

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

TLSD Academic Development and Policy Bulletin

Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development (TLSD)



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1. New/revised policies or procedures

- **Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Malpractice**

This guidance document has been updated to include a reference to contract cheating:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2870>.

The associated guidance for teaching staff is being reconsidered with further guidance in preparation from the Institute of Teaching and Learning, including a new Contract Cheating Toolkit. Details of this will be published when it is available.

The [Academic Malpractice Procedure](#) (owned by the Division of Campus Life) is the definitive University procedure for dealing with cases of suspected academic malpractice, which staff members should refer to if they have any concerns about possible student academic misconduct.

- **Updated guidance on Mitigating Circumstances and Self-Certification of Absence, Semester 1, 2020/21**

Updates have been made to the [Additional policy guidance in response to the Coronavirus outbreak webpage](#). Following the arrangements that were put in place in spring 2020 to manage the impact of the Covid-19 virus on the volume of students submitting claims for mitigating circumstances, updated guidance has been agreed by the Teaching and Learning Group (TLG) Executive. This guidance mainly relates to the use of [mitigating circumstances](#) and [self-certification of absence from learning](#) for the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

Students only need to consider submitting a claim for mitigating circumstances if their illness or personal circumstances relating to COVID-19 are *directly impacting on their ability to engage with the blended learning resources resulting in them being unable to submit required assessments*. (Such personal circumstances may include caring for dependants or sick members of the student's household and cases where students have not been able to access learning materials for longer than 7 days.)

1. New/revised policies or procedures (continued)

Students are required to submit supporting evidence with any claim for mitigating circumstances, whether this be COVID19 related or for any other reason.

Normally, the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#) does not allow IT failures as grounds for mitigation; however, due to the move to blended learning, certain IT-related circumstances will be accepted. Further guidance around IT failure, equipment or connectivity issues, in relation to students claiming mitigating circumstances, is available at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=51373>

The self-certification of absence procedure has now been extended to include cases where students miss learning opportunities, for up to and including seven days, due to situations such as loss of IT connection or new care responsibilities, in addition to cases of short-term illness. It covers teaching and learning activities, but does not extend to exams or assessment; absence from these activities would be considered under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances.

Students should submit to their School a [Student Self-certification of absence form](#) if they are ill or are unable to engage with study for a period *up to and including seven days*, in relation to teaching and learning activities; the form relates to attendance and engagement and is not part of the mitigating circumstances procedure.

The updated staff guidance can be found at: [Guidance for staff on Mitigating Circumstances and Self-Certification of Absence relating to Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\), Semester 1, 2020/21](#)

Associated guidance for students is available at: [Guidance for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students on Mitigating Circumstances and Self-Certification of Absence relating to Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\), Semester 1, 2020/21](#)

- **New Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees**

A new set of joint procedures has been introduced to cover the award of posthumous and aegrotat degrees for undergraduate and postgraduate students. This is to replace the briefer guidance about the awards of such degrees that has formerly been included in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations. More detailed information has been provided in relation to the award of aegrotat degrees, and the procedures for awarding posthumous degrees has been updated to permit the award of classified degrees. At the same time, the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement has updated its Posthumous and Aegrotat Award of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy so work has taken place to try to ensure that both sets of policy/procedures (covering both undergraduate/postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students) reflect each other, as far as possible.

The new Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees can be found at:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/teaching-and-learning/teaching/posthumous-aegrotat-awards/>



2. Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL)

- **New teaching and learning microsite for campus reopening**

A new teaching and learning microsite has been set up for staff members, to assist in the move back to on campus, face-to-face teaching. The link to the site is available at the top of the main [Staffnet home page](#), and also directly at:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/>

- **New guidance and resources to support staff in teaching and assessment design**

A number of resources to support teaching and assessment for the upcoming academic year have been developed in collaboration with staff across the University, and these have been brought together on the [Institute of Teaching and Learning \(ITL\) website](#).

For further details, please see: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/display/?id=24980>

- **Staff assessment literacy project**

The Institute of Teaching and Learning coordinates and supports a wide range of projects designed to enhance our teaching excellence across the University. Institute Fellows are colleagues from across the University who are working with the Institute on a short-term project that will support the University in achieving its goals in teaching and learning.

One of the projects is looking at staff assessment literacy. Academic colleagues are invited to take part in a survey to capture their views on assessment to inform an understanding of the levels of staff assessment literacy. This survey will feed into the fellowship project with the aim of addressing knowledge and training gaps, as well as improving advice and guidance available to staff.

To take part in the survey, please see:

<https://apps.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/surveys//TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=78K0m7832>

If you do intend to complete the survey, please could you do so by **31st October**.

For questions relating to the survey, please contact Sally.Hickson@manchester.ac.uk.



3. Peer Support/Student Engagement

The First Years are here, and we at Peer Support couldn't be more excited! It's our favourite time of the year as we welcome in brand new student volunteers, staff contacts, and most importantly, this year's cohort of new students.

This year our training period looks a little different to previous years. Once it became apparent students would not be in face-to-face sessions, our team began working to develop training which could be hosted and delivered in a digital format! We have taken a 'flipped classroom' approach of creating asynchronous content for students to learn, and consolidate this learning through running live, role specific training sessions over Zoom. The live sessions allow us to use break-out rooms, interactive whiteboards, menti.com, and quizzes to both reinforce what they've learnt, and learn how to be an effective online Peer Support volunteer! So far, we have trained 84% of our Student Coordinators, 75% of our Peer Mentors, and 56% of all PASS Leaders! Following our newly developed training, 97% of Peer Mentors feel confident in their role as a Peer Mentor, and 97.3% of our PASS Leaders felt they gained a better understanding of how their role will work digitally.



It's also an invaluable learning curve for the team! We're all constantly developing new skills, understanding of the technology and new techniques to run online sessions effectively.

Furthermore, as we enter into the new normal for this Semester, we are bolstering our Student Coordinator's confidence in hosting digital sessions by asking them to take part in delivering the scheme specific final training session! Already, we are seeing students step up and take on the responsibility of facilitating a digital training session, which is fantastic. We can't wait to see how else our students impress us this Semester!

4. Contact

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

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.

