

Frequently asked questions

When will the two Schools merge and what will the new School be called?

On 20 February 2019, the University's Board of Governors approved a recommendation to merge the School of Law and the School of Social Sciences. It was agreed that the School should be called the 'School of Social Sciences' (SoSS) and that Law and Criminology would become departments within that School from 1 August 2019.

Following feedback from staff and students about the importance of retaining a Law School identity, it was agreed that 'The University of Manchester Law School' could only be used for branding and external relationship reasons for clarity with students and external stakeholders.

The title 'School of Law' should no longer be used from 1 August 2019.

See the [branding guidelines](#).

Who is overseeing the merger?

A Working Group meets monthly to oversee and report back on the process for transitioning to a single School. The minutes from these meetings are stored on the [merger pages](#) and are available to colleagues in both Schools.

Membership of the working group includes the:

- Head of School (Law/SoSS)
- Head of School Admin (Law/SoSS)
- Deputy Head of School (Law)
- Director of Research (Law/SoSS)
- Director of Teaching and Learning (Law/SoSS)
- Chair of School Board (Law/SoSS)
- Director of Faculty Operations (Humanities)
- Vice-President and Dean (Humanities)
- Communications and Engagement Manager
- HR Partner

What have our students been told about the merger?

The Director of Faculty Operations met with the Students Union on 23 May 2018 to tell them about this. Students from both Schools were involved in the engagement process later in 2018 and their feedback was considered, along with staff feedback, before a proposal was developed to go to Senate and the Board of Governors in February 2019. Throughout the University governance process, all students and the Students' Union were kept up-to-date on the reasons for merging and the potential benefits.

On 21 February 2019, all students received a communication from their Head of School (HoS) explaining that the merger had been given the go-ahead and that:

- the new single School would be called the School of Social Sciences;
- the merger would take place on 1 August 2019;

- there are branding and external relationship reasons that mean it is important to keep a 'Law School' identity for clarity with students and external stakeholders.

Read more in the [branding guidelines](#).

Will we be changing location?

There will be no significant changes to location in 2019/20 with Law and Criminology staff remaining in Williamson. This may change in the future, for example one department or unit may 'swap' location with another. HoS is planning to have office hours in the Williamson building, the exact times will be subject to his diary.

There was concern about the reduction in the research allowance to £1,000 per year for T&S staff.

The Head of Department (HoD) can supplement this from the DAB budget. This needs to be discussed at School level. We are working towards two levels of support – teaching and research (T&R) and (teaching and scholarship (T&S) will receive £2,000 per annum, teaching focused staff on temporary contracts £1,000 per year.

What about the numbers of T&L/T&R staff?

This is difficult to answer now as the current SoSS has a different system. Law will have to consider the rationale for the current balance, and its weaknesses and strengths, and feed into School strategy. Staff need to have clearly defined progression routes.

What about credit for admin roles?

The T&L and Research Directors will have credits. The rest will depend on the roles and the percentage of time involved for each job. We will operate to the 40/40/20 model for T&R staff, where research and teaching are allocated 40% of time each over the year, and academic administration at 20%. Both Faculty and the School are looking at the Work Allocation Model (WAM) independently. The HoS and HoDs will meet to discuss and decide on this.

Can teaching-only staff have periods of sabbatical funded by SoSS? (eg to do pedagogical research; textbooks, professional development).

Yes, the SoSS procedures allow for staff on a teaching and scholarship route to apply for a sabbatical.

Will there be another layer in the decision making process post the merger?

Primarily departments make decisions. Therefore the process will be more integrated rather than having another layer.

What is the promotion process in SoSS? How are departments represented on the Promotions Committee?

There is the need to build career paths for existing staff with the support of the HoD. All applications go to the School. SoSS offers a supportive process, with a Promotions Workshop and two-stage process so that feedback can be given to allow those applying to strengthen their application.

Departments are not represented on the promotions committee. The School Promotions Committee (SPC) membership is: HoS (Chair), Director T&L, Director Research, Director Social Responsibility, one elected professorial representative, one elected non-professorial representative and HR partner, with supporting statements from HoDs. This has worked very successfully in the current SoSS to the satisfaction of Departments.

Are there policies on internal promotion and can Law strengthen these? The current promotion procedure is Law -> Faculty. Will that change to bigger SoSS -> Faculty or will it be Law -> SoSS > Faculty or will it stay the same?

Economics currently have an internal review process, on which they base the recommendations to the School Promotions Committee that then send their recommendation to Faculty. It is up the departments how they want to organise this. Fairness and equality are the key issues here, and the School is in a good position to oversee this. See previous question above.

How will decisions about staff recruitment be made - departmentally or at School level?

All posts have to be approved by HoS. If in budget this is usually automatic, if not in budget then we cannot approve if there is not an income stream identified.

What ambitions are there to improve equality and diversity (E&D) in the School?

The current SoSS is extremely attuned and committed to E&D, and this will be key to the new School. There will be a committee that has department representatives, each department has their own E&D plan, we have a number of initiatives in mind that have proven to be successful, and are preparing for Athena Swan Silver. Currently the SoSS promotions panel is very vigilant and rigorous in this regard and SoSS is ahead of the rest of the Faculty on gender and BAME.

In addition, the new SoSS will take the University's 'Dignity at Work and Study' policy very seriously as does the current SoSS.

Will we have continuity of professional services (PS) staff for teaching support/library, etc?

T&L PS staff will remain in Williamson. The Research Office is managed by Faculty, not the School, and so out of our control.

Will we be changing location?

There will be no significant changes next year but this may change in the future, for example one department or unit may ‘swap’ location with another. The HoS is planning to have office hours in the Williamson building the exact times will be subject to his diary.

What changes might there be to our teaching model in the longer term? Will we have control over our own teaching model (to continue as we are)?

Teaching models are largely determined by the departments, with advice from the Teaching and Learning Director and Committee. However, if it were an over-burdensome model for staff it would be reviewed. Likewise, if the contribution analysis showed that a particular department was not meeting its targets for student numbers or contact with students this would also be reviewed.

What PGR scholarships will we/our students be able to apply for? (School scholarships).

For 2019/20 numbers will be in line with the School of Law budget for scholarships. However, depending on demand from the other existing departments within new SoSS there may well be some reallocation. Quality is the main driver in offering School PGR scholarships.

What will happen to fixed term contract staff?

They will be renewed on a needs basis, for example to cover student numbers and necessary modules.

Could you tell us something about the proportion of sole carers? If we need to make up for budget, how are we going to accommodate those with caring responsibilities? At the moment we are just very collegial about it. How will this be managed?

SoSS is a very collegial School and teaching time is managed by departments - parity is also important, but overall we will encourage departments to be flexible.

How does SoSS function? How do the different departments relate to one another? Composition of the School Board?

Departments are fairly autonomous but there is cross collaboration and oversight going on across the School. Every academic and PS member of staff is a member of the School Board which can advise the HoS, there is a HoDs group that collaborates with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Membership of SLT is role-based – made up of School Directors (including Finance, HR etc). It will include a member of Law. School Director roles are advertised across the School when they become available. SLT and HoDs are members of SPRC – the School Policy and Resources Committee.

What will happen to overlapping courses? Impact on master's programmes (re overlap) eg recruitment, course cutting?

Not immediately but regular audits of modules and content will take place to ensure that there is not a high level of duplication, in addition it may make sense where the topics are similar to combine under a new title that can be team taught.

Increase in numbers if open in new School. Do they think there will be an influx? Do we have to open courses? Will it affect library in terms of resources? Will it affect website issues?

Student intake will be managed according to the targets already set as best we can ie there is no plan to increase student numbers – but external pressures on the sector as a whole – eg Augar may or may not result in taking more overseas students. Ideally, some current Law and SoSS modules could be offered as options on a wider range of programmes where there is capacity to do so. There is nothing to stop staff proposing new cross-school or specialist courses if they wish to. These would be considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee. In addition to this there is currently a push across the University to increase online and blended learning course, but University of Manchester Worldwide is managing this, and it is resource dependent.

Does the School Committee reflect the size of units?

SLT is role based, Law and Criminology will be represented, HoDs collaborate with SLT, and on SPRC large departments may have two representatives, small ones may have one representative.

Will Hubs budgets change?

SoSS has department Budgets so the HoD will decide whether money will be allocated for the Hubs out of this.

How long will we be given to get up to the target students (e.g. REF, TEF, Times Higher, etc)?

A plan will be agreed with the new HoD, who I am sure will consult with staff on this. All targets would be expected to be SMART. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)

Could you tell us more about the Student Experience budget?

Departments are given some money for student experience (£35 per student roughly) for single honours students. We also have a central pot to cover our cross department large programmes BAEC, BASS, PPE.

Criminology specific questions:

Is there still funding available for visiting/guest lecturers?

The Criminology budget can be used for this, so it is up to the HoD in consultation with the department to determine priorities for the department and resources used.

What might happen if similar courses are taught in Criminology to other departments? Will there be some rationalisation?

Not immediately but regular audits of modules and content take place to ensure that there is not a high level of duplication, in addition it may make sense where the topics are similar to combine under a new title that can be team taught.

How is it decided which staff will be in the Criminology Team?

This is based on job titles but this is not set in stone. We will work with the new HoDs to decide this and also consider the budget.