

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

School of Social Sciences

Minutes of the TA Coordinators & Reps Committee – 19 May 2020, via Zoom

1. Apologies – Paul Smith

2. Matters arising from meeting on 12.02.20

- MK raised the issue of amending the application form to include previous investigations disclosure with HR Partner. A response was received and fed back.
- MK asked HoSO to clarify strike pay for TAs – would preparation time still be paid as it had been in the past? A response was received and fed back.
- MC raised the issue of TA budget transparency with HoS. The All Pay Budget was confirmed as £937,367. The budget was due to increase to just over £1m, however this was likely to change due to the current situation and financial circumstances.
- MK raised the issue of pay breakdowns on payslips with HR Services. No reply had yet been received, but will likely be a matter for post-Covid.
- MK raised the issue of getting TAs onto systems earlier with HR. No response was received, though MK will endeavour to make this happen for the coming Semester, if possible.
- MC raised the issue of face-to-face E&D training with Ian Fairweather. Awaiting a response. However training was going to need to be revised substantially. Faculty were also reviewing changes that will need to be made to training to incorporate online teaching.
- MC was to look into whether a general, School-level policy statement could be made about office hours (although it is primarily a departmental matter). This was on hold for now as this was also covered by TA Principles, though they have now been re-named as *Support Hours*. The number and how they are dealt with would be covered by the Principles. The School was trying to make the Principles consistent across all Departments. TA Coordinators had received a draft of the amended Principles to review and were asked to put forward their thoughts. All concerns raised were particularly around marking pay. These were being considered by Brian and the Principles would then be sent to the TA Reps for their consideration also.
- MC raised the issue of actual hours allocated (and paid) for marking and tutorial preparation in the Politics Principles at March meeting with HoS. This had now been dealt with in re-working of Principles. In terms of tutorial preparation, some TAs felt the time allocated was not enough. TAs were reminded that it was course convenors who were really responsible for what was set for the tutorial and they should ensure that the preparation for this can be done within the allocated time.
- *Best Practice* sessions were on hold for now due to Covid.

- The TA Handbook amendments were in process

3. **Update from School TA Coordinator on recent concerns raised**

Pay for extra time worked due to move to online delivery

HR had already made clear that there would not be any extra payments made. This was due to the financial situation and in year savings that need to be made as the University would not receive all tuition and residency fees due. There was a current freeze on budgets and non-renewal of fixed term contracts and this was all impacting all staff. The School had already honoured all TA payments, including those where teaching did not actually take place or was reduced.

If they wished to pursue this, TA Reps could raise the issue with Rachel Walton in Faculty who would pass this on to relevant person (Rachel.Walton-2@manchester.ac.uk)

Communication

Course convenors needed to pass on relevant information in a timely manner. Both Staffnet and the School also provide regular updates.

Teaching Associates

This was outside the remit of the committee.

Training for online delivery at Faculty/School level

This was under discussion and the School was waiting to hear back from Faculty. This issue was also raised at Faculty Review Group last week. Ian Fairweather was following this up.

Hardware for remote teaching: Purchase/borrowing of equipment:

With permission from Brian, TAs may be able to arrange access to the building to collect any IT equipment from their desks for home-working. MK was also to be informed so that a log of borrowed equipment could be kept.

Cases would need to be made to HoS to request any additional equipment.

Office Hours

These had been renamed to *Support Hours*.

Terminology

TA was the term used by Faculty and advice had been received to keep terminology consistent.

Further meetings

Next meeting to be held in Semester one of the new academic year, with information in the meantime communicated via email.

Reassurance

Reassurance was given that TAs were appreciated and everyone was thanked for all the hard work they had been putting in.

4. Opportunity for questions (not related to issues under item 3)

Acceptance to the Pool emails would go out during the first week of June.

An update on the progress of the TA allocation process for 2020-21 was given.

A question was raised about the availability of funds for PGR students in their submission pending year. The advice was to refer the matter to the School PGR Director.

A question was raised about whether seminars/tutorials would be on campus or online. Advice given was that the University was waiting on government guidance in relation to campus reopening, social distancing, health & safety etc.

5. School Teaching Allocation Policy

This was currently being written and would be disseminated in due course.

6. AOB

None

Summary of Actions

Action	By Whom
Committee to continue be kept updated of any relevant issues related to TAs.	Margaret & Michelle