

# UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

## School of Social Sciences

### Minutes of the GTA Coordinator Committee – 16 December 2019

Room G.030/31, ALB at 10am

**Present** – Adrienne Roberts (School TA Coordinator), Greig Charnock (Politics TA Coordinator), Ann Whittle (Philosophy), Vic Jotham (Economics TA Coordinator), Will Floodgate (Criminology TA Coordinator), Margaret Cunningham (Law TA Coordinator), Michelle Kelly (School Resources Officer), Matthew Perry (Politics TA Rep), Mariela Sanchez-Belmont Montiel (Social Anthropology TA Rep), Magdalena Rodekirchen (Politics TA Rep), Veronica Vienne (Economics TA Rep), Jon Bebb (Philosophy TA Rep), Simon Walgenbach (Philosophy TA Rep), Oama Petcu (Criminology TA Rep)

**1. Apologies** – Nick Shryane (Social Statistics TA Coordinator), Owen Abbott (Sociology TA Coordinator), Michelle Obeid (Social Anthropology TA Coordinator), Jaime Garcia Iglesias (Sociology TA Rep), Caroline Henaghan (Law & Criminology TA Rep)

Minutes of the meeting on 07.10.19 approved.

#### 2. Matters arising from meeting on 07.10.19

##### 2.1 Future of TAs in SoSS

HoS was unable to attend the meeting today, but was happy to attend a meeting next Semester if required. The HoS response to the concern about the future of TAs in SoSS was:

*" The School has always had a policy that where units in the first two years have very small numbers the lecturers do some seminars (it used to be less than 60 students, it's now less than 36) - I have checked with heads of department who say there are no such courses in existence as we no longer teach units with less than 36 students.*

*The University exists to provide the best education for students, whether it be by full-time lecturers or TAs. But both lecturer and TA hours depend on student recruitment - how many students we have to teach - so we are not fully in control of available hours. However, it is likely we will try to increase student numbers in the future rather than reduce them."*

It was also mentioned that from a University perspective, it was not the intention that TA work be viewed as a means of financial income, but rather as a means of gaining valuable teaching experience.

Some TAs had discussed how they would like the allocation of TA hours to be prioritised, starting with allocations given to new TAs to gain experience, those who were not in receipt of bursaries and those with dependants. However, allocations made in such a manner could give rise to issues of discrimination and would not be compatible with HR regulations.

##### 2.2 School Pedagogy Workshop

The School Pedagogy Workshop was in the process of being organised.

## 2.3 LEAP

A number of applications had been received for the LEAP programme. December submissions had now been made, though in the future, submission deadlines would fall in the summer. Faculty meetings had already started. The Mentor role would be undertaken by the School TA Coordinator, which, from January 2020, would be Margaret Cunningham.

## 3. Departmental Updates

### Sociology

Nothing to report.

### Social Anthropology

It was asked if there was a possibility of holding an HR-led session on FAQs regarding tax/payslips and pensions for TAs. It was also asked if other useful information could be included in the TA Handbook, such as where to find payslips etc.

There was also some confusion around how payments for marking work.

**Noted:** A FAQ session with HR was already tabled on the Agenda for the next Faculty TA Review meeting.

**Action:** Michelle Kelly to clarify procedures for marking payments with Michelle Obeid.

### Philosophy

There had been queries from TAs as to whether the 15 hours of admin time covered emails to students out of teaching (but not semester) time.

It was advised that this was really Departmental & course dependent. In this case, the Departmental policy from HoD was, *"TAs are not expected to contact or reply to students outside of semester time. So they're not expected to email students over the Christmas vacation, even if students contact them. The 15 course admin hours fall within semester time, i.e. teaching time (So, by the same measure, weekends and weekday evenings don't count.)"*

It was also mentioned that in some departments, discussion boards are often used and were useful for large numbers of students to discuss/solve questions they might have.

### Economics

Semester 2 TA allocations had been completed and were ready to upload.

There was some concern about TAs being able to access Faculty training in semester 2. Reassurance was given that this would still be available and if not, that Faculty would be asked to reopen it.

It had been noted that TAs doing LEAP would be placed on the Faculty stream, even if they had applied to the Central stream. However the Central team were being accommodating if there were issues or problems with a TA being on the Faculty stream.

**Action:** School TA Coordinator to follow up if TAs can apply for Central LEAP if this suits them better than the Faculty timeline.

### **Politics**

Nothing to report.

### **Social Statistics**

Concern was raised about the difficulties in getting TAs from outside of SoSS/Faculty to undertake specialised courses if they hadn't undertaken the SoSS/Faculty training.

**Noted:** TAs do need to have undertaken the School training to teach in SoSS, though in exceptional circumstances, other solutions could be looked at e.g. Departmental TA Coordinators delivering the relevant training.

### **Law**

Teaching was stable. There had been ongoing training throughout the semester.

The following issues were also raised to the TA Rep:

#### **Invite to SoSS Xmas Festivities**

This was not for the remit of the TA Committee.

#### **Attendance Registers**

This was not for the remit of the TA Committee.

#### **SoSS TA Processes**

This was in progress with Margaret Cunningham and Michelle Kelly would also be in touch in the New Year with an email call for TAs for 2020-21, which would detail the application procedure for SoSS.

### **Criminology**

No issues to report. A new TA had been appointed to the pool and Oama Petcu was the new TA Rep for Criminology.

### **4. AOB**

None.

### **Summary of Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
Michelle Kelly to clarify procedures for marking payments with Michelle Obeid.	<b>Michelle Kelly / Michelle Obeid</b>