

School of Social Sciences Staff Bulletin

February/March 2020



[Read the President's Weekly Update Here](#)

[Humanities eNews](#)

Welcome to this month's Staff Bulletin.
In this issue:

- ❖ *Head of School Update*
- ❖ *Teaching & Learning News*
 - Student Surveys*
 - Exam Marks and Academic Advising*
- ❖ *Research News*
 - REF Progress*
 - Awards*
 - Making a Difference Awards*
 - Philip Leverhulme Competition*
 - Research Fish*

Head of School Update

Dear Colleagues

Up to the time of writing, in addition to our everyday activities there are four issues that we have been dealing or grappling with: the possible implications of the coronavirus; how to mediate the impact of the strike on students' anxieties; the reconfiguration of the PS staff structure for Recruitment and Admissions staff in line with the introduction of the Student Experience Programme (SEP); and the School budgeting process.

In terms of the coronavirus, like the rest of the University we are currently open for 'business as usual'. Unless informed otherwise in the future, all colleagues and students are expected attend to their teaching and learning activities as normal (unless of course they have been advised not to attend by the NHS).

Information for students is available and regularly updated at: <https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/03/06/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/>

Information for staff is available and regularly updated at the [coronavirus website](#)

As far as the strike is concerned, thanks again to colleagues who have and have not participated in the action for the mutually respectful way in which they have conducted themselves throughout. As we expected students have generally been well-tempered during the strike, but a considerable number have expressed their anxieties about progression and completion of their studies, as well as concerns about how they will meet the expectations set for passing courses and their preparedness for assessment. I know colleagues will do their best to minimise these anxieties and worries.

Student Recruitment and Admissions colleagues were recently informed of the implications of SEP for the reorganisation of the staff structure in that area, which inevitably leads to concerns about current positions and roles. This is a testing time for these colleagues, and I ask that academic and other PS colleagues be sensitive to this.

Finally, the School Leadership Team and many Heads of Departments attended our Performance and Budget Planning Meeting with the Faculty, where we spoke about our achievements and challenges so far this year, and presented our draft budget for next year and the following four years. It was an opportunity to highlight the excellent staff we have in our School, how we consistently achieve our objectives and targets, and what resources we need to maintain our excellence. As always, there are financial challenges we will have to face, not least the potential impact of the coronavirus on student recruitment.

Given the talent, energy and creativity that exists within our School we are well-placed to meet the challenges ahead.

Brian Heaphy, Head of School of Social Sciences

Student Surveys

The NSS is now open – thanks to all those who are promoting it to students. The University response rate is 32.5%, compared to 23.7% at the same stage last year. SoSS response rate is 31.7%, compared to 18.7% at the same stage last year.

PTES opens on 23rd March until 15th June; communications around promotion will be circulated soon.

Reports on Course Unit Surveys for semester 1 have been produced and some T&L leads have highlighted to me cases of excellent performance in their Departments.

Exam Marks and Academic Advising

First semester exam marks should now be with students and this is the time to arrange meetings with our academic advisees to discuss their progress. Early identification of students with problems is key to their retention and academic success so, if you are an adviser, please make sure to invite your students to meet. In addition to the resources and guidance provided by your Department, please notice that the University provides useful resources available at

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/toolkits/academicadvising/>

REF Progress

We have recently completed a round of meetings on our REF preparations with the VP for Research, Colette Fagan and her team. All of our UoAs are firmly on track for submission in November, and our UoA teams performed strongly in the meetings. Thanks to them, and to Gillian and Clare, for their ongoing hard work.

Awards

Congratulations to:

- Mark Elliot (Social Statistics) and Sophie Woodward (Sociology), National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), ESRC (led by Southampton)
- Ed Fieldhouse and the BES team (Politics) British Election Study, ESRC
- Nicole Martin (Politics), Understanding Society ; 2019 General and European Elections Research Programme, ESRC (led by Essex)
- Debbie Price (Sociology) *Pensions and Divorce: Exploratory analysis of quantitative data*, MICRA/PPI Seedcorn funding.
- Sebastian Bachelet (Anthropology) Mahgreb Action on Displacement and Rights (MADAR), AHRC Network Plus Grant (led by Keele)
- William Shankley (Sociology) DSTL/BAE for a Sandpit Pilot entitled #SharedStories led by the Universities of Lancaster and Liverpool.

Further awards in the recent SoSS Small Grants competition are:

- Luke De Noronha, Sociology
- Liz Richardson, Politics
- John O'Neill, Philosophy

Making a Difference Awards

Congratulations to Hilary Pilkington and Ajmal Hussain (Sociology) who were highly commended for their innovative impact work arising from the DARE project.

Philip Leverhulme Competition

This year's Philip Leverhulme Award Competition will include the following School areas:

- Law - School of Social Sciences (al.researchhub@manchester.ac.uk)
- Philosophy and Theology - School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, in consultation with SoSS as appropriate (salc.research@manchester.ac.uk)
- Sociology and Social Policy - School of Social Sciences (al.researchhub@manchester.ac.uk)

Eligibility: Nominees must hold either a permanent post or a long-term fellowship in a UK institution of higher education or research that would extend beyond the duration of the Philip Leverhulme Prize. Those otherwise without salary are not eligible to be nominated. Nominees should normally have been awarded their doctoral degree not more than ten years prior to the closing date of 18th May 2020. The award date is considered to be the date on which the degree was confirmed by the awarding institution.

Applications will be demand managed as each institution may only submit a maximum of three applications. Outline applications must be sent to al.researchhub@manchester.ac.uk by the 23rd March and a Faculty panel will meet on the 26th March to consider applications.

Please note that SALC is administering the Philosophy and Theology call and applicants should email their outline to salc.research@manchester.ac.uk after discussion with their HoD

Further details: <https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/philip-leverhulme-prizes>

Research Fish

The annual Research Fish submission period for Research Council and other grants has opened with a **closing time of 4PM 12 March 2020**

All PIs should have received an email directly from Research Fish with instructions

Support for PIs using the system is directly available from support@researchfish.com

Failure to complete the submission will result in sanctions being applied by the research councils including but not limited to withdrawal of grant funding and ineligibility to apply for research funding.

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