



Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences
Department Leadership Team Meeting
Minutes
Date: **Wednesday 10th February 2021**

Part 1 Attendees;

Mike Burton (Head of Department)
Ann Webb (Deputy Head of Department)
Helena Gittins (Deputy School Operations Manager)
Cathy Walton (Head of Social Responsibility)
Bart Van Dongen (Discipline Head of Education)
Gemma McCabe (PS Teaching and Learning Manager)
Gordon McFiggans (Discipline Head of Research)
Alex Sinton (PS Research Support Manager)
Giles Johnson (Line Manager)
David Polya (Line Manager)
Mads Huuse (Line Manager)
Sarah Heath (Line Manager)
David Topping (Line Manager)
Jon Pittman (PGR director)
Rhian Jones (Admissions)
Luis Garcia-Carreras (Employability)
Sonya Kewley (PS Safety)
Rob Gardham (PS PA)
Rob Sansom (Forum Chair)

Apologies;

Lisa Jameson (PS Technical)
Sarah Heath (Line Manager)

Summary Actions

ACTION: Set up interview for IT Academic Lead (MB)

ACTION (rolling item): Report on progress with Departmental Forum discussion on sustainability (MB/SK)

ACTION: Proceed with sabbatical request for Merren (MB/BVD)

ACTION: Make departmental action plans available to everyone (MB)

ACTION: Review failure of Environmental Solutions bid, post-26 February (GMC/MB/others)

Matters Arising

The minutes and actions from the previous meeting were confirmed/rolled over.

HoD Introduction and report

Mike Burton (MB)

A new academic from Imperial, Chris Jackson, has joined the Department, opening up new opportunities. A suggested role was PGDIR for the Petroleum Geoscience degree (or trio of programmes), to reflect on.

Gaining approval for new masters programmes (Sustainable Geoscience & Subsurface Energy – CEAS) has been challenging. Initial financial model rejected but resubmitted for review. If rejected again a new financial model will be required. NPP1 also awaiting approval.

Reports – please refer to grouped report handout

Recruitment & Admissions Update

Rhian Jones (RJ)

Report submitted

RJ reported that we are now at the end of applications with recruitment looking strong and UCAS interviews scheduled.

The Recruitment and Admissions Office is undergoing realignment. The International Recruitment Officer (Hannah Jordan) is leaving without replacement – much of this work going forward will be done by the International Office.

Employability Update

Luis Garcia-Carreras (LGC)

No major updates. Employability Committee now up and running each month with a couple more people joining.

Teaching and Learning

Bart Van Dongen (BVD)

Report submitted

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the June field-trip has been moved to September given the travel problems involved.

It was reported that the Faculty has delayed the release of the first semester results until 23 March.

PGR Report

Jon Pittman (JP)

Report submitted

PGR Admissions are steady. There is an increase of applications from countries that historically have had very low numbers.

JP requested to contact him if there were any supervisors struggling to support PGRs.

Director of Research

Gordon McFiggins (GM)

Report submitted

Feedback has been received on the tech review with input from all Departments.

Capital bids have been put to Faculty and Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships not supported.

Peer Review – we now need to review all applications internally in order to get signed off.

ACTION: Review failure of Environmental Solutions bid, post-26 February (GMC/MB/others)

Director of Social Responsibility

Cathy Walton (CW)

Report submitted

Some concerns were raised about support for the enhanced BAME/WP outreach programme.

Questionnaire to be put together to obtain feedback from UG students on inclusiveness in Department.

There was a discussion about supporting charities with fundraising efforts (e.g. Cowrie Foundation).

The lab efficiency assessment framework will hopefully be rolled out soon.

PS Update

Helena Gittins (HG)/Sonya Kewley (SK)

Report submitted

HG advised that budgets has come around again. This will be done slightly differently this year with TSLE from Gemma and technical from HoRIF. MB will review Department budget as a whole.

An end to end review of the GTA process will be ongoing for the next few months.

BVD highlighted that the budget holders list is incorrect, and that it would be helpful when receiving requests to see the budget from last year as a guide.

SK requested any comments on sustainability to be sent to her.

AOB

None.

Next Meeting

2pm, Wednesday 10th March 2021.

DLT Grouped Reports February 2021

5. Recruitment and Admissions

EES DLT, February 2021: Admissions and Recruitment

Admissions Office

The SEP is moving forwards and many PS staff across Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing are either being reassigned, or they are applying for open roles.

Recruitment, 2021 Entry

Undergraduate

The UCAS deadline for guaranteed consideration was 29th January. This means that we now have a clearer picture of UG applications. Overall application numbers are currently up 14% compared to this time last year, with a total of 585 applications. Home applications are similar to last year (364 applications), despite a fall of 17% across the School of Natural Sciences. Overseas applications are currently up 41% (221 applications), a similar trend to other departments in the School (33%). The number of WP applications to date (80 applications) is up 29% compared with last year.

The government recently held a consultation with input from teachers, school students and universities, regarding how A-level results should be handled this year. The outcome of this consultation and decisions on many aspects of A-level results are still to be announced, so there is still considerable uncertainty. For example, there is a possibility that results will be announced to students, and appeals will be addressed, before university acceptances are made. Results Day is still currently set as Tuesday 24th August.

We will be holding six UCAS Visit / Interview Days in the next few weeks, with around 40 applicants on each day. We still need a few academic staff to sign up to conduct interviews on 3rd March, which was added as an extra interview day. The higher number of interviews this year is because we have a very high acceptance rate for interviews, because of them being online.

We held a webinar for international applicants and offer holders on 3rd February and had 12 participants. A recording will be available for other offer holders.

Dave Topping is working with NUIST on recruitment for the 2+2 programme. The webinar planned for 20th January was postponed to 25th February. Interviews will take place after that.

Postgraduate

Home applications are down 76% compared with this time last year (only 4 applications to date), and Overseas applications are also down 10% (436 applications). However, overall, Accepts are up by 48% compared with the same time last year. Applications for the Petroleum courses are down 40% and 8% (Exploration & Reservoir Development respectively) while MPEC applications are similar to last year (310 applications, down 3%, but a 51% increase in Accepts).

Imperial College has cancelled its Petroleum degrees so we are hoping to pick up any students who had applied to them. We are advertising the Petroleum courses on Earthworks.

The new MSc in Subsurface Energy Engineering has passed NPP1 approval. The course is now live on the EES PGT courses web pages, with the statement "Please note that this course is subject to approval."

The new MSc in Sustainable Geoscience also has NPP1 approval and we will be making this visible soon.

The Postgraduate Loyalty Bursary (£1,200 for UK fee-paying students or £2,200 for international fee-paying students) is being promoted to Manchester students. On our PGT course pages, we have added a pointer to the Manchester Master's Bursary for WP students (individual awards of £4,000).

The Petroleum courses are planning a conversion day with scholarship interviews on 3rd March. There will be a university-wide PGT Virtual Open Day on 27th March. We are currently discussing what will be presented at this event.

Marketing is working on a pdf brochure to advertise the EES PGT courses.

Recruitment and Outreach Committee

There will be an "Explore Your Planet" event on 24th March. Katherine Harrison is coordinating this.

Within the Recruitment and Outreach Committee, we are putting effort into improving our information on careers for applicants. The Blog is a very effective way to highlight careers that our graduates are taking up, and we seek contacts of graduates who would be willing to contribute to this.

Rhian Jones
Admissions Tutor

7. T&L Update

Discipline head of education report for DLT February 2021

January exam period, Semester 1 Unit Surveys and National Student Survey (NSS). January assessment period has finished. No major incidents but a few smaller ones. Impact will need to be assessed during the moderation process. We have received first feedback from student-reps during a workshop that was held last week and are currently evaluating the information. The Semester 1 Unit Surveys have been closed and results can now be downloaded/ have been added to all unit folders. Vicky has done a very useful higher level analyses of both the comments from the undergraduate and postgraduate and these have been shared with all. During workshop last week the outcomes have also been discussed with the student-reps. The National Student Survey launched this week (deadline 30th April). The University has decided, in first instance, to have a minimal focus on this, 'light touch', considering what is currently going on. It is considered not the time to focus on this.

ZOOM meetings with all undergraduate students, per year group. Last week we had ZOOM meetings with all year groups, to have a chat about semester 2 teaching, including

field work. A lot of questions and it is clear that the students are worried about their future, particularly years 3 and 4. It gave us also the opportunity to update the students of the assessment pledge 2020-21, and explain what it all means.

Second semester teaching, on campus activities and timetables. We remain in a lockdown until at least 22nd February, and during the period of lockdown all teaching, learning and assessment will be delivered online. Remains unclear what happens afterwards but the safety of our students and staff is of primary consideration, and we will only deliver on-campus, face-to-face teaching where it is safe and practical to do so, and in full compliance with government legislation and guidance. It is anticipated that it may be necessary to maintain the online delivery of teaching, learning and assessment until the end of March, and we are making plans on this basis. All students have been informed about this. Timetables have been adjusted and updated where needed.

Fieldwork and Goodwill payment. All Easter/April field courses have been moved online and to the week directly after the Easter vacation, which allows students/academic staff to have a 'real' break. Major challenges are still with the June/July part of the Earth and Planetary Sciences fieldtrips and the mapping projects. We are currently carefully looking at alternatives and it is not unlikely that these fieldtrips will (partly) be moved to early September.

It recently became clear that humanities gave a goodwill payment to PGT students that could not go on a fieldtrip last year. We, Mike B and Bart, were requested to have a meeting, at short notice, with representatives from the other faculties to discuss the new plans proposed by humanities regarding goodwill payments to all students unable to undertake fieldwork due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic this year. During this meeting it became clear that we were unable to agree and there remains a substantial divergence of opinion related to the goodwill payment.

We reported back to the faculty (Peter Green) that we recognise the fact that Humanities already gave a goodwill payment to PGT students that could not go on a fieldtrip last year has set a precedent but feel that it is very complicated to use this approach across all our programmes (PGT and UGT) this year and do not support reimbursement at this stage. We explained that, besides the fact that in EES we have a range of degrees with different levels of fieldwork components, which would likely result in different amount of goodwill payments, we are also worried that this sets an unfair precedent. It remains unclear to us how this reflect on those programmes which have a relative low(er) fieldwork component but, for instance, a relative high(er) labwork component, which is also seriously impacted due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Students could easily argue that a goodwill payment for those components is justified as well. This could create a snowball effect and we could end up with a whole series of complains. We proposed that whatever is put in place must be fair to everybody. Just looking at the fieldwork component may be straightforward since it can be relatively easily quantified (missed airline ticket + hotel costs) but may not be considered fair across the board, particularly not by students. In addition, having different approaches by faculty may also cause problems since we have students on joint programmes, such as for instance the students on the Geography/Geology programme. We also feel that that it would be devaluing the efforts we have put in to replace (field) courses if we now provide compensation.

The latest information is that Peter Green has reported our findings back to the Teaching and Learning Group meeting, and he has been asked to raise our concerns, which he shares, with the Legal Team. To be continued.....

Second semester tutorials and teaching allocation for the year 2021. Information of tutorials and projects have been rolled out to programme directors/academics and they are now working on implementing it. Draft for teaching (unit) allocation will be discussed later in this DLT meeting. There is a bit of urgency since unit coordinators need to be in place asap so they can have a good look at the unit specs. Any required changes (we hope none) that result in a programme update will need to be reported back to faculty before the 1st of March for undergraduate programmes and 30th of April for postgraduate programmes.

8. PGR Update

PGR report for DLT – February 2021

Admissions and recruitment:

Current admissions numbers for 2021 entry are (as of 8 Feb 2021): 167 applications (37 Home, 130 O/S), 44 offers made (10 Home, 34 O/S), of which there are 30 acceptances (9 Home, 21 O/S). Application numbers remain equivalent to this time last year while offer and accept numbers are up slightly for both home and overseas numbers.

For international applications we are down 45% Nigeria, 25% Iran and 20% Indonesia, but up 32% China, 320% India, 14% Pakistan and 75% Saudi Arabia.

A new starter induction took place in January for the 12 new January starters (6 home and 6 O/S) and any PGRs who missed the September induction.

We received a large number of nominations for President's Doctoral Scholarship awards and UoM-Chinese Scholarship Council awards. Six CSC nominations (from 11 in total) were put forward to Faculty and all six were selected for the second stage of the process. Two PDS nominations (from 12 in total) were put forward to Faculty for panel interviews – decisions still pending.

Interview selections will be taking place over the next month for STFC DTP, BBSRC DTP and EPSRC DTP studentships.

Extensions:

There were 15 UKRI Phase 2 extension requests submitted from PGRs in EES. These went through an initial PGRD assessment and are now being assessed by the central university panel. It is expected that extension requests for non-UKRI funded PGRs with a submission deadline after 31 March 2021 will be assessed using the same criteria as for these UKRI Phase 2 extensions, but the exact process is awaiting confirmation.

Current PGR working arrangements:

Supervisors have been reminded that all PGRs are allowed access to laboratories and research facilities where essential – this includes for new first years, such as for laboratory training with appropriate supervision in place.

Messages have also gone out to PGRs regarding homeworking for PGRs and how to access IT equipment and office furniture.

Supervisors have also been reminded how regular (ideally at least once per week) communication with all their PGRs is essential during these times of remote working, and some suggestions for methods of engagement were provided. Please can line managers let me know of instances where supervisors are likely to be struggling with supporting their PGRs (e.g. on sick leave or other issues) so that we are aware and can put additional support in place.

MDC PGR Excellence Awards 2020/21:

I have sent out a call for nominations for this year's PGR excellence awards: Best Outstanding Output (one award per Faculty), Best Contribution to PGR Environment (individual or team – one overall award), Best Contribution to Society (individual or team – one overall award), Best Contribution to Internationalisation (one overall award), Supervisor of the Year (one award per Faculty). The internal department deadline for nominations is Monday 22 March 2021.

Jon Pittman

9. Research Update

DHoR Report February 2021; 10/2/21 Gordon McFiggans

Tech Review: Report on progress from Chris Muryn at FRSG; the team have fully appreciated the complexity and are starting to grapple with the nuances. They have received robust feedback and did so at FRSG, and are happy to continue to receive input. Interim update papers available, but not much to report on developments since the initial documents distributed.

Capital bids: 7 received across research and teaching, 5 ranked and put forward to Faculty; currently under consideration.

Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships: 7 excellent candidates, ranked and put forward; Faculty decided not to support the scheme this time around. Need to reflect on feedback and reasoning – that DEES did not have sufficient financial headroom to participate.

Principles of Peer Review: new FSE paper out for consultation. Upshot – the NERC DM model is viewed as such a success that a formal internal peer review process will likely be required for all applications, and Faculty or Central review for those calls considered strategically important.

Faculty Contribution Model: Discussion with all RGLs. Good aspiration to have realistic model. Care needed to recognise the true RGL workload and clearly defined responsibilities without missions creep. Aspirational 0.1 FTE possibly reasonable, provided additional “non-standard” responsibilities are recognised as beyond this contribution.

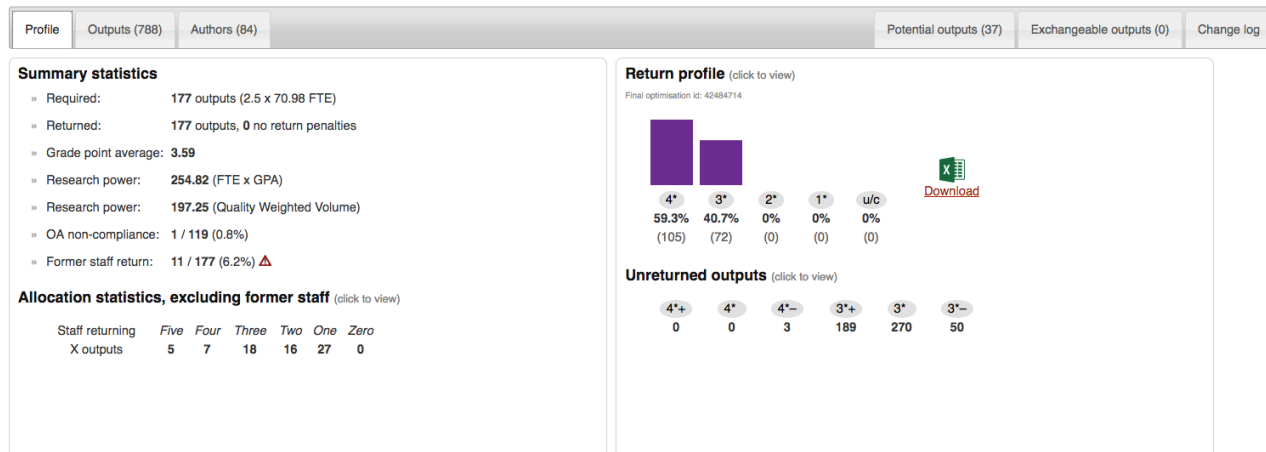
REF pushing forward on all elements to internal deadline. Signoff completed – but it wasn't a complete signoff apparently – this will be 26th February:

Outputs: All fully signed off and frozen. Excellent return *if* our gradings are accurate...:

REF Explorer 2021: UoA 7 Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences

ARCHIVE VERSION OF FINAL OPTIMISATION NO EDITING PERMITTED

[REF explorer](#) | [REF supporter](#)



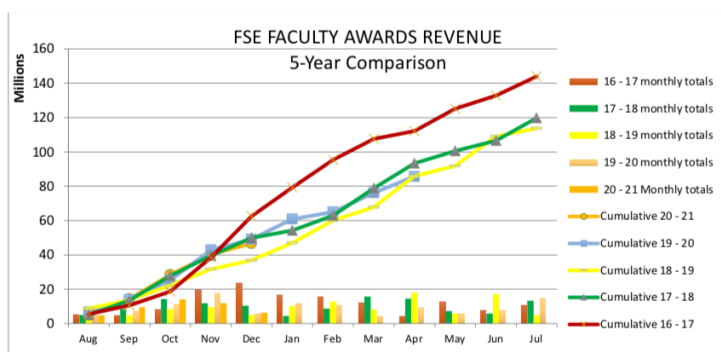
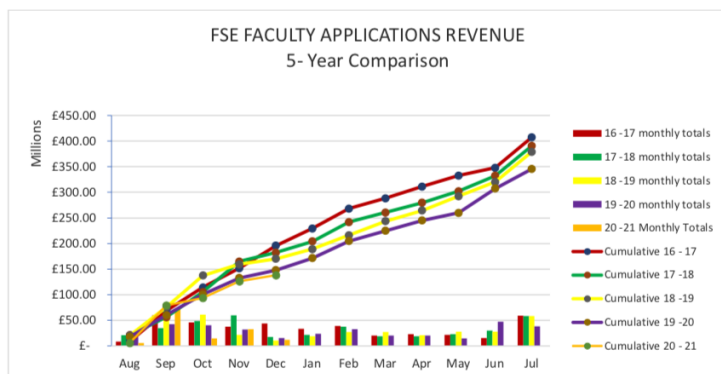
Data synced with PURE: 4th February 2021

Environment statement: latest draft received wholly positive response from Faculty and will not need another SLT. Next “final” draft to be submitted after final cut next Monday 15th for final check.

Impact cases: all signed off

Research Support: Alex Sinton acting as Cassy’s replacement. New RSO allocations across groups notified..

Awards and Applications: No DEES report available for this month. FSE report below:



Faculty very happy with persistence of both.

10. Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility Director's report

Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences Leadership Team Meeting 10th February 2021

Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity and Access (EDIA)/Social Inclusion

Confirmed that all advertisements for our masters courses now include a mention of and link to the University's widening participation bursary. It is hoped this will address the wide difference in uptake of these bursaries between FSE and Humanities (that latter have been much more up front with these).

Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Widening Participation (WP) committee

Meeting held on Tuesday 9th February. The committee agreed to target a subset of local schools in lower socioeconomic areas in/around Manchester with high BAME representation for our planned enhanced outreach as we believe a focussed approach is more likely to be successful and will better enable us to evaluate our success. We will develop a list of schools and relevant contacts (governors/teachers) to ensure their buy in and to understand their requirements. From this we will develop a database with school outreach requirements that we can use to reach out to all staff to ask them to match themselves to the schools' needs. Note that we are losing support from Jemma Stewart that will impede our progress while at the same time we are generating additional workload. We could do with support staff for committee meetings, to build up database, be involved in school liaison and match academic staff to school needs. We assume that all costs (materials and local staff travel) will be able to be met from existing outreach funds.

CW will also work to develop a brief questionnaire for UG students to gain an understanding of their experience of diversity and inclusivity within the Department.

Julian Meckleborough informed us of University of Manchester supporting new Cowrie Foundation scholarships for BAME UG students. When appropriate we should consider how we ensure relevant people know about these. Bart Van Dongen suggested and committee approved that we should encourage support for the Cowrie Foundation within the department when it comes to fund-raising activities.

Better Health:

Nothing new to report but the issues regarding stress for undergraduates, postgraduates and staff remain unchanged – or perhaps worse (based on nothing more than talking to staff and students so this is a personal statement of CW only).

Environmental Sustainability:

LEAF (Lab Efficiency Assessment Framework)

John Waters is planning to engage several labs in this over the coming weeks. He is waiting for a fully online version of the workbook to be completed before starting this. It will be important to have lab engagement for this if we are to achieve this SR goal (see SR & EDIA strategy document).

There is an issue with the time involved in implementing this, especially the initiation stage. One suggestion was that students should be approached to engage in their own lab activities. However, as many students are anxious about time lost from the PhDs this could be difficult. Would it be better to provide dedicated technical support to help with this? Or to ensure that John Waters has more time allocated to help labs set this up?

11. PS Update (SK)

Sustainability Toolkit Development – Update SK

- Focus group with Academic lead required to set out objectives

Research

- Diamond Light Source - I have made contact with UoM Harwell campus and am finding a contact to learn about emissions for the beam.

Travel

- I'm analysing the 150 journeys recorded for 2018/19 year by km/CO2/purpose
- My personal survey was circulated, 39 respondents from Academic & postdoc – many thanks to everyone who completed it.
- Most respondents said they had already identified potential travel savings by replacing with videoconferencing since homeworking.
- Staff would like to see a CO2 calculator – 2 suggested below
- Cost of taking a train was a big issue for many; the extra time taken was also a concern. Staff are keen to see support for extra funding for train journeys where they are trying to lower emissions. An example of grant providers who do this are Wellcome Trust – I will explore this further with other sources.
- Consensus that if options were more visible this would help – this will be addressed in my project report and can be used in a toolkit.

Faculty Business Air Travel Task Group

- Cathy Walton, Dave Norwood, Sonya Kewley group members
- Task and finish group with outcomes finalised by 31st March 2021
- First meeting held, next meeting 25/2/2021
- It was reported that EES have 2nd highest volume of air travel after Physics with over 550,000km travelled in 2017/18
- University Data is not complete for the 2018/19 year due to change from Egencia to Keytravel.
- Tasks will be focussed on changing travel policy – working on the Department strategy will help us to feed in ways of doing this to the group and hopefully influence the outcomes.

Air travel carbon calculator

<https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Carbonoffset/Pages/default.aspx>

Comparison tool

http://www.ecopassenger.org/bin/query.exe/en?ld=uic-eco&L=vs_uic&OK#focus