

# **DIRECTORATE FOR THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

**Notes of *Student Recruitment Communications Group* held on**

***23 January 2014***

**Circulation** To: SRCG Membership

Cc: Ian Bradley, Ben Goldblum, Shelley Gordon, Amanda Grimshaw, Saira Jackson (RAMG Faculty Reps), Alan Ferns.

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**Attendance:** Paul Govey (Chair), Victoria Root (Secretary), Jayne Golden, Andy Simmons, Fiona Brown, Fran Halliwell, Shelley Gordon, Antoinette Perry, Richard Screaton, Charlotte Alcock, Laura Jwekes, James Tallentire, Sue Hubbard.

1. **Apologies:** Kate Scott, Bernard Strutt, Marieke Mollitt, Kate Tidman, Paul Uncles,

Jane Naylor, Neil Condron.

1. **Minutes from the previous meetings**

The minutes from the previous meetings (16th October 2013) were agreed as a true record.

1. **Matters Arising from notes of last meetings**

**16th October 2013**

Item 4: PG to provide the group with an in-depth report on the 2014 UG prospectus as compiled by Janice Ellis. Completed.

Item 4: PG to discuss testing of the International Prospectus with Janice Ellis and Fiona Brown. Completed

1. **Student Recruitment Communications Action Plan (Jan 14 update) –** Paul Govey

Relating to item 9 in previous meeting (16th October 2013) (PG provide update of the communications and publications) – PG provides group with a Student Recruitment Communications Action Plan. This is a record summarising all of the communications and publication projects.

1. **Publications Update –** Jayne Golden

The Manchester Advantage is a conversion publication for all international students (undergraduate and postgraduate). The finalised printed copy was shown to the group. There is a proposal in 2014/2015 budgets for production of the Advantage for home offer holders as well for the 2015 conversion cycle. The Pocket Guide is also at the printing stage due to be finalised by the 14th February. Undergraduate Prospectus printing date is estimated end of February.

Augmented Reality was trialled in both the Undergraduate Prospectus and the Pocket guide. The results of this trial will be looked at to determine the success of Augmented Reality and fed back to SRCG.

Work on the International and Postgraduate prospectus will begin at the start of February.

1. **E-advantage templates –** Susannah Crossland

The Reading Room review of the old template brought up some key recommendations for the e-advantage newsletter. It needed a: cleaner, modern look, with bolder images and less copy and something that was fully mobile-responsive and in line with the new corporate website (AS).

Key changes: It is a personalised newsletter with 6 different versions (UK UG & PG, EU UG & PG, International UG & PG) and is more of a sign-posting device then a normal newsletter. The key feature is that it contains a click through to web content instead of a lot of copy. This highlights the need for up-to-date web content. It was also noted that new software was invested in for this project, called Litmus, which allows you to send a test out before you send the campaign.

Overall, the e-advantage is performing well. The open rate is around 50-60% and the click through rate is double that of last year (20%). The most popular edition is the EU PG with a 31% click through. It was also noted here that the ‘Parents’ edition of the e-advantage is no longer going ahead and it now represents an icon at the bottom of the newsletter. The second stage of the project may lead to Faculty’s adopting the template and even more personalisation (possibly similar to/or linking with the My Manchester Portal).

It was noted, however, that during the creation of the newsletter they were challenging time scales and technical issues. It was also noted that Marieke Mollitt is meeting with Matt Walker to review the systems that we currently use.

1. **Welcome Communications –** Marieke Mollitt

Some work is currently being carried out to review and improve the conversion communications that University of Manchester offer holders receive. As a review of the e-advantage has just been competed, this will purely focus on printed publications. Marieke Mollitt is leading on the review, and a conversion communications working group has been established to steer the project. This contains representatives from SRID and Student Communications and Marketing.   
  
At the moment offer holders receive the following:  
  
Accommodation brochure - October onwards - all offer holders. Information about our accommodation offer to both inform and persuade applicants to choose UoM-owned accommodation.

The Manchester Advantage - January/February onwards - international UG and PG offer holders. A publication showcasing the University and city delivering key messages and impressive imagery to encourage readers to choose Manchester.

The Arrival Guide - April onwards - international and EU UG and PG offer holders. Detailed information about practicalities for preparation and arrival in Manchester.

The Orientation Guide - July onwards - international and EU UG and PG offer holders. A guide about the activities taking place especially for international and EU offer holders when they arrive.   
The Crucial Guide-Get Ready - mid July - all UF offer holders. A document giving information about the university and city and what students should expect from life here.

The Crucial Guide-Welcome - handed out on arrival - all new students. Detailed arrival information covering areas like registration, setting up an IT account etc.

The Manchester Welcome What's On guide - handed out on arrival - all new students. Full timetable of Welcome activities. Joint project with UMSU.   
  
Current ideas around improvement lie in three main areas:

1. To bring more of consistency in design and tone of publications, to create a better applicant journey.

2. To tweak the function and timings of some of the publications - considering combining the Crucial Guide Get Ready with the What's On guide and sending to CFs as well as UFs to act more of a conversion tool, and deliver information sooner (July) to increase excitement and anticipation.

3. Address imbalance between amount of communications received by home and international/EU applicants by creating a home version of The Manchester Advantage from 2015 onwards.   
  
All these ideas are preliminary and the working group is due to meet next week to discuss further. Sign off will also go through SRCG and relevant management groups.

1. **Web Project Update –** Andy Simmons

On course for a new website launch by the end of April. Currently, 95% of site structure is agreed and designs are signed off. There are 7/8 page types, which they are currently building prototypes for, which will be tested.

Web project currently working through the content, deciding who is responsible for what and removing content that is no longer needed.

1. **Update from Groups and Task Forces** 
   1. Course Content Working Group – Andy Simmons

Work has begun with Campus Solutions, planning to carry out functional specifications around March.

Concerning the OLAF project – (an online application form) needs to be changed the way it’s accessed and talks are with Campus Solutions on resolving this issue.

1. **Items brought forward from Faculties/Schools and Teams**
   1. Consistent recruitment campaign messages – PG (+SRID)

There is a need to provide key messages to travelling academics for recruitment. This will be brought as priority work to new Head of Marketing for discussion when appointed.

Also noted that interviews for a new Head of Marketing will commence on the 3rd of February.

* 1. Prospects ChatLive – Antoinette Perry

This involves the UK EU Working Group. Demonstrations were shown the previous week and there was discussion about taking this to the University level.

The software is basic so all Schools would be able to use it. It sits on the Prospects server and students register themselves and a transcript is produced after the interview. It is currently set at £1000 per account, but this will decrease with multiple users. It was agreed that Faculties would pursue this individually and there would not be central management of the process.

A demo took place last Friday by a Prospects representative. Marieke Mollitt had the following observations:

As part of the price they will embed the chat area into any page on your existing website so it's seamlessly integrated in terms of design.

It could be used for a range of areas - visa chats, student ambassadors to applicants, pre-open day Q&As, C&C.

The usual cost is £2000 but they will discount it to £1000 per account per year for UoM.

Questions exist around coordination across the university (governance, consistency, overlap in chat times across different areas) and where central team's responsibilities of advice giving end, and Schools begin.

Sue Hubbard in EPS gave a brief update concerning the EPS text project and us of Meerkat texting and Text Tools. There is evidence that for a single event e.g. lecture cancellation, that using SMS as a form of communication is effective.

1. **Issues to be raised at Recruitment and Admissions Management Group**

Discussion of re-naming the group from the SRCG (Student Recruitment and Communications Group) to the SRMG (Student Recruitment and Marketing Group). PG to raise with RAMG for approval.

1. **AOB**

AS – recruited social media co-ordinator, Sam – audit current activity with new website, select more popular content for social media and put it in a central area, consolidating corporate Facebook and Twitter account, produce general guideline for people interacting with social media, evolving the strategy.

Also, hiring a new video and image co-ordinator is currently taking place. Nothing has been confirmed so far.

For Faculty Reps – Education UK website has a database containing all courses at The University of Manchester. We have a profile, via Hotcourses, who have given the opportunity to Schools to have their own profile. The cost of a profile would be £1,900 but if it was to include undergraduate and postgraduate this would increase to £12,000. There would be a discount if four or more schools signed up and there is also an opportunity to upload five videos to the site.

**Action:** Fran Halliwell to provide Faculty reps with further details.

**Date of Next of Meeting**

Wednesday 23 April, 2.00 – 3.00pm in the Rutherford Room, Rutherford Building