

DECEMBER 2020

TLSD Academic Development and Policy (ADP) Bulletin



Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development

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1. New or updated policies and procedures

- **Arrangements for Mitigating Circumstances for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year**

Temporary arrangements 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 by temporarily removing the requirement to provide evidence for illness and introducing a step prior to mitigating circumstances submission which allowed students to self-certify for illness for a period up to and including seven days.

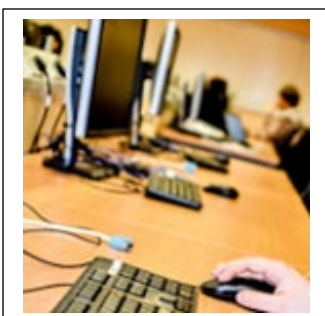
Further updated arrangements have now been agreed by the Teaching and Learning Group (TLG) in relation to the use of mitigating circumstances and self-certification for the 2020/21 academic year. Full details can be found [online](#) but a summary of the main updates is below:

- Self-certification of absence forms should be considered by Mitigating Circumstances panels as an acceptable form of evidence, if appropriate; however, students are advised that their claim for mitigating circumstances would be strengthened if they also had additional supporting evidence;
- Certain IT-related circumstances can be accepted as a ground for mitigating circumstances;
- Examples of the various types of evidence that students can submit for different scenarios are provided.

The Academic Development and Policy (ADP) website includes a page on '[additional policy guidance in response to the Coronavirus outbreak](#)'.

An updated note about the current arrangements for mitigating circumstances can be found on the main Policy on Mitigating Circumstances webpage on the [TLSD ADP website](#). The latest guidance for students is available on the [Student Support website](#).

Heads of School (Teaching, Learning and Student Experience) are requested to circulate this information to their colleagues, to ensure that these messages are passed on to all relevant staff members.



1. New or updated policies and procedures (continued)

- **Safety Guidance for undertaking field courses during Covid-19**

New, temporary guidance has been introduced to cover essential field courses during the Covid-19 pandemic in the 2020/21 academic year, in relation to taught Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes of study. The guidance is linked to from the '[Additional policy guidance in response to the Coronavirus outbreak](#)' webpage, with the direct link to the document available [here](#).

- **Procedure for protecting the interests of students and Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) during 'Exceptional Events'**

The existing 'Procedures for Protecting the Interests of Students in the Event of Strike Action and/or Action Short of a Strike' has been expanded and renamed as 'Procedures for Protecting the Interests of Students and Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) during 'Exceptional Events'. The Procedures were revised to encompass other exceptional events (in addition to strike action) that could take place which could disrupt normal academic processes and procedures, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. The updated document can be found [here](#).

- **Student Protection Plan**

The Student Protection Plan has recently been revised and approved by PRC. Student Protection Plans are a requirement on HEIs from the Office for Students and contain an assessment of risks to continuation of study for students, including measures to mitigate risks and links to refund policy. The recent revisions include updates relating to dates and statistics, web links, and providing more detail. The updated Student Protection Plan can be found [here](#).

- **Degree Outcomes statement webpage**

The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment recommends that every higher education provider across England should publish a Degree Outcomes Statement analysing their degree classification profile and providing the results of an internal institutional review of their arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment of students, academic regulations, and academic governance. The Degree Outcomes statement has now been set up on the following webpage:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/quality/degree-outcomes-statement/>

- **Minor updates to the Undergraduate Degree Regulations and the Postgraduate Degree Regulations**

A new set of [Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees have recently been introduced, which](#) replace information about posthumous and aegrotat degrees that are contained within the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations. Both sets of Degree Regulations have now had minor updates made to them, to remove the wording relating to aegrotat and posthumous degrees, and direct readers instead, to the new Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees, as detailed above, which are more detailed. The updated Degree Regulations can be found on the [ADP website](#).

1. New or updated policies and procedures (continued)

- **Guidance on late submission (to accompany the Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment)**

TLG has agreed a minor update to the wording of the [Guidance on Late Submission](#). The wording in paragraph 5 has been amended from:

“A student who submits work at 1 second past a deadline or later will therefore be subject to a penalty for late submission” to:

“A student who submits work at 1 minute past a deadline or later will therefore be subject to a penalty for late submission.”

This was due to concerns raised about the ‘1 second past the deadline or after’ rule not correlating with how Turnitin/Blackboard displays submission time to both staff and students.

- **Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students**

The Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students is due for review and updating, with work commencing last academic year when the TLG Policy and Guidance subgroup carried out initial discussions and a student focus group was held. The review was put on hold due to being overtaken by other policy priorities relating to the Coronavirus pandemic, however, the plan is to still progress with a full review of the Policy during the current academic year, as priorities allow.

In the meantime, a few revisions have been made to the Policy due to a number of recent queries relating to the existing wording around providing access to students to the feedback they received on their exam scripts/online exams. Paragraphs 16-18 of the Policy have therefore been updated to provide clarification in this area. The updates can be seen on the [ADP website](#).

2. Staffing updates

We are pleased to welcome two new interns in the Institute of Teaching and Learning; Freddie Gent and Linford Butler will be working on the full range of Institute activities.



3. Institute³ of Teaching and Learning (ITL)

- **Applications invited for the 'Leaders in Teaching' Programme 2020/21**

"An excellent course with very good learning opportunities in a wide range of aspects. This has impacted not only on my own approaches, practices and behaviour, but also my relations with others."

Applications are invited for the University's '[Leaders in Teaching](#)' programme 2020/21 (February – July 2021).

The programme is delivered by [Dr Polly Turner](#) and Jamie McDonald ([JMcD Coaching & Development Ltd.](#)) to support academic and professional services staff involved in, or aspiring to, a position of leadership in teaching and learning.

The free, six-month programme covers: Leading change; Communication and Influence; Teams, Culture and Development; Being Well and Strategy, Vision and Goals. The programme also invites participants to inform programme content to ensure it meets their needs.

Participants need to attend seven half-day sessions over the course of 6 months (indicative dates are available on the [Institute for Teaching and Learning website](#)). There are no formal assignments to complete, although there will be short 'homework' tasks to engage with in between sessions.

Applicants are asked to write a brief 250 word statement on why they think the programme would be beneficial to them and their role, and how they plan to cascade the knowledge gained from this course through their area.

Participants will be selected on the basis of their application statement, scope for impact, and with consideration for balance across the three faculties.

"It's is not an exaggeration to say that this course has definitely changed how I behave. I feel I have grown from seeing myself as 'just a lecturer' into a leader in teaching. My self-awareness has improved, as well as my ability to interact, motivate and persuade others."

How to apply

To apply for a place on the programme, please seek approval from your line manager and complete the simple [online application form](#). Note that places on the programme are limited, and will be allocated across the three Faculties. Applications must be submitted by **9pm on Thursday 21 January 2021**.

Further information

- Institute of Teaching and Learning: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/umitl/teaching-development/leaders-in-teaching/>
- Contact: teaching.learning@manchester.ac.uk



4. Student Surveys

- **NSS launches 08 February 2021**

This year's NSS will run from 08 February – 30th 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.

We will shortly be 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.

There will also be 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 vouchers to be won. To encourage early completion this draw will close on midnight 31 March 2021. 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.

We are planning to send a brief poll shortly after returning in the new year to our eligible final year students so they can decide which four charities mean most to them. The short list of charities has been put together in liaison with the Office for Social Responsibility and have been chosen for their alignment with our Social Responsibility goals and a strong tradition in working with our students. We will share the most popular four chosen charities in the new year once students have voted.

For further information, please email studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk

5. Peer Support/Student Engagement

As we continue through the year, the Peer Support team is constantly finding new opportunities to develop. Working from home is becoming the new normal for now, and because of this we are finding new solutions to ensure events still run! For example, the month of November is typically an exciting period for Peer Support, as we come up to our annual SI PASS/PAL Conference. Last year's conference was held in Loughborough, and this year should have taken us to Warwick. However, COVID had other ideas. Despite this, thanks to some really hard work by our colleagues in Peer Support and Sweden, and our 19/20 cohort of interns, the week remained just as full of activities, talks, and inspiration as it always is. We were even able to send six of our own students; albeit, online!

The Festival kicked off on a Sunday evening, introducing the student delegates over Zoom to each other in small groups which they would return to each night. Each day, the festival offered the 80 student delegates from all across Europe a multitude of events to participate during the days. This varied from improvisation sessions, to alumni speakers discussing how PASS fed into their Graduate lives, to our own Graduate Interns running PASS sessions at the end of the day! There were headliner speakers each day, with our very own Ben Bone running a brilliant session on how students can transform their SI PASS sessions.

One off the most enjoyed session was the Improvisation session run by guest Mel Taylor, which boasted 60 minutes of ice-breakers, games, and challenges students and staff alike could partake in, and take to their own sessions. The session was a huge triumph, and we even had one of our Manchester delegates saying they had already tried one of the games they learnt with great success!

Following the headliners, the student delegates would be put into breakout rooms of their small groups, and worked on their project for the week: designing and creating a short game for other delegates to play, based on Strategy Cards used in PASS sessions. When Thursday came, it was competition time. Each group had to play all games, the fastest team to finish being crowned the winner. It was a really positive end to the week, and really reinforced the relationships they had been cultivating in their small groups!

Each day also came with a half an hour 'Fika.' This concept comes to us from slow-living Sweden- a small social break in the afternoon, typically accompanied by coffee. It allowed all attendees of the Festival to come together and discuss their days so far, or anything else which came to mind! It is certainly something we might find happening with more frequency in the Peer Support office...

Overall, the week was a glowing success. A feedback session we ran recently following the Festival was overwhelmingly positive, even suggesting running more during the year in future!



6. 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).

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).

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**

