to take on the overall ownership and management of eAssessment processes (as outlined in the document) was not approved.	Lisa McAleese