

DECEMBER 2019

# TLSD Academic Development and Policy Bulletin



Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development

## 1. TLSD policies, procedures and website

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### Student surveys 2019/20

Please consult The TLSD webpages for an updated [schedule of teaching and learning surveys](#) taking place during 2019/20.

- **NSS launches 27 January 2020**

**This year's NSS will run from 27<sup>th</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> April and as always we need help from colleagues in Schools to promote the survey to final year undergraduates.**

The University places significant importance on the feedback from students to enable us to understand where we are performing well and help us to identify areas where change or improvements are needed. Completing the NSS gives students 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.

- **Helping to promote the NSS to students**

As you know we can only view and publicise our NSS data if we meet the 50% threshold, and so we need all staff in regular contact with students to actively contribute towards meeting this target.

There will be communications from both central teams and IPSOS Mori, but evidence shows that students respond more favourably to requests to complete the survey from people they know, such as their lecturers, dissertation supervisors and School administrators, so we would be grateful for your support in actively promoting the survey and engaging students.



## 1. TLSO policies, procedures and website (continued)

- **Student surveys 2019/20 (continued)**

Schools will be sent posters and postcards in the New Year to be displayed throughout the survey period. We are currently updating NSS content on [the TLSD webpages](#) where you will also be able to download digital assets (including images for digital screens, social media and email footers), as well as find guidance and information on helping to promote the NSS – including information on inappropriate influence. Please take a couple of minutes to read over the information or ask colleagues with contact with students to do so.

You will also find a Communications Plan that includes central and IPSOS MORI communications so you are aware of what students are receiving when.

### University Incentives

This year, the University will again be offering a prize draw for those participating in the survey, with ten £400 Amazon vouchers to be won. **To encourage early completion this draw will close on midnight 29 February 2020 – much earlier than the end of the survey period.**

**Please mention this to students as a potential reward for early engagement and completion.**

In addition, the University will also be taking the opportunity to give something back to our community and for each survey response will donate £1 to be split between four charities chosen for their alignment with our Social Responsibility goals and because they have a strong tradition in working with our students. We will share our chosen charities in the New Year once they have been selected in conjunction with our UMSU Executive Team.

More information can be found on [the TLSD webpages](#) and terms and conditions are available on the [Your Say](#) pages for students.



Key information relating to our taught teaching and learning surveys is circulated via: STUDENT-SURVEY-INFORMATION. To be added to this listserv account please contact [studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk)

If you require key information about research survey activity, such as PRES, please contact [claire.faichnie@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:claire.faichnie@manchester.ac.uk)

## 2. The Annual Review of Teaching and Learning (ARTL)

A specially extended meeting of the Teaching and Learning Engagement Forum (TLEF: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/teaching-and-learning-groups/>) (known as the Annual Review of Teaching and Learning) took place on Monday 09 December at the Crowne Plaza Manchester hotel, located at the heart of our campus and adjoining our Executive Education Centre.

The Annual Review of Teaching and Learning is important for us in terms of providing assurance to Senate and the Board of Governors on our policies, procedures and structures for the support and enhancement of teaching and learning. It is the culmination of the continuous monitoring of programmes in the University with an emphasis on self-review and action planning. During the event Faculty Vice Deans and School Directors of Teaching and Learning present Faculty action plans based upon emerging themes, strategic issues and matters of good practice as reported in the Student Experience Action Plans (SEAPs).

The day also provided an opportunity for the newly established Teaching and Learning Engagement Forum to come together with our new Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students, Professor April McMahon to discuss future plans that will articulate our key teaching and learning priorities as part of the University's new strategic vision called 'Our Future': <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/our-future/future-strategy/>.



## 3. The Peer Support programme

It has been a fantastic month in Peer Support and all schemes are trundling along nicely. They have all started to run really fun and engaging sessions for their students, many of which have begun to take on a more festive feel! Civil Engineering took their PASS cohort ice skating, whilst Fashion Business held a scheme wide festive session, complete with mince pies and music! Other schemes are facilitating a variety of essay workshops, careers talks, and even a volunteering session from Geography to help encourage their attendees to get out into the community! Meanwhile in the office, we have been busy setting up some of our own opportunities and festive fun...

### 3. The Peer Support programme (continued)

#### PwC Masterclass

A few weeks ago, 31 Peer Support students, and a mix of Peer Mentors, PASS Leaders and Student Coordinators, had the excellent opportunity to visit the professional services firm, PwC, for a Masterclass. This entailed learning all about the company and what it is like to work there, with advice given on CVs and what employers look for. The masterclass was very popular with our students: we had over 70 very strong applications! In addition to a general introduction to the graduate scheme and summer internships available to students, the students also had a talk from Ghalib Khan, a UoM graduate who works at PwC who used to be a Maths PASS Leader.

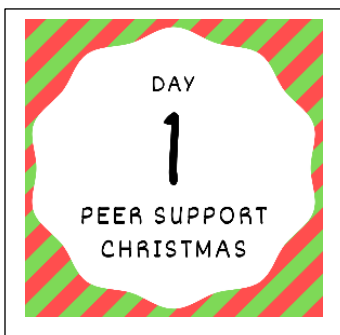


Figure 1- PwC Masterclass, Ghalib

The students were reminded about all of the soft skills they are developing in their Peer Support role, and how they can describe and explain these skill in interviews. Overall, an engaging and very useful evening!

#### The 12 Days of Peer Support Christmas

Launched last week, Peer Support are running their very own interactive Advent Calendar on Instagram! For the next twelve days we will be releasing little tips, tricks, and insights into Peer Support for all our followers, in hopes that we can encourage some good habits in our PASS and Mentoring sessions. The first day of Christmas featured 'How to Set up a Room', accompanied by a video by some of our very own interns. This stemmed from some of our Observations Feedback, through which we found lots of sessions weren't taking the time to move their tables around. This can be a huge advantage when it comes to helping a session be more engaging and inclusive, and so we hope by highlighting it through this venture we will see more of it in the future. The second day of Christmas will show some ice-breaker inspiration, and the third some great ideas to include in debriefs.



To get us even further into the Christmas spirit, we are also hosting our annual Peer Support Christmas Quiz this Wednesday. We hope to see lots of students turning up to eat, quiz, and be merry!

This month promises to be a really fun and festive one, and we are all very excited not only for the events we have planned with Peer Support, but also the ones across the department!

Merry Christmas!



## 4. Success for University undergraduates at prestigious awards

Two students from The University of Manchester have won the highest award possible at this year's prestigious [Undergraduate Awards](#) in Dublin, Ireland.

Aayush Chadha and Stefan Pricopie were the Global Winners in the Engineering and Economics categories, respectively. They took home the [Thomas Clarkson Gold Medal](#) for their academic research and presentations, while fellow University student Samanyou Garg was the Regional Winner in the Computer Science category.

Aayush won his award for his final year project, "BLINK: Detecting, Analysing and Storing Eye Blinks". He developed a system to detect and track eye blinking, with applications in monitoring Parkinson's disease.

His work brings together his background in computer science, with elements of physics, health, and engineering. The sensor was built using graphene, because "it is very conductive and very sensitive", says Aayush. It was then connected to a data storage device, where the data could be processed to identify blink characteristics such as frequency.



Speaking about his project, Aayush said; "While the project had elements that directly applied knowledge of Computer Science, most of the work required a good understanding of the physics involved, which was something I had to build up as I went along."

He added; "Thankfully, I had great support from my supervisory team, Prof Thomas Thomson and Dr Gregory Auton!"

Samanyou won his award for a project on facial recognition in groups of people.

"Automatic facial emotion recognition is a challenging task that had gained significant scientific interest," Samanyou explains, "but the problem of emotion recognition for a group of people has been less extensively studied."

## 4. Success for University undergraduates at prestigious awards (continued)

Samanyou's project aimed to overcome some of the problems faced in group recognition, such as head and body pose variations, variable lighting conditions, and variable image quality. He used a dataset of more than 10,000 images to train recognition models, using a hybrid machine learning system that incorporated deep neural networks and Bayesian classifiers."

"Receiving the Undergraduate Award is an absolute honour for me. Being recognised by UA for the work that I put in is so very special to me, as it means that my work had some meaningful impact and motivates me to work even harder."

*Mr Samanyou Garg, Undergraduate Award winner (Computer Science)*

Remarking on the significance of his achievement, Aayush said; "The Undergraduate Award means a much more widespread recognition of the idea's merit, and its potential to be useful in the future. For a long time, eye blinking wasn't looked at actively as a potential biomarker for tracking Parkinson's disease, something which may now change."

Similarly, Samanyou said; "Receiving the Undergraduate Award is an absolute honour for me. Being recognised by UA for the work that I put in is so very special to me, as it means that my work had some meaningful impact and motivates me to work even harder."

The students attended a three-day summit in Dublin, where they were presented with their awards, as well as the opportunity to network with other winners and nominees. "I was able to meet people working on similar subjects," said Aayush, adding; "Not only did that allow me to look at some of the problems I encountered from another perspective, but it also meant that I now have valuable contacts to reach out to in case I want to collaborate, or understand something about my research topic that doesn't exactly fall in the purview of my project."

The full list of Undergraduate Award winners from the University is:

- Global Winner – Aayush Chadha (Engineering)
- Global Winner – Stefan Pricopie (Economics)
- Regional Winner – Samanyou Garg (Computer Science)
- Highly Commended – Andrej Ivanon (Computer Science)
- Highly Commended – Igor Wodiany (Computer Science)
- Highly Commended – Matthew Caine (Politics and International Relations)
- Highly Commended – Otilia Vintu (Anthropology and Cultural Studies)

## 5. Contact

If you are aware of other staff members who would like to be added to the Academic Development and Policy TLSD Bulletin mailing list to receive future editions of the Bulletin, please contact Miriam Graham (email [m.graham@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:m.graham@manchester.ac.uk)).

If you are from a Collaborative Partner and you are having difficulties accessing any of the linked documents or web pages, please also contact Miriam Graham ([m.graham@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:m.graham@manchester.ac.uk)).

The Academic Development and Policy/Peer Support area of the TLSD website is available at: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/>

To find out more information about the Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development, please visit: <http://www.dse.manchester.ac.uk/our-directorate/tlso/>

*Wishing you a very happy, peaceful Christmas  
and New Year period!*



The University's Christmas e-card can be found at:  
<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/greetings-card/>

**Send Season's Greetings - festive,  
free and environmentally friendly**

