

School of Social Sciences Staff Bulletin January 2019



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Head of School Update

Since the last bulletin Heads of School were invited to a meeting to introduce a first draft of the University's post-2020 Strategic Vision, to hear about the University's financial position and to consider the possible implications of reduced fees.

Reduced fees as well as the current climate of negativity about Universities (especially about staff-student contact time) means that we must continue to work hard at providing an excellent student experience, and engaging with students. The expectation is that all lecturing staff who are not on agreed research leave be present in the University for 3 days a week.

Focussing our efforts on enhancing student experience does not mean that we need to neglect our research. Staff on teaching and research (T/R) contracts have 40% of their time allocated for research during teaching time.

We recently discussed the School's research strategy with the Vice-President for Research and her team. Despite our best efforts in supporting top-quality research outputs and grant applications over the last four years, we still fall short of our aims in some areas, especially in research income. The expectation is that T/R colleagues who do not currently have a research grant submit a high quality application (as judged by their peers) to an external funder every three years (exceptions must be agreed with the Head of Department).

We recently completed a first draft of the School budget for 2019-20 which was considered by the Faculty Leadership Team. We may be asked to make some savings when the Faculty budget is considered at the broader University level.

We are now working on the School's mid-year review and its strategic plan for 2019-20.

We currently have two new Presidential Research Fellows advertised in the School.

The proposal for the SoSS merger with Law, which is supported by the Faculty Leadership Team will be considered by Senate in February.

Brian Heaphy, Head of School of Social Sciences

TEACHING & LEARNING

School Director, Ken Clark

NSS 2019

The National Student Survey 2019 opens to students on Monday 28th January and runs until April 30th. Completing the survey provides students with the opportunity to let us know what they think about the quality of teaching, academic and personal support and resources enabling the University to maintain our strengths as well as improve the student experience. All colleagues with student-facing responsibilities are encouraged to support our efforts to achieve a high response rate. There will be specific actions co-ordinated by Departmental UG leads but third year lecturers will be asked to publicise the survey in classes. Given low response rates in recent years and because subject-level TEF will take a weighted average of three years' NSS in computing the metrics used to judge our teaching, it is particularly important to get out the vote this year. Importantly: **there is no Student Union boycott of the survey in 2019.**

Feeding back on Unit Surveys (Closing the Loop)

The School would like all module convenors to respond to students' unit survey feedback on their modules. Evidence suggests that students value the opportunities that we give them to tell us about their teaching but that we are not good at explaining what use we make of such evidence. (This might explain why it's hard to get high response rates on the Unit Surveys.) There is no need to respond to every comment or to quote quantitative evidence and colleagues should avoid being defensive about negative comments however it is important that students feel that they are being heard and that their comments, positive, negative or neutral are considered. There will be local guidance from your T&L leads on how to approach this. After the first semester exams would be good time to send these communications via email or Blackboard.

Sharing Good T&L Practice from Politics

At the 23rd January School Board, Carl Death, Undergraduate Director in Politics discussed some of the ways in which he and colleagues had improved the student learning experience on Politics programmes. Carl discussed how they have developed and grown a UG conference, now in its fifth year, which has up to 50 students attending. Last year the event was also combined with a dissertation preparation session for second years and it also functions as an end-of-year social. There has also been extremely positive feedback from those participating, and most Politics students are aware of it. The Department also finances a student-led politics journal, [Juncture](#), where students publish essays.

The Department has also focusing on sharing ideas around pedagogy, improving the training of TAs, appointing Teaching Associates with a role in training, mentoring and pedagogy, introducing new moderation guidelines to encourage use of the full range of marks, providing pre-assignment preparation for students in tutorials and lectures and providing shorter feedback which is focused on ways to improve (feedforward). The Department also has a very wide range of diverse and innovative forms of assessment (well beyond coursework essays and exams), as well as other innovations such as combined lectures and tutorials (workshops), class trips, etc.

As Carl puts it, "All of this depends upon, and stems from, the culture of enthusiasm for teaching and creativity amongst my colleagues in the politics staff. The core of 'the student experience' is high quality teachers with passion for their subjects, and this comes through very strongly in the unit survey responses we get from students. As part of this, we have had lots of discussions about what 'decolonising the curriculum' means for politics teaching, as well as agendas around gender, race, class, privilege, ethics and so on."

Carl is on sabbatical in semester 2: the School is grateful for his contribution to the Board and for his work on Politics T&L matters.

Distinguished Achievement Award – PGT Student of the Year

This award was won by Elizabeth Ackerley, a Masters student in Sociology. Her prize citation read: "Elizabeth achieved the highest Masters grade in her cohort of 37 Sociology students. Her dissertation was a highly original examination of organisations that combat sexual violence, focused on what it means to be a young female activist against the contemporary backdrop of the #MeToo movement. Her dissertation is a testament to her commitment to fight social injustices both within and outside academia. Elizabeth also excelled in her contribution to the life of the University as a student representative, where her enthusiasm for intellectual endeavour was matched by her desire to ensure that the student experience

was as positive as possible for her peers, and where she combined student advocacy with her organisational skills in establishing a peer-led student workshop.” The School expresses thanks to those colleagues in Sociology who contribute to the process of nominating Elizabeth.

Training Opportunity I – Academic Advising

A reminder that an online module for academic advisors is available: <https://app.manchester.ac.uk/training/profile.aspx?unitid=8136&parentid=183&returnid=183>

Training Opportunity II - Learning for All

The Staff Learning and Development team will be hosting a one-hour webinar on Thursday 31 January at 1pm. The aim of the session is to help you unlock your learning potential and learn how to use this in a practical way in your role, personal life and to support your career. Please visit the Learning for All webpage for more details.

Training Opportunity III - Evidencing excellence in teaching

Across the University and nationally there are awards available to demonstrate and evidence your expertise in teaching and learning and enhancement of student experience. On Tuesday 9 April 2019 between 10am and 12pm a University-wide event will explore these awards in more detail. Specifically the session will look at award criteria and extracts from successful applications, and offer support in capturing and evidencing teaching excellence and applying for awards, grants and fellowships. There will be a focus on LEAP fellowship applications, promotions, and evidencing externally. Click here for more details and to enrol.

RESEARCH NEWS

School Director, Claire Alexander

Research Office Staffing:

- We are delighted to welcome Patricia Gorham to the School Research Office. Pat is taking over from Gillian as the Research Support Manager for the next two years. Pat was previously Research Support Manager for MIE (SEED) and Secretary to UREC committee working with Chair of Ethics Oversight Committee. She has ten years Research Support experience within FSE and Humanities Faculties working with institutes and large grant applications and awards.
- Gillian has been seconded to a new role of REF Manager for the next two years, supporting the School Research Director and REF UoA leads in their preparations for REF2021. Gillian has extensive knowledge and experience of the previous REF and RAE exercises and we are delighted to have her on board.
- We would like to welcome Rebecca (Becci) Bailey to her new role as Research Support Officer. Becci will be working primarily with Social Anthropology and Social Statistics.
- A further RSO, Neil Chetham, will be arriving on 1st March. Neil will be working with Economics and Politics.

REF/RRE:

This year's RRE round closes on 31st January 2019. To date, just over half of staff have updated their RRE tab on PURE. Please make sure you have all updated your PURE profile, and nominated any new outputs for review.

Awards:

Congratulations to the following people who have recently received new grant awards:

Olga Onuch (Politics), ESRC/ORF 'Mobilize'

Louise Thompson (Politics), ESRC "Small parties in the UK"

Jeanette Edwards (Anthropology), ESRC "Left Behind places: Everyday hopes and Fears"

Small Grants Competition

The second round of the School's 2018-19 SOSS small grants internal competition is now live. The funds are designed to support new and ongoing research activity in relation to grant preparation, networks and collaboration (including internationalisation) or impact and engagement activity by academic staff.

The fund will offer small grants of up to £2000.

Criteria:

- Personal Research Funds must be used to fund these activities in the first instance, the awards can be applied for where PRF have been allocated to other activities;
- The awards are open to all full and part-time academic staff;
- Staff with fixed-term contracts that extend throughout the period of the award are also eligible;
- Only one application may be made per person per year;
- Ineligible costs: staff time, conference travel;
- Proposals that include match funding (from the DA or other sources) are encouraged;
- Heads of department must be informed of any applications to this call;
- Funds **must** be spent before 31 July 2019.
- **Deadline for applications: noon on 4th February 2019.**

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme

Deadline: compulsory **EoI to be submitted to UKRI by 2nd May 2019** (to be submitted by the institution on behalf of the candidate)

UK Research and Innovation recently launched its new Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme (FLF). This scheme aims to develop, retain, attract and sustain research and innovation

talent in the UK. Providing up to seven years of funding, for at least 550 early-career researchers and innovators, the scheme will tackle difficult and novel challenges.

This is the third of six calls over the next three financial years, typically awarding 100 fellowships per round with no discipline quotas. The majority of these Fellowships will run for seven years (with a major review after 4 years to approve continuation funding). The third call opens on Je-S on 2nd April 2019 and has a compulsory EoI deadline of 2nd May 2019. The School of Social Sciences will support **one** application to this call.

If you wish to be considered for this, please submit an **Intention To Bid** to patricia.a.gorham@manchester.ac.uk by **18th March 2019** to comprise:

- Name of anticipated host discipline
- Applicant's 2 page CV (on the attached template)
- A note of primary area of interest (200 characters) and research focus (2000 characters)
- Draft Case for Support (see [guidance on completing application form](#) for details of requirements)

Please do get in touch if you have any questions about this call.

Training:

There will be a Research Support Advice Drop-In Session on 12th March 2019, from 10am-12pm. This event is to provide guidance and support to any member of staff considering grant applications.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

School Director, Stuart Shields

MDC Excellence Awards

We've already had the nominations for the DAA PGR Student of the Year 2018/19. They've been submitted to MDC.

Now we have the next stage and the remainder of the MDC Excellence Awards: MDC Awards

- Best Outstanding Output - one award per Faculty
- Best Contribution to PGR Environment – one overall award
- Best Contribution to Society – one overall award
- Best Contribution to Internationalisation – one overall award
- Best Supervisor of the Year – one award per Faculty

The School deadline for submission of nominations by Dept's PGR Directors to Bernadette O'Connor is 6th March. Further details of the awards, including the criteria against which nominations are judged, the process, and full timetable is available from your Departmental PGR Director or from Bernadette O'Connor.

Unconscious Bias Training

A reminder that there will be an unconscious bias 'training' session ('Implicit Bias: What it is and What to do About It') for SoSS staff (academic, PS and teaching assistants) and PGRs on WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY, 3.00-4.30pm, in Kilburn Lecture Theatre 1.1. If you would like to attend, please register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/soss-unconscious-bias-training-tickets-54910727464>.

AIG Travel Assistance

Staff are encouraged to register on the site or download the app to your phone prior to travel. The AIG Travel Assistance offers useful information and tips to ensure your safety whilst travelling. You can also sign up to receive destination specific travel alerts to keep you informed of the latest security and travel incidents that might affect your trip.

Any University member can register themselves to this site or download the app to their phone using the policy number 0010015245. <https://travelguard.secure.force.com/TravelAssistance/>

SoSS PS Christmas Lunch, Browns, 19 December 2018

The PS went out for Xmas lunch on 19th December. A good time was had by all, as is evidenced by the photos below. Many thanks to Michelle Kelly for organising.





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[Staff Bulletins](#)

