

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

School of Social Sciences

**Minutes of the GTA Coordinator Committee – 07 October 2019
Room G.030/31, ALB at 10am**

Present – Adrienne Roberts (School TA Coordinator), Greig Charnock (Politics TA Coordinator), Owen Abbott (Sociology TA Coordinator), Ann Whittle (Philosophy), Vic Jotham (Economics TA Coordinator), Michelle Obeid (Social Anthropology TA Coordinator), Will Floodgate (Criminology TA Coordinator), Margaret Cunningham (Law TA Coordinator), Michelle Kelly (School Resources Officer), Matthew Perry (Politics TA Rep), Stephen Nolan (Economics), Mariela Sanchez-Belmont Montiel (Social Anthropology TA Rep), Guilherme Moreira Fians (Social Anthropology TA Rep), Jaime Garcia Iglesias (Sociology TA Rep), Caroline Henaghan (Law & Criminology TA Rep), Josephine Biglin (Social Statistics TA Rep)

1. Apologies – Nick Shryane (Social Statistics TA Coordinator)

Minutes of the meeting on 14.05.19 approved.

2. Matters arising from meeting on 14.05.19

2.1 Update on Negotiations

There was nothing further to report with no further advances having been made.

2.2 T&L Committee views on Teaching Fellows (Item 3 – Politics)

No further discussions had taken place to date around Teaching Fellows.

2.3 Pedagogy Lab (Item 4)

The School was happy to provide funding and resources for this and as the Centre for Innovation and Pedagogy already existed, voluntary, School-wide, TA-focussed sessions around pedagogy would be held under this umbrella.

3. Departmental Updates

Sociology

TAs gaining employment elsewhere had been an issue, leaving gaps in teaching to be plugged. There was general concern amongst TAs about the potential reduction in the use of TAs and budget reduction, in spite of the fact that nothing had currently been changed or implemented.

Action: Adrienne would follow up on this and ask if Brian Heaphy would attend the next meeting in order to clarify any issues.

Social Anthropology

Aside from the usual issues of TA having to pull out, having found other employment, everything had been running smoothly. There was concern from a couple of TAs who had just graduated and had not been able to obtain their cards from HR Services, but this had since been resolved. Some TAs were

struggling to find information on the different e-learning systems, e.g. BlackBoard and how to make full use of them. There had been requests for some training on these. Turnitin training was in the process of being scheduled. There were also some TAs who still did not have BlackBoard access.

Action: (i) TA Coordinators to raise the issue of BB access with programme administrators. (ii) The issue of systems training needing to take place earlier was to be raised at the next Faculty TA meeting.

Philosophy

Nothing to report.

Economics

This year had proved to be one of the most challenging in terms of allocations due to PhD graduates having considerable success in the job market. Approximately one quarter of TAs had had to be sourced from other Schools as well as externally in order to fill gaps. There were still currently some gaps for semester 2. Systems access had been a problem for some TAs due to HR processes. A central university session on LEAP had taken place last week. It was felt that a SoSS update would be useful for TAs as there was a feeling of parallel systems running (University & Faculty) and confusion about timelines.

Noted: Faculty would be sending out further information soon to clarify things.

Politics

The departmental training had gone well. The issue of transparency in allocations had been raised by some TAs who had not been allocated any teaching this semester. The same issue had come up in Social Statistics.

Agreed: It was agreed that TA Coordinators should be holding conversations with TAs on the process and reasons for allocation/non-allocation in order to maintain transparency.

Law

As in other areas, some TAs had dropped out, having found employment. There was still some organisation of office hours etc. being finalised. There had been some issues with registering attendance, but this had now been resolved. The TA training had gone well. Feedback, marking and assessment training was due to take place next week for both new and returning TAs.

Action: The possibility of holding an HR-led session on FAQs regarding tax/payslips and pensions for TAs was to be raised at the next Faculty TA meeting.

Criminology

A call would be going out later this week to recruit more TAs to cover for Semester 2.

4. AOB

There had been some timetabling issues with classes scheduled in rooms without enough PCs and one class where the required IT program had been uninstalled over the summer and was unavailable when the TA turned up to teach.

Noted: HoDS would need to speak with Andy Partington about these issues.

Summary of Actions

Action	By Whom
Adrienne to invite Brian Heaphy to attend the next TA Coordinators & Reps meeting to clarify the future of TAs in SoSS	Adrienne
TA Coordinators to raise the issue of BB access with programme administrators.	TA Coordinators
Raise the issue of systems training needing to take place earlier at the next Faculty TA meeting.	Michelle (via Rachel Walton)
The possibility of holding an HR-led session on FAQs regarding tax/payslips and pensions for TAs to be raised at the next Faculty TA meeting.	Michelle (via Rachel Walton)