

October 2017

## 1. Update from Steve Dauncey

September certainly sees a ramp up of activity for us all as the academic cycle restarts. The registration of students is a very effective demonstration of cross-PSS collaboration with teams from across Finance working with DSE to ensure the whole process is well administered and students are made to feel welcome. The levels of income collected on a daily basis are significant and the levels of customer service continue to impress – I witnessed a relatively common occurrence where credit card payments are refused by the bank given the unusual size of the transaction; this represents good control from the bank but a problem for the student! The advice given to the student was clear, calm and reassuring allowing a smooth payment once they had contacted the bank. While our teams were busy at the ‘front of house’, the back office was busy completing reconciliations and ‘keeping score’ and making sure all issues were cleared by the close of play. In terms of statistics, we are currently £10m over last year’s takings, and cash and direct bank transfers have increased. My thanks to all involved.

I can confirm that through voluntary severance, direct transfers and other mitigating activities we have met the strategic objectives of the restructure in Finance, which were to create a more consistent structure and approach across the three Faculties. This process has now concluded and we are no longer looking to make redundancies in this area. There will now be a transition period over the coming months as people move into new roles and others leave the organisation. We are in the process of recruiting to vacant posts in the [new structure](#) and details of these vacancies can be found on [StaffNet](#).

Should you have any further questions or concerns please speak with your line manager in the first instance. I would be happy to attend any future team meetings to discuss this process and the implementation of the restructure.

Whilst there is still more work to do to get the new structure operating effectively over the coming months, I and the Senior Leadership Team are committed to ongoing discussion and engagement with you and colleagues across Finance to build a strong effective team, and to ensure that we work together to provide an efficient service to the University.

I thank all staff for their support and patience throughout this process. Obviously the impact has been felt most by the teams directly involved and being put at risk of redundancy is a very unsettling move. However the fact that the restructure was achieved by entirely voluntary means is the best outcome and we can now start to fill the positions in the new structure. I fully appreciate that the process will have had a significant impact on morale and therefore the focus on rebuilding and giving support to all remains important for all my leadership team. I also recognise that the impact has been felt by all teams as vacancy replacement was paused during the process and therefore workload increased and many felt that they were unable to offer the expected level of service as a result, so my appreciation goes to all the finance staff for managing service delivery through the last five months. As part of implementing the revised structures, we are increasing the size of the Finance helpdesk in order to prepare it to provide a wider service to the University, and this will now be managed by Carol Walker within Transactional Services. Internal interviews have already taken place for a number of the new finance roles and an external recruitment campaign is planned.

I was happy to note that we have completed our PCI DSS re-accreditation with flying colours; this is very important to the University in maintaining cash flow and my thanks go to everyone involved in the process, particularly in providing audit evidence for the external assessor. This culminated in a

# Finance Update

very successful PCI DSS Incident Management Plan test exercise and workshop which was part of our re-accreditation. It was observed that we have built an extremely effective and integrated team across IT and Finance.

The year end audit has been continuing through the month and I have met with EY to discuss their draft report. As ever, there are some management letter points which require action but we will receive a clean audit opinion which continues to demonstrate the high levels of financial control which exist across the University. However, at a more detailed level, the issues around the clear evidencing of our research grant expenditure continue to challenge but I appreciate the level of effort that has gone in to responding to the audit findings and I have updated our funding bodies on progress.

On the Planning front, this is also a very busy period as all our regulatory returns have to be completed. Roger Starling and his team have maintained their focus on this despite an office move happening around him, and the team are now settled in the Christie Building. The data required for the Annual Performance Reports has been collated by Roxanne Bretherton and I have been involved in the planning sessions for the upcoming meetings. Matt Atkin worked with the Senior Leadership Team to develop the themes for the meetings and this was greatly appreciated. I have had several meetings with Marie Wright relating to the upcoming supplier awards and again another example of effective collaboration across PSS. The sustainability teams have been engaged in judging and the evidence has been sourced from our supplier engagement tool.

---

## 2. Criminal Finances Act 2017 - New Tax Offence

You will be aware that tax evasion – essentially acting dishonestly to reduce a tax liability - is already an offence. Aiding and abetting a third party's tax evasion (i.e. facilitation) is also a crime.

From 30 September 2017, a new corporate offence of “failing to prevent the criminal facilitation of tax evasion” comes into force via the Criminal Finance Act. Under this, the University could be criminally liable if (i) a third party has undertaken tax evasion, (ii) a University staff member (or other associated person) has aided the third party in that, **and** (iii) the University has not acted to prevent such facilitation.

The potential penalties that the University could face, if found to have failed in its obligations under this new law, include an unlimited fine. It would also be a major reputational issue, with likely disclosures to regulators.

A valid defence to this new corporate offence is that the entity accused of “failing to prevent the criminal facilitation of tax evasion” has in place (and can show that it has) “reasonable prevention procedures”, aimed at stopping facilitation. In light of this, the University is undertaking a risk review to identify potential areas where facilitation could arise involving the University, and considering whether its existing controls are “reasonable”. Where appropriate, new procedures will be introduced with a view to preventing such facilitation.

You may be asked to assist in the risk review, and/or with introducing or adhering to new practices. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Neil Turner, Laurence Clarke, Louise Bissell, or the relevant HoFF.

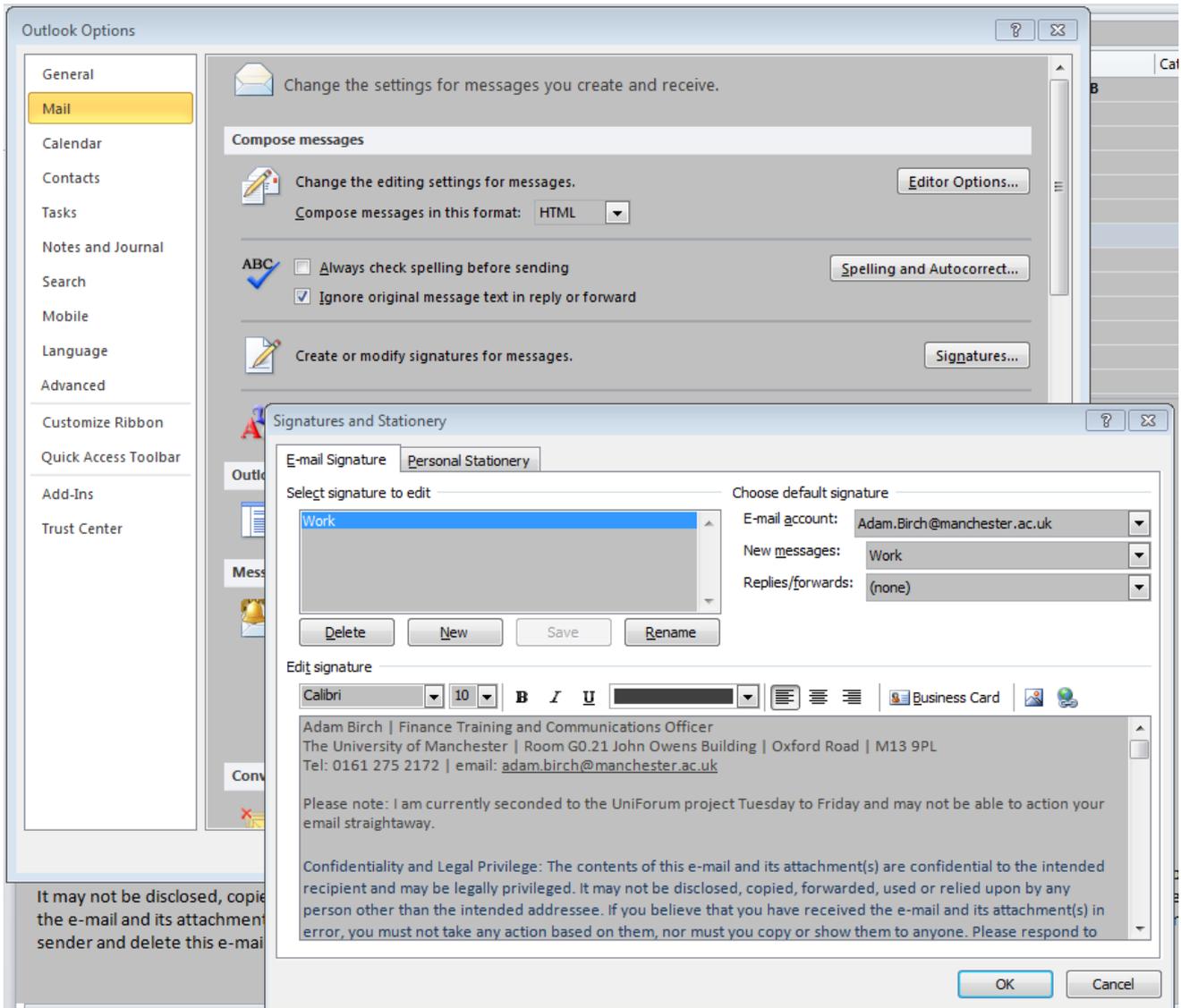
---

## 3. E-mail signatures

Staff are reminded that standard named signatures should be used on all responses to e-mails; this is particularly important when replying from a generic e-mail account, in order that the recipient has quick access to a staff member's contact details if a query is to be made regarding an issue in an e-mail. Instructions on how to set one up can be found below:

Open Microsoft Outlook and select File>Options from the top menu. A window will open up, select the 'Mail' option from the list on the left. The third option down is the function to create and edit Signatures. Select the 'Signatures' button and this will open the window where you enter your details. You give your signature a name e.g. 'Finance Officer' then enter your details in the bottom text area of the window.

(Illustrative screenshot below.)



This is an example of the standard finance signature that should be used, please copy and paste this into the text area of the signature set up window and amend for your details;

Adam Birch | Finance Training and Communications Officer  
The University of Manchester | Room G0.21 John Owens Building | Oxford Road | M13 9PL  
Tel: 0161 275 2172 | email: [adam.birch@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:adam.birch@manchester.ac.uk)

---

## 4. Website Changes

| Link to page   | Update  |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">Fees and Expenses</a>                      | Updates to the handy guide to expense claimants and expenses signatories.   |
| <a href="#">PPMS Facilities and Equipment Charging</a> | Information regarding the PPMS core facilities management system along with <a href="#">useful documents</a> and <a href="#">charge rates for equipment</a> |
| <a href="#">Month End Timetable</a>                    | The month end timetable has been updated  |
| <a href="#">New Starters</a>                           | There is a new starter section of the training webpage with an induction presentation and a checklist for managers with new staff.                          |

In addition to the above, a full review of the website is currently underway to ensure all content is up to date. If you have any updates or suggestions for improvement, please contact [Adam Birch](#).

---

## 5. Staff Updates

BMH:

- No change

HUM:

- Matt Warrington will be covering for Elizabeth Langton whilst she is on leave, until December.

FSE:

- No change.

PSS:

- Chris Trask officially commenced the role of Deputy Director of Finance on 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- The Finance Helpdesk team has now moved to become part of the Transactional Services team under Carol Walker.
- Congratulations to Jo Atkinson (nee Bird) on her wedding!