

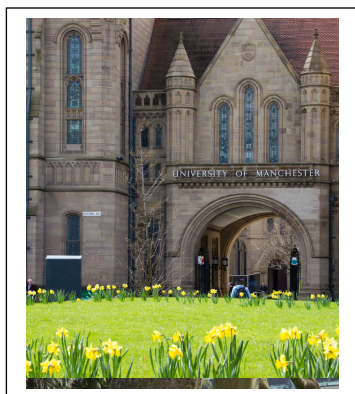
APRIL 2020

TLSD Academic Development and Policy Bulletin

Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development (TLSD)

Inside This Issue

- 1 Staffing news
- 2 New/revised policies and procedures
 - Updates/additional guidance relating to the Coronavirus outbreak
 - How staff can support students in relation to teaching and learning policies/procedures in light of the Coronavirus pandemic: FAQs
 - Guidance on addressing informal complaints arising as a result of industrial action and/or the coronavirus (COVID-19)
- 3 Taught Programme Team update
- 4 Institute of Teaching and Learning
- 5 Peer Support/Student Engagement
- 6 Contact



1. Staffing news

We are pleased to announce that Matthew Oakley has moved from his Student Engagement (Peer Support) Graduate Intern role to a new temporary post as Interim Teaching and Learning Coordinator for the Student Partnership element of the Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL).

2. New/revised policies and procedures

- **Updates/additional guidance relating to the Coronavirus outbreak**

A number of updates or supplementary guidance to some of our existing policies and procedures have recently been issued as a result of the current Coronavirus outbreak. These include the introduction of a new Procedure for Student Self-Certification of Illness, along with an accompanying self-certification form; guidance for students and for staff on mitigating circumstances relating to the outbreak; new arrangements for assessment, to include the new 'no disadvantage' principle; and a new guidance document on student disciplinary hearings.

With regards to mitigating circumstances, the current principle is that students don't need to routinely submit a request for mitigating circumstances to cover the impact of coronavirus, as steps will be taken for all students across all programmes to minimise the academic impact of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Students are advised that they only need to submit a claim for Mitigating Circumstances if their illness or personal circumstances relating to Covid-19 is impacting on their ability to engage with the online learning resources resulting in them being unable to submit any required assessments.

A new webpage has been put in place to house details of these updates/additional policy guidance in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. This can be found at:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/corona-updates/>

2. New/revised policies and procedures (continued)

- **How staff can support students in relation to teaching and learning policies/procedures in light of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic: FAQs**

As part of the above new set of webpages, a list of FAQs has been introduced to assist staff members in dealing with queries regarding how best to support students and enable teaching and learning to continue in the best way possible, and for students to successfully achieve their outcomes. This list is a 'work in progress' and will be added to as time goes on. The FAQs will shortly be available on the webpage noted above: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/corona-updates/>.

- **Guidance on addressing informal complaints arising as a result of industrial action and/or the coronavirus (COVID-19)**

A new brief guidance note has been produced to assist Schools in responding to informal complaints from students as a result of the recent industrial action and/or the coronavirus outbreak. The details are available at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=48837>

3. Taught Programme Team update

- **Maintaining Standards and Quality during Challenging Times**

As we all adjust to working in very different ways I wanted to take this opportunity to thank colleagues for their usual concern to ensure that the value and integrity of our provision, and quality of student experience remains at its best in spite of such challenging circumstances.

QAA have released '[initial guidance on quality and standards](#)' to support HEIs in their response to the challenges posed by Covid-19 using a non-prescriptive flexible approach. A [summary of the QAA guidance](#) is also available. I hope by reading this colleagues will find some reassurance that many of the suggested actions are already underway.

QAA are currently developing detailed thematic guidance around **Academic Standards, Work Based Learning** (including partnerships), **Accelerated Degrees** and **Practice and Lab-based work** which will be [publicly available by 08 April](#). The thematic guidance will be based around models of good practice and written in consultation with a broad range of sector and student bodies.

If there are any particular challenges or issues which you would welcome advice and support from QAA, please get in touch (jo.hicks@manchester.ac.uk). QAA are scheduling bookable online Quality Clinics where additional support is required on specific matters, and/or where a telephone or face-to-face conversation may be needed.

- **PSRBs and Quality**

QAA also hosted an online **PSRB Forum on 2 April 2020**. The Forum was attended by 140 delegates from a range of sector representatives, including the Department for Education, General Optical Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health and Care Professions Council.



3. Taught Programme Team update (continued)

The Forum highlighted that PSRBs across the sector are mobilising at different rates. Increasingly more are now demonstrating flexibility and innovation in adapting their approaches to quality assurance, progression and assessment whilst protecting professional competency standards. For example, emergency standards are being introduced by some PSRBs, whilst some are seeking measures to facilitate a pre-registration emergency register. This will enable early career healthcare students to complete the latter stages of their programme in a front line setting, or by helping to backfill gaps left by their more experienced colleagues redeployed elsewhere.

Douglas Blackstock (Chief Executive of the QAA) has written a useful article [summarising the key points arising from the PSRB Forum](#). Should any colleagues wish to hear more detail about the forum please do contact me (jo.hicks@manchester.ac.uk). A (2 hour) recording of the discussion is available to QAA members.

- **Collaboration and Partnerships**

QAA guidance is that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, they must ensure it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

Our partners (validated provision and joint delivery/award arrangements) have been sent an email alerting them to QAA's latest guidance on maintaining quality and academic standards. They have also been forwarded a copy of a letter sent to all External Examiners from Professor April McMahon (see below) which provides details of our plans for the coming months with regards to delivery, assessment and progression.

TLSD have asked for summary plans regarding the delivery, assessment and progression adjustments in place at each respective provider to ensure that they align with our approach and to ensure consistency in application of our own adjustments for assessment and progression where these followed.

We are also liaising with colleagues in SRID to consider provision for INTO students against NCUK assessment plans, and also to gain an insight into those areas where online learning has not always been recognised so that appropriate learning approaches are in place in those countries where we have collaborative agreements.

HE provision in other countries is also going to be under particular stress at this time and students may be caught up in attempts to leave other countries imposing travel restrictions - others may be unable to do so. Liaison with our partner institutions is crucial with regards to this. Our advice should not supersede measures put in place by local authorities to contain the spread of the virus.

Processes and guidance for managing Institutional Reviews that may be scheduled during remote operational arrangements are being considered and will be shared once details are worked through.

If you have any questions about collaborative provision please email Lisa.Carter@manchester.ac.uk

3. Taught Programme Team update (continued)

- **External Examining**

TLSD are liaising with HR to determine arrangements for making new appointments or extending existing ones, checking right to work documents remotely and to pay fees and expenses. HR are scheduled to publish guidance this week relating to these processes, and following this [External Examiner guidance and FAQs](#) will be updated to reflect interim arrangements.

We are in communication with all External Examiners to keep them informed of circumstances and how this may impact on their role, including sharing a letter from Professor April McMahon which provides further information on our plans for the coming months with regards to delivery, assessment and progression. This letter has also been shared with key Teaching, Learning and Student Experience leads within each Faculty and copies may be requested via the External.Examiners@manchester.ac.uk email address.

It is recognised that each respective Faculty will have their own way of managing such adjustments so questions received from External Examiners specific to local arrangements will be forwarded appropriately.

For any other questions relating to External Examining please contact External.Examiners@manchester.ac.uk in the first instance.

- **Consumer Protection Matters and Covid-19 (including Discover Uni (formerly UNISTATS))**

Both CMA and OfS have published messaging to state that whilst current circumstances and government advice mean providers are likely to need to make changes, consumer protection law continues to apply and contractual terms and conditions for students must remain fair and easily understood and that we abide by these in practice.

It will continue to be necessary for providers to provide clear communication and to notify students about the changes in advance of them taking effect, the reasons for these, the impact the changes are likely to have, and the options available to students to avoid the changes without being adversely affected.

We are able to apply a measure of flexibility and pragmatism to our approach with both bodies stating that they do not intend to take regulatory action unless practices appear likely to constitute a significant breach of consumer protection law.

In this context TLSD are now collating published information for the [Discover Uni \(formerly UNISTATS\)](#) record and would politely ask that if you have not already returned your verification checks, particularly around accreditation information for **2021 entry** then please send to Lisa.Carter@manchester.ac.uk.



3. Taught Programme Team update (continued)

- **Programme Approval**

In response to feedback, the final deadline for TLSD to receive approved new or major amendments to **PGT programmes only is now 31 May**.

The deadline for all new or major amendments to **UG programmes will remain as 31st March** to ensure that we are fully compliant with CMA legislation. For colleague wishing to refresh their knowledge in this area, or for those new to working with published information please do take the time to consult our [CMA guidance and CMA training module](#).

- **Teaching and Learning Surveys**

Initial decisions about teaching and learning surveys are being made to manage the immediate forthcoming period.

We are pausing central promotional communications with students regarding survey activity to avoid exacerbating current pressures and sensitivities, and to provide the space for our students to adjust to circumstances. We would encourage the same arrangements to be replicated in local areas. We are considering other ways that we may capture student feedback in the immediate, and once we have worked through these details colleagues will be updated as soon as possible. For these reasons we would also ask for colleagues to pause requests for TLSD to deploy exceptional unit surveys outside of the core activity below.

Where students may be keen to provide feedback of a nature intended to inform future decisions and improvements, and not where individual or urgent support is required, please do consider other channels too, such as virtual group drop-in sessions, Academic Adviser meetings or virtual SSLCs, and by using Blackboard Collaborate or setting up a Blackboard discussion board. Students can also opt to use student-facing channels too via their programme student representative(s), contacting UMSU and by using peer support systems.

Please do feel free to share with TLSD anything that you think other colleagues may find pertinent either from the feedback received, or in facilitating virtual feedback sessions:

studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk

NSS – IPSOS have announced that they intend to continue with fieldwork until 30 April and in consultation with OfS will look at the data to assess any impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on the results.



PTES 2020 – we have postponed our original 23 March launch date to the last latest launch of 25 May 2020. This will reduce the window the survey is open as we are obligated to close the survey

on 15 June but we hope this will enable us to capture valuable feedback and provide students with a formal opportunity to engage at a point when they will hopefully be better adjusted to circumstances.



3. Taught Programme Team update (continued)

Semester 2 Unit Surveys 2020 – originally scheduled to deploy on 13 April, Unit Surveys have been cancelled in favour of an alternative survey with more focus on how students are getting on with their online experience and adjusted circumstances. The timing, questions and accompanying student communications are currently being decided in consultation with TLG Executive, TLG Student Engagement Sub-Group and Marketing and Communications.



- **Teaching and Learning Engagement Forum (TLEF)**

For information, this Group will next meet on 20 April 2020 at 10am.

4. Institute of Teaching and Learning

- **Online community to support staff with remote teaching and learning: Join and share your expertise and skills in online learning**

A new [Yammer Group - Teaching & Learning Online Network \(TALON\)](#) – has been set up by the Institute of Teaching and Learning for staff to share their skills and expertise in online learning. It also offers a forum for colleagues to share tips and guidance that they have found helpful. If you have a 'how to' question relating to online delivery, please join the group and ask the members for help.

This resource will supplement the Guidance for Online Teaching and Learning, provided for staff on the [TLSD webpages](#).

We'd like to thank those who have already volunteered to help support colleagues with online teaching and learning. If you would like to volunteer, please email: teaching.learning@manchester.ac.uk and tell us about your areas of expertise.



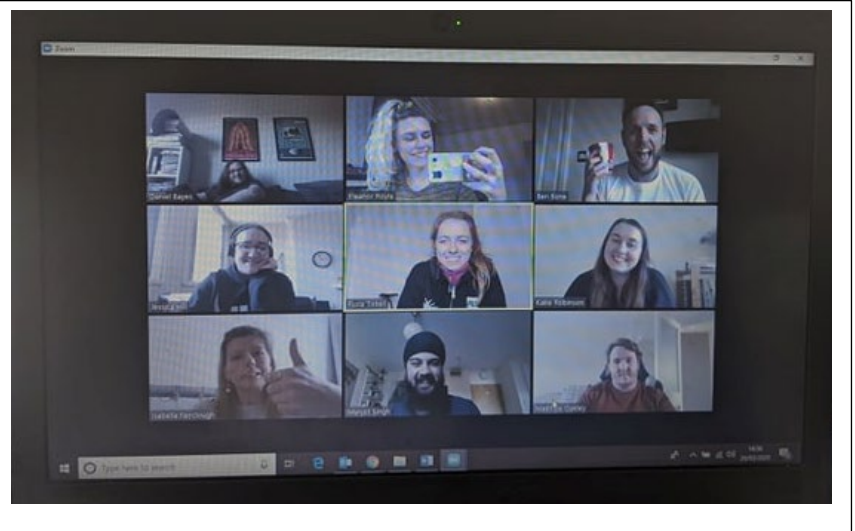
5. Peer Support/Student Engagement

Since the recent, rather significant change to our working (and home) lives, the Peer Support team has been working diligently to continue to support our students from home. The University made the decision to shut down face-to-face interactions during one of our key period of the academic year- training period! During these months, we are typically running training sessions a day to around 40 students at a time. Thus, our initial priority has been discussing how we can move these training sessions online!

Our team have been having multiple Zoom meetings, bouncing ideas off each other in order to decide on the best way to react to the situation. At the moment, the team is in smaller working groups- not only to discuss how we can transfer our current training sessions onto perhaps Blackboard, but to flesh out how we want to move forwards with our training in the future! There has been lots of exciting discussions surrounding how we can make our training more efficient, whether there is space to move some things online permanently, and how we can do all this from our separate homes!

Unfortunately, we have had to make the decision to cancel our typical Celebration Evening this year. But please don't delete it from your diaries just yet! The team is thinking up a storm, trying to

We have been making sure to have tea breaks and non-work related chats over Zoom too, to keep the human contact. There are also multiple Slack chats happening- different subjects equal different threads and we keep everyone up to date with projects we are working on! Our Social Media presence is bigger than ever, with uom_peersupport currently posting some work-from-home vlogs by our very own interns! We hope everyone else is finding ways to work from home that work for them!



6. Contact

If you are aware of other staff members who would like to be added to the ADP Bulletin mailing list to receive future editions of the Bulletin, please contact Miriam Graham (email 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.

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