

The University of Manchester

SENATE

Wednesday, 29 April 2009

Present:

Professor Gilbert (in the Chair)

Drs Allan, Brockhaus-Grand, Professor Brown, Dr Browning, Professors Case, Coombs, Drs Cobb, Cotton, Professor Derrick, Dr Eccles, Professors Esmail, Gaskell, Humphries, Drs Kimber, Kitmitto, Lane-Serff, Professor Li, Drs Lyte, Mellor, McBride, Miss Medforth, Professors North, Perkins, Reece, Rezazadeh, Rubery, Miss Sigley, Dr Schiessl, Professor Stirling, Dr Timmerman, Professor Ulph, Dr Vallely and Professor Vincent (34).

For unreserved business: Mr Jenkinson, Miss Little, Mr Mahalla and Mr Pinfold Students' Union

Invited: Professor Bailey (School of MACE), Professor Gibson (School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering), Professor Gleeson (School of Physics and Astronomy), Professor Luker (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work) and Professor Sutcliffe (School of Chemical and Analytical Sciences).

In attendance: The Registrar and Secretary and the Head of the Student Services Centre.

At the start of the meeting the President and Vice-Chancellor expressed his sadness at the recent death of Professor Ken Green, a colleague in the Manchester Business School and a member of Senate. He also announced that Professor John Perkins, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, would be leaving the University to take up a new post as Provost of the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi.

1. Minutes

Confirmed: the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2009, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) List of attendees Addition of Professor North.
- (b) Agendum 3 Statement by the President and Vice-Chancellor

In the final paragraph

Delete: While it was acknowledged that pension arrangements will be a concern for all staff it was felt that it would be irresponsible to take such a position without full consideration of all the facts and the costs that might be involved.

Insert: While it was acknowledged that pension arrangements will be a concern for all staff the President and Vice-Chancellor said that it would be irresponsible to take such a position without full consideration of all the facts and the costs that might be involved. If and when this information became available there would be a discussion at Senate.

And to note that:

(c) **Agendum 8(a) Closure of courses for the public**

The concern expressed by the member of Senate had not been solely that she had learnt recently of the decision to close Courses for the public but that the decision had not been considered by Senate.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

3. Statement by the President and Vice-Chancellor

The President and Vice-Chancellor provided an oral supplement to his written statement as follows:

- (a) While it had been acknowledged for some time that the external environment in which the University will be operating over the next few years would be dominated by severe and prolonged public funding stringency in the UK it had been anticipated that pressures on public outlays would be postponed until after the next General Election, likely to be held in May 2010. However, the recent tougher than expected Budget Statement had indicated that the requirement for stringency had been bought forward, albeit that the exact effect on the HE sector generally and on the University of Manchester particularly had yet to be clarified. Initial indications were of an 8.4% reduction in funding to the Department of innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) which, despite continuing assertions that this would have no effect on core activity and services, had already translated into reduced funding for the Research Councils of approximately £108m and a cut in HEFCE teaching funds of approximately £400m.
- (b) Although events were moving faster than perhaps had been anticipated there was nothing that had not been foreshadowed. It remained the case that having faced the challenges of building the *2015 Agenda* the University was well placed to face the coming period with confidence and to emerge stronger. The important thing would be to continue to behave strategically and to seek to reduce the emphasis on maximising the University's share of a diminishing stream of public funding and to emphasize instead the building of alternative streams with greater potential for long term growth.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made.

- (a) The University's capacity to make up from different sources of lost revenue would depend in part on the nature and the impact of the cuts imposed so that for example the current pressure from HEFCE on widening participation and additional student numbers might be easier to manage than a reduction in core funding. Colleagues would have to be innovative in their thinking. CPD activity was an area with the potential for growth.
- (b) While the Research Councils had indicated that they would be seeking to improve the effectiveness of research and re-focusing their spend on new research priorities it was not yet clear how this might be implemented or the effect it might have on the University and whether this would result in a shift of funding from the Humanities to the Sciences.
- (c) Internal considerations of greater research selectivity would be approached on a holistic basis to ensure that any relatively weak areas that were core to key activities elsewhere in the University might be strengthened. Furthermore, activities of strategic importance would also require particular consideration.

- (d) It was not possible at this stage to identify specific deadlines and timescales for further reductions in funding but, given that the unprecedented levels of public debt would result in a prolonged period of stringency nationally, colleagues in Faculties and Schools should not be alarmed but should be considering how they might respond in different scenarios and look at options for revenue generation, recognising that additional income earned would make the situation easier. In the meantime, senior management was currently giving careful, measured consideration to everything that could be thought of to strengthen the University's position in the longer term and to ensure, as far as possible, that it would be ready and able to respond in a range of different circumstances once the extent of the external pressures was clear.
- (e) A concern that it was optimistic to think that it would be possible to raise substantial levels of non-government revenue and that there had to be some focus on the ways in which greater efficiency might be achieved.
- (f) The Board of Governors, informed by the Senior Executive Team (SET) and the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC), would be responsible for the decision making required by these circumstances albeit that Senate may need to comment on specific proposals or plans. The President and Vice-Chancellor would be open to requests for an additional meeting of Senate during the next or succeeding session should the situation after a General Election make that necessary.

4. Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)

- (a) Recruitment and admissions data

Noted:

- (i) That while the most recent data from UCAS confirmed that the University of Manchester remains the most popular for undergraduate applications the overall increase of 1% on the previous year compared less favourably with an increase of 5% for the Russell Group as a whole and an increase of 9% for the sector overall. International undergraduate applications had risen by 12% on the same time last year with a most notable increase of 23% in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences.
 - (ii) That taught postgraduate applications had increased by 37% overall on the same point last year. Offers had increased by 38% and acceptances by 39%.
 - (iii) That research postgraduate applications had increased by 12%, offers had increased by 14% and acceptances by 2%.
 - (iv) That the reduction in home undergraduate applications relative to the Russell Group comparators was a cause for concern and, while the reasons for this might vary, the University had to pay close attention to its reputation and positioning within the domestic sector. Notwithstanding this it was anticipated that the home undergraduate targets would be met. Measures would, however, be needed to ensure that targets were not exceeded as required by HEFCE.
 - (v) That where the increased applications from international students were considered to be due, in part, to the weaker pound particular efforts would be concentrated on maximising conversion.
- (b) National Student Survey (NSS) – Progress report

Noted:

- (i) That as at 20 April 2009 63% of final year undergraduates, as compared to 58% in the previous year, had completed the NSS and thereby the minimum threshold for the publication of results at an institutional level had been achieved. The survey would remain open until 30 April 2009.
 - (ii) That in 2008 the University's performance had not compared well with either the Russell Group or the higher education sector as a whole. In a number of areas the level of student satisfaction achieved had left a great deal to be desired. It had to be hoped that the actions taken recently in Schools would make a difference to the results in 2009 albeit that it would take time for some dimensions of this work to take effect. In the longer term it was anticipated that the implementation of the recommendations of the Undergraduate Review would improve the quality of the student experience.
- (c) Review of degree regulations

Noted:

That the Teaching and Learning Group (TLG) had agreed to undertake a thorough review of the University's degree regulations for undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision the terms of reference for which are attached as an *Appendix* to these minutes. Members of Senate were invited to send any comments directly to the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning). (*Action: Members of Senate*)

- (d) Review of Undergraduate Education

Noted:

That there would be a report to the June meeting of Senate outlining progress to date on the implementation of a number of different recommendations arising from the Review of Undergraduate Education. (*Action: Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)*)

During the ensuing discussion some concern was expressed about the review of the University's degree regulations for undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision and a desire to retain sufficient flexibility to allow the exercise of local traditions and practices. A complementary view was that it would not be possible to harmonise the degree regulations without standardised marking practices. While it was acknowledged that some variation might be accommodated circumstances, where candidates with identical marks might achieve different outcomes, could not be supported. The regulations had to be fair to all candidates.

At this point in the meeting the President and Vice-Chancellor thanked Mr Christopher Jenkinson, the outgoing Students' Union Academic Affairs Officer, for his contribution throughout his term of office and to welcome his successor, Miss Katie Little.

5. Vice-President (Research)**Received:**

A copy of the *Research Fortnight* benchmarking league table for 2005-6 to 2007-8 which Professor Gaskell supplemented with a short presentation to the meeting and which is attached to these minutes as *Appendix 2*.

Noted:

- (a) That the table from *Research Fortnight* was based on the premise that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was not the only way to measure research strength and that share of research funding could be used as an alternative.
- (b) That a comparison of universities by research grant income from the individual research councils and two major charities, and excluding the Department of Health, produces a ranking very similar to that to emerge from the results of RAE 2008 i.e., the University of Manchester was 5th behind Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College and UCL. Specifically, the University was the most highly funded by the BBSRC and was ranked 3rd on funding received from the EPSRC but appeared to be underperforming on funding received from the MRC (ranked 8th), from the NERC (ranked 7th) and from the Wellcome Trust (ranked 7th).
- (c) That the University's market share from the Arts and Social Science providers i.e., AHRC, ESRC and the Leverhulme Trust was broadly at the level within the Russell Group that would be expected.
- (d) That, as would be expected, funding from the major funding agencies was concentrated within the Russell Group universities with Oxford and Cambridge performing disproportionately well. It was also the case that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge secured the highest share of funding from the MRC and from the Wellcome Trust.
- (e) That the University had some way to go to achieve the share of funding from the MRC and Wellcome Trust commensurate with its research profile. The evidence was of a pattern of under achievement over a period of time that needed to be fully understood so that strategies could be implemented to improve the situation. To this end the Vice-President (Research) would work with the Vice-President and Deans of the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences and of the Faculty of Life Sciences to agree an action plan that would be reported to Senate in due course. (*Action: Vice-President (Research)*)

6. Associate Vice-President (Graduate Education)

Received:

A paper prepared by the Associate Vice-President (Graduate Education) outlining the background to, and mission, structure and goals of, the Manchester Doctoral College (MDC).

Noted:

- (a) That having originated as an enabling and coordinating structure developed to provide internal coherence and external visibility to those Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) that had been successful in the 2008 EPSRC competition the Manchester Doctoral College (MDC) had developed as an institution-wide facilitating structure to:
 - (i) develop and promote the reputation, branding and distinctiveness of DTC activity at Manchester;
 - (ii) promote interdisciplinarity, share intelligence and practice, and increase efficiency across DTC and related activity;
 - (iii) make a significant contribution to the University's strategic approach to doctoral study in the future through its experience of programmes offered under the DTC model.
- (b) That the MDC Management Committee, chaired by the Associate Vice-President

(Graduate Education) would seek to define and develop the College's goals and priorities over the coming years. To this end its terms of reference were:

- To lead on the formulation, development and implementation of the MDCs strategic and operational plan.
- To monitor the performance of the MDC against the key performance indicators in its strategic and annual operation plan.
- To ensure requirements of external agencies such as the Research Councils and QAA are adhered to across all DTCs.
- To share good practice and facilitate interchange between DTCs.
- To scan the (inter)national horizon for new opportunities and initiatives.

(d) That the goals of the MDC included:

- Offering a harmonised environment for skills training and careers guidance.
- Providing a forum for large events at college level e.g. annual conference, seminar series, lectures from distinguished academics.
- Giving support and direction for individual DTC managers and administrators.
- Reinforcing the strengths of one DTC through the work of other University DTCs.
- Building upon expertise and knowledge acquired from cognate programmes and activities.
- Providing a marketing vehicle for national and international recruitment.
- Identifying and learning from opportunities and initiatives in graduate education wherever in the world they may arise.
- Helping to develop the PGR-related returns to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) or other future research assessment schemes.

7. Annual Report of Appeals, Complaints and Student Discipline Cases for the academic year 2007-08

Received: the annual Report of Appeals, Complaints and Student Discipline Cases for the academic year 2007-08, prepared by the Head of Student Support and Services.

Noted:

- (a) That the University regulations on student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline include the requirement for an annual report to Senate on the number and nature of the cases, and on any general issues raised. The figures reported relate only to formal cases and thus did not include the significant number of cases which were dealt with and/or resolved informally by colleagues in Schools.
- (b) That the procedures for handling cases of academic malpractice among research students were changing and would be dealt with under the Misconduct in Research Procedures so that in future only malpractice which occurred in the taught elements of a research student's programme would be reported. With respect to the current reporting year, however, all cases of alleged academic malpractice (no matter the severity) involving PGR students had been handled by Student Discipline Committee of Senate.

- (c) That a rise in the number of complaints about Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying was of concern and would continue to be monitored. There may be a number of contributing factors to the rise in these complaints: a genuine rise in the incidences of harassment, discrimination or bullying; an increased awareness of the procedure; confidence that a complaint will be handled properly. The proposed introduction of the new Dignity at Work and Study policy and procedures, with access to Harassment Advisers and mediation facilities may help to address this problem.
- (d) That although there had been a small drop in the total number of academic appeals, the number which were made against Examiners' decisions had increased substantially and now formed the majority of academic appeals whereas in 2006/7 academic appeals were split fairly evenly between appeals against exclusion and appeals against the decisions of Boards of Examiners. In 2005/6 there had been 40 appeals against Examiners' decisions. This increased to 98 in 2006/7 and had increased again to 129 in 2007/8. The degree of increase may relate to the introduction, in September 2005, of the new undergraduate degree regulations as the first cohort of students to have studied under these regulations would have graduated in July 2008.
- (e) That the majority of appeals were still made on grounds of mitigating circumstances, but the proportion had reduced since 2006/7 (53% compared to 66% in 2006/7).
- (f) That the majority of academic-related conduct and discipline matters were dealt with by Faculties but across the University two issues stood out: firstly, the number and proportion of academic malpractice cases which involved plagiarism, and secondly, the proportion of these cases which involved PGT students and international students.
- (g) That the statistics showed a substantial increase in the number and proportion of cases of plagiarism compared to previous years with 91% (132) of the conduct and discipline cases in 2007-8 involving plagiarism, compared to 66% (71) in 2006/7 (67% in 2005/6 and 74% in 2004-5.)
- (h) That in 2006/7 62% (71) of plagiarism cases involved PGT students and 49% (56) involved international students. In 2007/8 60% (79) of plagiarism cases involved PGT students and 43% (57) involved international students. International students accounted for 23% of the University student population, and PGT students were 16% of the University student population. These data suggested that there continues to be a need for Schools to ensure that international PGT students, in particular, properly understand academic malpractice and its consequences. More time should also be given during the admission and induction process to ensuring that these students understand the expectations of UK education of them, and are given the opportunity to reflect on how this might be different from they system to which they are accustomed.

During the ensuing discussion it was observed that the report represented a significant volume of work that was being undertaken across the University. The view that more emphasis needed to be placed on support for international students to understand plagiarism was also endorsed. It was reported that there were examples of good practice where colleagues in Schools were tackling this issue so that it had to be hoped that there would be an incremental improvement throughout the University. For the future it would be important to ensure that all practical steps possible were taken to ensure the consistency of the application of the disciplinary procedures across the University. There might also be a case for an impact assessment to be conducted in due course.

8. Recommendation for change to Ordinance XIV

Reported:

That as part of a review of the University's Intellectual Property Policy in respect of students and related matters the University's solicitors, Eversheds LLP, had reviewed Ordinance XIV in conjunction with The University of Manchester Intellectual Property Limited (UMIP). In this context they had recommended that Ordinance XIV 2 be amended to provide greater clarification as follows:

Delete: Members of staff and students shall comply with the University's policy in relation to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) as approved from time to time by the Senate and the Board. In specific instances where this policy may not be applicable, or where its application may be at variance with a particular obligation of a member of staff or a student to a third party, the question of ownership of any IPR generated in such circumstances shall be determined by the prior agreement of those parties having a legitimate interest therein, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board.

Insert: Members of staff and students *are bound by* the University's policy in relation to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) as approved from time to time by the Senate and the Board, *as if it formed part of their contract of employment or student contract and shall comply with it. In specific instances where this policy is at variance with an express provision of the relevant contract of employment or student contract, then the provision in the contract of employment or student contract shall prevail.*

Agreed:

To approve the revised wording for onward transmission to the Board of Governors.

9. Matters for report to Senate

(a) Elections to the Senate from 1 September 2009

The following have been elected with effect from 1 September 2009 to 31 August in the year indicated:

Faculty of Humanities (5 places)

Professor Kersti E Borjars (2012)
 Professor Fiona Devine (2012)
 Professor Maggie Gale (2012)
 Mr Bob Jones (2012)
 Dr Khaleel Malik (2011)

Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences (3 places)

Dr Jose Maria Valderas Martinez (2012)
 Professor Leon Aarons (2012)
 Dr Harbans Lal Sharma (2012)

Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (5 places)

Professor Andrew Masters (2012)
 Professor John Helliwell (2012)
 Dr Douglas Edwards (2012)

Dr Ian Cotton (2012)
 Professor Daniel Kirschen (2011)

Faculty of Life Sciences (2 places)

No nominations were submitted by the appointed date within the Faculty of Life Sciences.

- (b) Report on exercise of delegations on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors.

Promotional Appointments

Acting on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors, and on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, the President and Vice-Chancellor has approved the fast-track promotion of Dr David Lomas from Reader to Professor of Art History with effect from 3 April 2009.

Professorial Appointments

The following appointments have been approved by the President and Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors

Professor Horst Zank, Msc, PhD (Maastricht), previously Reader at the University of Manchester, as Professor of Economics in the School of Social Sciences.

Professor Geraint G Howells, LLB, BVC (Inner Temple), as Professor of Commercial Law in the School of Law.

Professor Nicholas C Yannelis, BA, MA, PhD (Rochester), as Professor of Economic Theory in the School of Social Sciences.

Professor Christopher A Gregory, BCom, MEd, PhD (Cambridge), as Professor of Political and Economic Anthropology in the School of Social Sciences.

Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, BSc, BA, PhD (Cambridge), as Professor of Environmental and Development Economics in the School of Social Sciences.

Professor Michael J Bresnen, BA, PhD (Nottingham) as Professor of Organisation Studies, in the Manchester Business School.

Professor P C Mohan Munasignhe, BA, MA, MA, PhD (McGill), as Director General of the Sustainable Consumption Institute, in the Faculty of Humanities.

Smith Chair in English Language and Medieval Literature

Acting on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors, and on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, the President and Vice-Chancellor has approved the appointment of Professor David Denison, in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures to the Smith Chair in English Language and Medieval Literature, with effect from 1 December 2008.

- (c) Report on exercise of delegations on behalf of Senate.

Acting on behalf of Senate, the members of academic staff of the University listed below have been appointed to the panel of staff from which they may be drawn to serve as a member of the following:

- (i) A Student Discipline Committee or an Appeal Board under the provisions of Regulation XVII *Conduct and Discipline of Students*
- (ii) A Student Complaints Panel under the provisions of Regulation XVIII *Student Complaints Procedure*:
- (iii) An Appeal Panel under the provisions of Regulation XIX *Academic Appeals*

Professor Clive Agnew	School of Environment and Development
Dr Stuart Allan	Faculty of Life Sciences
Ms Kate Barker	Manchester Business School
Professor Mike Birse	School of Physics and Astronomy
Professor Raymond Bishop	School of Physics and Astronomy
Professor Kersti Börjars	School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures
Professor Rodney Brazier	School of Law
Dr Wiebke Brockhaus-Grand	School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures
Dr Philippa K Browning	School of Physics and Astronomy
Dr Christine Bundy	School of Translational Medicine
Professor Maynard Case	Faculty of Life Sciences
Dr Matthew Cobb	Faculty of Life Sciences
Dr Mark Coleman	School of Mathematics
Dr Jeremy Derrick	Faculty of Life Sciences
Dr Peter Eccles	School of Mathematics
Dr Peter Fenn	School of Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering
Professor David Garrod	Faculty of Life Sciences
Professor Tom Gibbons	School of Law
Professor Andrew Gibson	School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Professor Helen Gleeson	School of Physics and Astronomy
Professor John Helliwell	School of Chemistry
Dr Ashraf Kitmitto	School of Translational Medicine
Dr Gregory F Lane-Serff	School of Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering
Professor Karen Luker	School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
Mrs Geraldine Main	School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
Dr Judith McGovern	School of Physics and Astronomy
Ms Sue Medforth	School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
Dr Kevin Munro	School of Psychological Sciences
Professor Gale Owen-Crocker	School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
Professor Richard Patrick	School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences
Dr John Rigby	Manchester Business School
Professor Andrew Sanders	School of Law
Dr Ingo Schiessl	Faculty of Life Sciences
Professor Frank Stephen	School of Law
Professor Penny Summerfield	School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
Professor Mike Sutcliffe	School of Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science
Professor Chris Taylor	School of Computer Science
Ms Janet Vale	Faculty of Life Sciences
Dr Pamela Vallely	School of Translational Medicine
Professor Nigel Vincent	School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures
Professor Graham Ward	School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
Professor Mel West	School of Education
Professor Bob Young	School of Materials

(d) New undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes

The new and amended undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes approved by Faculties on its behalf during the 2008-09 session. Unless otherwise shown, the programmes will start in the 2009-10 session.

Faculty of Humanities

BA(Hons) in History & American Studies, BA(Hons) in English Literature & American Studies

MSc in Marketing - Addition of specialist pathways within the existing MSc to be recognised in the award:- (Retailing, Consumer Behaviour, International, Services, Business to Business)

MSc in Human Resource Management & Industrial Relations - Removal of 1 core course unit, Introduction of 3 new optional course units and name changes to 3 existing course units

Change of programme title from MSc Management of Science, Technology & Innovation to MSc Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship

MSc Quantitative Finance and Financial Engineering to change to MSc Quantitative Finance (Financial Engineering) and MSc Quantitative Finance (Risk Management)

Cliff College (Validated Partner) - MA in Mission will now have additional 3 pathways:- Children's Mission, Youth Mission and Children's & Youth Mission

Addition of a 360 credit stream to the existing Global MBA programme

Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences

MRes in Cardiovascular Sciences

Faculty of Life Sciences

BSc in Biology with Science and Society - Addition of Biology with Sciences & Society with industrial/professional experience (optional 4th year placement)

Certificate in Egyptology - now a 3 year PT DL programme and not a 4 year PT DL programme

MRes in Biological Sciences - Reduction in the number of research projects from 3 to 2 18 week projects (60 credits each) and addition of a 15 credit unit:- Experimental Design

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

The University of Manchester**Terms of reference for a review of the undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree regulations**Background

- 1 The Teaching and Learning Group (TLG) agreed, at its meeting on 16 February 2009, to undertake a thorough review of the University's degree regulations for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. This decision was made in response to an initial scoping exercise undertaken by Prof Iain Mackie (School of Dentistry) on behalf of TLG. This exercise focused on the Regulations for Undergraduate Awards and collated feedback from Faculties and Schools. The feedback indicates that the flexibility of the current regulations has led to them being interpreted and acted on in different ways across the University. The regulations are felt to work well as a framework but not as day-to-day guidance for Faculties and Schools on how to deal with specifics. This is a matter of serious concern and may be leading to variable experiences for University of Manchester students and may pose a threat to the academic integrity of the University of Manchester degree.
- 2 The scoping exercise has identified the following specific concerns:
 - Schools are using different methods of determining the final degree classification, e.g. taking different percentages from different levels.
 - There are different practices for making decisions on progression, resits, borderline candidates, and mitigating circumstances.
 - The rationale for Viva Voce oral examinations is unclear and there is variation in practice across the University.
 - Some Examination Boards are not conducted with complete anonymity.
 - The regulations have been written for full-time students and do not address joint honours students and part-time students (including continuing professional development).
 - The regulations do not include essential information which is currently only detailed in other documents (e.g. the Assessment Framework).
 - The above variable practice can be seen across programmes within a School, across Schools within a Faculty and across Faculties.

National context

- 3 Over the last few years, a number of institutions have reviewed and revised their degree regulations in order to introduce greater uniformity and consistency in the rules used for classifying honours degrees. Most recently, the University of Warwick has introduced a 17-point marking scale and a unified degree classification convention.
- 4 The QAA Code of Practice: Assessment emphasises that degrees are awarded by the institution and that there must therefore be: "Consistent approaches to progression and to combining marks for awards across an institution support the key principles of fairness to all students and maintaining academic standards." (Precept 8). Some "Flexibility at subject level may be appropriate, to reflect different discipline needs and marking conventions" but "Such flexibility can often be accommodated within the overarching rules set by the institution, but where this is not possible, approval at institutional level of any variation helps to promote fairness [and] Consistency of treatment...".
- 5 The Burgess Group Final Report (October 2007, pages 7-8) states: "Institutional methods for calculating the degree classification could be clearer in order to help students' understanding of what they are being awarded and what is being recognised by the institution."

Actions

- 6 The Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) have been asked to ensure that there are no areas within their respective Faculties where the degree regulations are not being adhered to.
- 7 The TLG, supported by the Teaching and Learning Support Office, will undertake a review of the Regulations for Undergraduate Awards to ensure that they are fully fit for purpose. It is anticipated that this review will result in a revised and enhanced version of the current Regulations including proposals for a single, University-wide system of degree classification. The review will involve consultation with all staff, Faculty and School Teaching and Learning Committees or equivalent, student representatives (including the Students' Union), professional and statutory bodies, and External Examiners. Other external input will also be considered as appropriate, e.g. QAA auditors from peer institutions. Final proposals will be presented to Senate for approval.
- 8 It is proposed that the review of the Regulations for Undergraduate Awards is managed as a two stage process. Stage 1 will be an exercise to clarify the current regulations in order to address the issues addressed in the scoping exercise (with the exception of issues around degree classification) for implementation from September 2009. Stage 2 will be the development of new degree classification conventions for implementation from September 2010. The timescale for this latter aspect of the review is an acknowledgement that extensive consultation with the University community will be required. Both stages will be overseen by the Teaching and Learning Group and supported by the Teaching and Learning Support Office.
- 9 The Postgraduate Taught Group will undertake a review of the Regulations for the Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate. This will ensure that this set of regulations is fully fit for purpose and consistent with the Regulations for Undergraduate Awards. The form and timing of this review will be agreed by the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) and the Associate Vice-President (Graduate Education). The review will be supported by the Teaching and Learning Support Office.

Approved by the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) on 6 April 2009