

The University of Manchester

Board of the School of Natural Sciences

2pm – 4pm Tuesday 23rd March 2021, Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/97323930420>) – Passcode –172162

Agenda

1. Chairs Business 2:00 – 2:05
 - a. Minutes from the previous meeting held on 13.01.2021
2. Head of School Report and Q&A (led by **Chris Hardacre**) 2:05-2:25
3. Items from the Departments (led by **Chairs of Department Fora**) 2:25-2:45
 - a. No-Confidence-Motion-16.12.20.pdf (ucu.org.uk) – raised by Mathematic Department
<https://manchester.web.ucu.org.uk/files/2021/01/No-Confidence-Motion-16.12.20.pdf>
 - b. Pandemic impacts on parents and carers - raised for Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelzYXdfu3b5D1_nY0HXIAfkC2KH9Z7QKool8wC2KJIVNWIFA/viewform?usp=sf_link
 - c. Items from other Department Forums
4. Items from the Faculty Committee Reps (led by **Faculty committee reps** and **Senate reps**) 2:45-2:50
5. Head of Education Report (led by **Andrew Horn**) 2:50 – 3:00
6. First Steps to Flexible Learning (led by **Dan George**, Associate Vice President Blended and Flexible Learning and **Stephen Pettifer**, Academic Lead for Digital Learning) 3:00 – 3:20
7. Items from the Student Reps (led by **Student reps**) 3:20-3:35
 - a. Student Survey Results: 'How are SoNS finding semester 2' (**Alannah Williams**)
 - b. Funding extensions for international students – the funding sources are vast and varied, but can anything be done to appease concerned internationally-funded students with looming deadlines? (**James Bird**)
 - c. Compensation for the impact of the move to the Royce Hub building, by means of funded extension (**James Bird**)
8. Head of Research Report (led by **Kevin Taylor**) 3:35-3:40
9. Head of EDIA Report (led by **Giles Johnson**) 3:40- 3:45
10. Student Experience Programme Engagement: Your Views Matter. (led by **Steve Olivier**) 3:45– 3:55

11. Head of School Operations Report (led by **Sam Ryder**) 3:55-4:00

12. AOB

13. Date and time of next meeting – 5th May 2021

Reports

Head of Education Report

First Steps to Flexible Learning

Student Survey Results Report

Head of Research Report

Head of School Operations Report

HR Report (report only)

SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCHOOL BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th JAN AT 2PM, ZOOM

Item No.	Item	Action By	Date Due
1	Chairs Business		
	Minutes from the previous meeting held on Tuesday 22 nd September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.		
2	Head of School Update including discussion on School Priorities and Planning (Chris Hardacre)		
	<p><u>School Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris gave an overview of the School priorities and objectives which cover the areas of workforce & budget planning, teaching, learning and student experience, enabling staff time, internationalisation & industry and our culture. To address the priorities two Task and Finish groups have been set up to look at a series of strategic areas, the first two are financial sustainability and size and shape. <p><u>Budget</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris advised that the School budget planning cycle will be in two phases. The first phase includes tuition fees, student numbers, pay and capital and to be concluded by 12th March 2021. The second phase includes research, OOE and overall position and concluded by 2nd June 2021. The student number planning will consider the contribution made to the centre and the reasons we are doing certain courses to get a better understanding of student numbers. Further considerations include balancing between international and home student's numbers and the climate change agenda. Chris highlighted that strategic staff appointments will be limited as there is uncertainty in the budget for 2021/2022. Chris confirmed that staff start-up packages are to be held at School level and discretionary spend is currently paused due to budget restraints and will be reconsidered how they operate. <p><u>Strategic Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic staff planning and capital equipment bid planning take place at School Leadership Team meetings and a School ranked priority list will be formed and put forward for approval by Faculty. <p><u>Events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President and Vice Chancellor's visit to the School is taking place on Tuesday 2nd February. Staff are encouraged to register to attend virtual staff open meeting via Eventbrite. <p><u>Overseas working requests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OW1 form is required for all overseas working requests – both new and existing staff Information from this is used by HR and International tax accountant to assess the employer obligations and permanent establishment risk Often requires consulting external advice to proceed and this needs Head of School (HoS) approval and Dean approval 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To request HoS and Dean Approval a business case is required, this needs to demonstrate the business need for overseas working. Chris acknowledged that many requests currently under review are for staff working overseas for personal reasons – many impacted by covid-19 <p>Jen Lockhart to circulate the Overseas Working Request (OW1) form to Heads of Departments and Deputy School Operation Managers.</p> <p>Questions raised include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will the campus opening hours be reconsidered and will the views of PGRs and PDRAs will be sought on this occasion? Chris confirmed it will be reconsidered at the Campus Management Meeting. 2. How many first year UGs are currently registered in the school? Chris Hardacre to circulate the student registration figures in the Departments. 3. Does the Campus Management Group have Academic Input? Chris confirmed it has PS and Academic Input (50/50). 	JL	January
3	Growing a School Culture (Giles Johnson & Emma Nichols)		
	<p>Activity is underway within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team to prepare for the Athena Swan Award which has to be submitted by November 2021. The charter is a mechanism which is used to support gender equality.</p> <p>The Board were invited to answer the question ‘How would you describe the culture of the School now?’ via Menti.com. The word cloud that was generated from the responses will be used for the Athena Swan application.</p> <p>The School Board was split into break out rooms for 5 minutes to discuss ‘What culture should the School aspire too?’ and the feedback was inputted on to Menti.com. The word clouds are to be shared and staff are encouraged to continue to contribute to Menti.com.</p> <p>Staff were encouraged to complete the EDI survey which will be an important part of the School Athena Swan Application: https://apps.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/surveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=88K175I4K</p>		
4	Improving the Student Experience in Exceptional Times (Francesca Moss)		
	<p>Fran Moss (Student Experience Manager) attended to deliver an overview of Student Experience in the School of Natural Sciences. It was noted that the main focus has been on blended learning and to ensure everyone is connected during the COVID pandemic. Fran outlined the challenges and opportunities as a result of having to adapt to the new ways of working and interacting with students in an online environment. Fran highlighted the achievements including the delivery of online graduation celebrations in June and December that were set up to recognise the student’s achievements and can be viewed online. Future plans for semester 2 were outlined including developing framework on the journey of the student voice, hosting several employability events with Industry, holding a student away day and continue to run SAG and increase membership of students.</p> <p>Questions/comments raised included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is student experience only a brief item to discuss when it's majorly affecting the lives of hundreds of students? The item will have increased time allocated at the next School Board meeting and specific topics are to be agreed in 		

	<p>advance. It was noted that Student Rep details were confirmed a few days prior to the meeting and therefore not sufficient notice.</p> <p>2. Student Representative highlighted that there is a disconnect between what is reported as being delivered and the student experience due to difficulty in communication. For example communication on assessment and structure of courses since September has been intermittent. Workload is incredibly high</p> <p>Sam Ryder to organise a meeting with Student Reps and School representatives to discuss issues raised during the School Board.</p> <p>Student Reps were encouraged to engage with the Student Union Reps however it was noted that there have been number of issues with response times and communication with the SU leading to difficulties being able to contribute to relevant meetings.</p> <p>3. Student Representative highlighted that blended learning should be more exciting and interactive</p> <p>4. Student representative expressed concerns regarding lack of communication following the National Lockdown announcement and that students are concerned about examinations and the impact of the lockdown/restrictions on student's wellbeing and mental health. The representative expressed a lack of empathy shown from the School/Faculty and the University.</p>	SR	Complete
5	Issues from the Departments (Chairs of Department For a)		
	<p><u>Department of Mathematics (Joel Daou)</u></p> <p>Raised a No-Confidence-Motion-16.12.20.pdf (ucu.org.uk). It was agreed not to discuss during the meeting but to circulate for consideration by Board members and discussion at Department Forums, pending discussion at the next Board.</p>		
6	Update from Head of Research (Kevin Taylor)		
	<p><i>A report by Kevin Taylor had been received and had been circulated. Philippa highlighted key issues in Kevin absence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REF is going well and has been finalised • Positive news in relation to EU Funding however the Erasmus exchange programme will end • UKRI are extending application deadlines for several of their calls • Any essential research travel will need to be approved by Head of School during lock down period • Chris Jackson will be joining the school from February. His Royal Institution Christmas Lecture and interview on "A life Scientific" is available in BBC iPlayer. 		
7	Update from Head of School Operations (Sam Ryder)		
	<p><i>A report by Sam Ryder had been received and had been circulated.</i></p> <p>Written report was taken as read</p>		
8	Issues from the Student Reps (Student reps)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement about the No Detriment Policy has been published on Social Media and it was reported that students have not received an email communication about it. Student representative expressed a lack of communication. Peter Green confirmed that the Faculty is proposing a 		

	<p>comprehensive approach of moderation and assured that the Faculty will put in place measures that mitigate and look after students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding extensions do not cover all PGR students and it was noted that the time allowed in labs for PGR researchers is much less compared to other institutions. • The PGR access to offices on campus for wellbeing purposes is limited. Chris Hardacre confirmed that access to campus has been reduced due to National Lockdown but access can still be facilitated. 		
9	Report from Senate (Philippa Browning)		
	Philippa informed the Board that a special Senate meeting took place to discuss a motion for a Task and Finish group involving elected members of Senate to be set up that would discuss approaches to Teaching and Learning and Student Experience for the forthcoming Semester and facilitate an open consultation beyond the SLT. The motion was not passed.		
10	Update from Head of Education (Andrew Horn) and Vice Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Peter Green)		
	<p>Summary from Andrew Horn as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked the Discipline Head of Education's for facilitating communication in to the Department following weekly Teaching, Learning and Student Experience committee meetings. • Highlighted that high quality material has been produced for Blended Learning and will look at ensuring best practice is shared for Semester 2. Overall high level of student engagement reported with blended learning • Noted that there is a high workload for academics, PS and technical colleagues and students feeling over whelmed with balancing asynchronous and synchronous activities. • Noted that Microsoft Teams is a good tool for collaborative working and could be utilised to build staff/student communities online. Currently working with the Student Union to explore this. • Opportunities include engagement with students to improve methods of communication in a Teaching and Learning environment. Will create a guidance for study schedules for both students and academics. <p>Summary from Peter Green as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flexible Learning programme is to look at providing staff and students with required software tools • It was acknowledged that there are restrictions on planning because the University is awaiting Government announcements which is causing uncertainty for staff and students however the Faculty have started to plan where possible. • A proposal regarding safety net for students has been discussed at TLG and an announcement is expected imminently by the University. Faculty will follow up with further details to ensure that the same level of measures used last year to protect students will be put in place. <p>Questions/comments raised included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student representative highlighted that there are variations in duration of lecture material and asked whether there was compulsory Staff Training in place? The Teaching Academy have provided guidelines to all staff and the take 		

	<p>up by staff has been wide spread across the School. It was noted that the training was not compulsory and further guidelines on recommendations to staff is required.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Student representative highlighted that delivery of Blended Learning has not met expectations to provide on-campus and off-campus opportunities. Peter Green highlighted that material has been delivered online where appropriate but the student interaction element would be on campus post-pandemic. 3. Student representative highlighted that uniformity of platform for teaching content is required and this should be made transparent for students. Peter Green agreed and the Flexible Learning Programme will address this. 4. Student representative highlighted a concern that the staffing resource to support student experience does not cover the entire student population and it was noted that there is a high staff workload. It was asked if additional staff could be employed given the University's financial position. Chris Hardacre confirmed that the financial position is still not known and savings are still required to take into account additional costs such as increased pension contributions. Investment in PS and Academic staff is taking place. Peter Green noted that student welfare areas have been strengthened. 5. It was highlighted that the School restructure has resulted in fewer senior staff in the Discipline's in the Teaching and Learning Offices. Peter Green confirmed that senior staff are at School level. 6. It was suggested a smaller group should be responsible for Blackboard uploads following a style guide to ensure consistency. 7. Requirement to provide guidance for staff delivering Semester 2 Lectures. Peter Green asked staff to get in touch with the e-learning team for assistance. 		
12	AOB		
	<p>Department of Material (Rob Sansom)</p> <p>It was reported that School closures has resulted in issues for staff with caring responsibilities. It was highlighted that the staff are considered as Key Workers but lack of School places and messages to work from home where possible has impacted staff. What guidance is available for parents or carers?</p>		

SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT BY: Andrew Horn (Head of Education)

MONTH: 17/03/2021

School Priority	On agenda (Y/N)
Priority 1	
Detail on activity to date to address objective	
Priority 2 (TLSE)	
Amalgamated SEAP now submitted to TLSD. We don't expect to make progress on a broad front in what remains of this academic year, so a prioritisation step is needed to highlight key objectives for 2020-21. Activity on this will be picked up after Easter.	
Priority 3	
Detail on activity to date to address objective	
Priority 4	
Detail on activity to date to address objective	
Additional Items	
<p><u>Actions to deliver the Assessment Pledge in FSE schools.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS Forms-based system for automatic extensions in Sem 2, plus processes to check and count student requests Changes to Mitigating Circumstances – no need for medical evidence. New processes for moderation and scaling in FSE – developing a single process in all departments. Unit coordinators return all marks as raw data, historical data collection from CS via PowerBI tools, moderation panels in each discipline, unified scaling process. <p><u>Programme amendments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UG programme amendments from SoNS will go to Faculty for approval at the end of the week (19th March), and with then pass to TLSD by 31st March for Senate approval. PGT programme amendments due by 30th April for School and Faculty approval, then to TLSD by 31st May. <p><u>Semester 2 assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the same formats as for S1 in addition to the UMITL assessment matrix. All assessment types for the exam period to be approved by the DHoE. Same moderation and scaling approach as for S1 Likely that exam boards will need to move to accommodate extended workload and to cope with auto-extensions applied to end-of-semester coursework (including project reports) <p><u>On-campus teaching in S2 of AY2020-21</u></p> <p>DfE guidance, late Feb 2021: <i>"In addition to the students who returned to in-person teaching and learning in January, providers can resume in-person teaching and learning for undergraduate and post-graduate students who are studying practical or practice-based (including creative arts) subjects and require</i></p>	

specialist equipment and facilities from 8 March. Providers should not ask students to return if their course can reasonably be continued online.”

- Following this guidance, on-campus practical activities became allowed if they are needed to meet programme ILOs and cannot be delivered by alternative means. In SoNS, this has allowed some MChem Chemistry final year students to undertake project work in research labs.
- Programme/year cohorts that were offered a remote study option are required to remain fully online – if a remote study option was offered, then an online version of all teaching must necessarily be available, and therefore the final clause applies.
- If the guidance changes, it might be possible to support more on-campus teaching. However, where a remote study option has been offered, a fully remote programme delivering equivalent T&L activities to meet programme-level ILOs must be offered throughout the remainder of the academic year. Specifically, any on-campus practical activities for these programme/year cohorts must therefore have an online equivalent that meets the same ILOs.

Timetabling for AY2021-22

- Semester 1 is timetabled as blended learning and on the assumption of 2 metre social distancing for any synchronous components on campus; Semester 2 will be blended with the asynchronous online and synchronous on campus.
- Disciplines will be permitted to offer a remote study option for programme/year cohorts for Semester 1 (only), but with an expectation that where this is offered, students will be available for on-campus assessments in the January 2022 exam period.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

School Board SoNS

23/03/2021

TITLE: FIRST STEPS TO FLEXIBLE LEARNING

SPONSOR:

AUTHOR: Danielle George

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (300 WORDS MAX.)

First steps towards flexible learning is a draft paper for discussion which outlines some proposals towards a blended and flexible approach to learning for the next academic year. It also summarises the background context and engagement plans, and invites feedback and comments on the proposals from staff and students.

Key points from the proposals:

- Blended at programme level
- Flip the classroom
 - move most explanatory material to video
 - use the live sessions for active learning
- Signposting
 - notional timetable for asynchronous activities
 - clear study budget
- Assessment driven by learning outcomes
 - Increased emphasis on formative feedback / assessment

DECISIONS/ACTIONS REQUESTED

1. note, the paper on the first steps to flexible learning and provide feedback to Dan George and Steve Pettifer.

APPENDICES

1. First Steps to flexible Learning paper for review and discussion

First Steps Towards Flexible Learning: a proposal for discussion

Danielle George (Associate Vice President for Teaching and Learning (Flexible Learning))
Steve Pettifer (University Academic Lead for Digital Learning)

The University's 'Our Future' strategic vision – published pre-pandemic – sets us on a five-year path towards 'increased student choice and flexible learning through combinations of face-to-face, online and blended learning at greater scale'. Design of the plan to achieve that vision was due to begin in 2020 — just at the moment that the world changed. This document is a work-in-progress intended as a starting point for discussion leading to re-starting that planning process. We welcome all and any input to help shape this important agenda.

In recent months, the face of teaching and learning has changed at a pace that would have previously been unthinkable, with both students and staff innovating and working together to adapt to difficult and rapidly changing circumstances. As a possible end to the COVID crisis emerges, it is important that we capitalise on the remarkable things that have already been achieved, and reflect on the experiences of staff and students to help us in developing a world-class approach to flexible learning that combines the best of online and digital content with the best in-person on-campus interaction, collaboration and tuition.

You are reading this document as the first part of a process of broad engagement with staff and students to understand your experiences of teaching and learning during the pandemic, to identify what has been positive, but also importantly to make sure we understand any barriers, challenges and concerns you may have about the shape of our future offering.

By invitation we are attending school boards, groups, leadership teams, and faculty committees as well as arranging meetings with students and the Students' Union. As plans become more concrete, proposals will be made available for further comment online before being taken to Senate.

While there is considerable reflection and engagement yet to be done, two themes relating to blended learning have already emerged clearly during the pandemic: first, students and staff have missed the real-world human interactions – formal and informal – that take place during on-campus teaching and learning activities; and second, while there remains work to be done in terms of signposting and balancing the workload associated with asynchronous activities, students have valued the flexibility in terms of time, pace and place that access to online materials has provided.

Taking these factors and others into account we propose the following 'first steps' in preparation for the next academic year. All of which should be caveated with 'where possible' and/or 'where appropriate'; the intention here is to begin the process of shifting our default model of teaching and learning from its current state towards one of increased flexibility.

It is also important to note that -- while an end to the pandemic may be in sight, and we propose these first steps as part of an aspirational/strategic shift -- there is still considerable uncertainty about timescales for returning to 'normal' on-campus teaching, and it would be prudent to plan -- at least by way of a contingency -- for one more academic year disrupted by travel restrictions and social distancing. These first steps are a necessary basis for that contingency.

First Steps Recommendations for Academic Year 2021/2022:

1. That a model of Blended Learning be adopted at Programme level. This provides freedom for individual academic course unit leaders to choose appropriate methods of delivery in consultation with those responsible (e.g. programme directors or similar) to create a balanced portfolio of synchronous, asynchronous, on-campus and on-line activities across a programme.
2. Synchronous activities should primarily be used for active learning, e.g. flipped classrooms, workshops, seminars, tutorials, laboratories, example/problem classes, fieldwork and practical activities etc. Where possible these should be designed such that they can be delivered on campus or online, depending on circumstances.
3. Non-interactive explanatory material should, for the most part, be delivered through online asynchronous activities (e.g. videos and guided reading, supported by formative assessments such as online quizzes). This is intended not as an outlawing of any particular form of delivery, but rather the first steps towards shifting the emphasis away from the 'traditional' lecture towards more flexible methods as our default.
4. Where appropriate course units should publish a clear study 'budget' that explains how students are expected to use the nominal 100 hours per 10 credits.
5. Guidance should be provided to indicate activities that are essential to achieve learning outcomes, recommended to enhance the level of outcome, or optional 'for interest'.
6. Assessments should be clearly related to learning outcomes and should provide opportunities for formative feedback against learning outcomes before summative assessment.
7. Where possible, all teaching activity should timetabled, including notional slots for asynchronous activities (e.g. time to watch videos, read material and access formative quizzes). This provides a framework that gives staff and students confidence that there is a workable 'study week' of appropriate intensity, while giving students the flexibility to shuffle exactly how they use the asynchronous slots and to maximise their engagement with synchronous activities.

Even taking into account the momentum for change afforded by recent events, achieving this transformation in our teaching will not be trivial. We will need to establish appropriate timescales, and invest in technology and training to support both staff and students throughout this change.

How are SoNS finding semester 2?

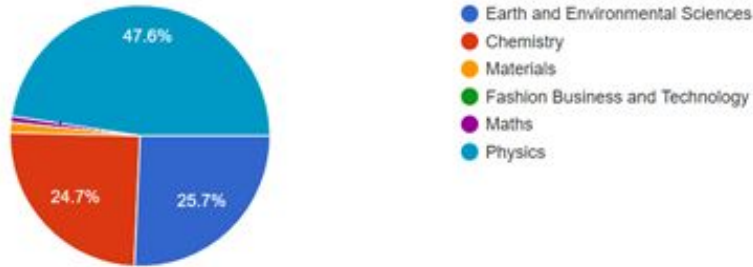
SoNS Board 23rd March 2021

Paige Halil (Chemistry) and Alannah Williams (EES)

Sample size and distribution

What department are you in?

397 responses



Earth and Environmental Sciences 102 responses

Chemistry 98 responses

Materials 5 responses

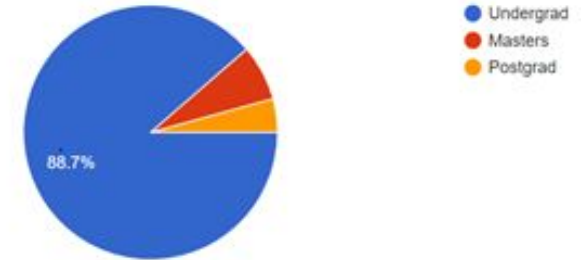
Fashion Business and Technology 0 responses

Mathematics 3 responses

Physics and Astronomy 189 responses

Are you an Undergraduate student, Masters or Postgrad?

397 responses



Undergraduate 352 responses

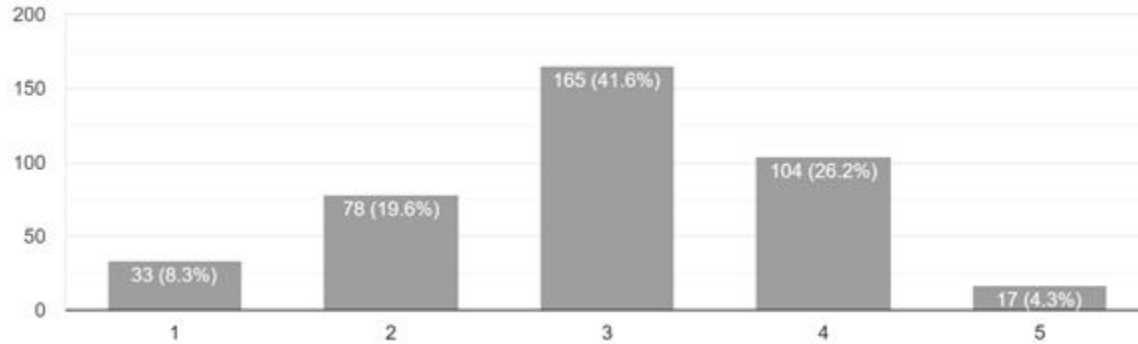
Masters 28 responses

Postgraduate 17 responses

Effort was put in to make the data as representative as possible, unfortunately, we had no luck with having the survey distributed in some departments despite contacting reps and staff. We had a total response of 396.

On a scale of one to five (one being worse, 3 being the same and 5 being better), how do you feel things have changed since semester one?

397 responses



The general feeling across the departments is that not much has changed from semester one.

Main concerns: Lack of communication from the University, increased workloads, lack of labs.

However, students do feel as though this semester does have more structure than the first and want to commend staff on this.

Some comments included...

We've only included comments that specifically relate to the University and not those that relate to housing etc

- Better now we've adjusted to online learning – running a lot smoother
- Students with less modules in Semester two are coping much better
- Some students feel that the only thing that's changed is the addition of the Assessment Pledge
- Improved now that staff have took on board a dislike for randomised breakout rooms (we can now pick who we work with)
- Lectures are more engaging
- Quality of asynchronous content has improved now lecturers are used to doing this
- Students are feeling unmotivated and disheartened about the possibility of in person teaching returning for the second half of this semester

Do you think University communications have improved since semester one?

390 responses



Nearly 50% of participants stated that communication hadn't improved upon since semester one, which was brought up as the main issue and reported back to staff before the return of semester two.

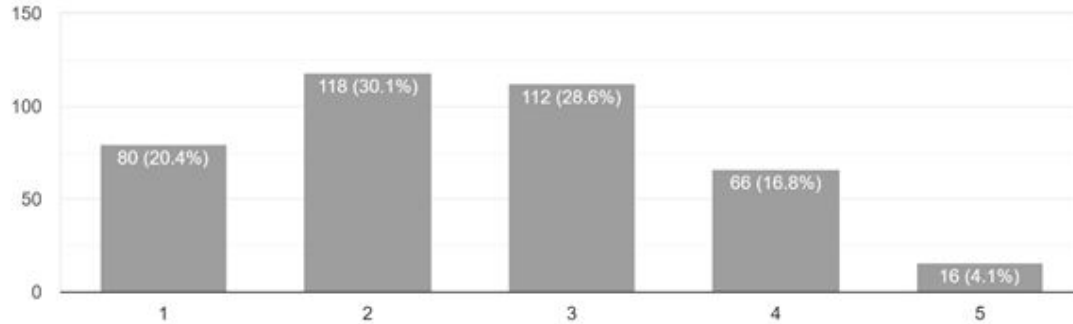
Only 20% of students felt that communications had improved, and those were primarily from the EES department.

Some comments included...

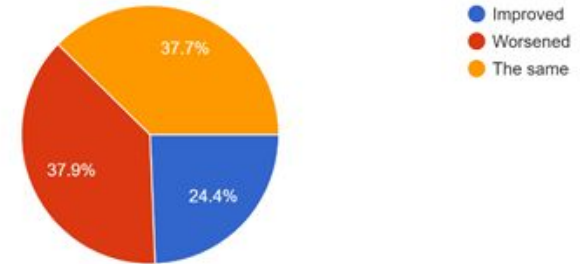
- Education office are very slow to reply (up to one month)
- We would appreciate more regular updates
- There's been a higher volume of communication and emails, but most of it is irrelevant
- Formal clarification needed for lab changes (Chemistry)
- Not being checked in on enough by academic advisors to make sure we're okay
- EES academics respond quickly, but the University in general needs to improve
- Communication of exam results roll out was appalling
- We need more communication than just weekly 'newsletters'

On a scale of one to five (1 being the worst and 5 being the best) how has your mental health and wellbeing this semester and has this improve or worsened since semester one?

92 responses



390 responses



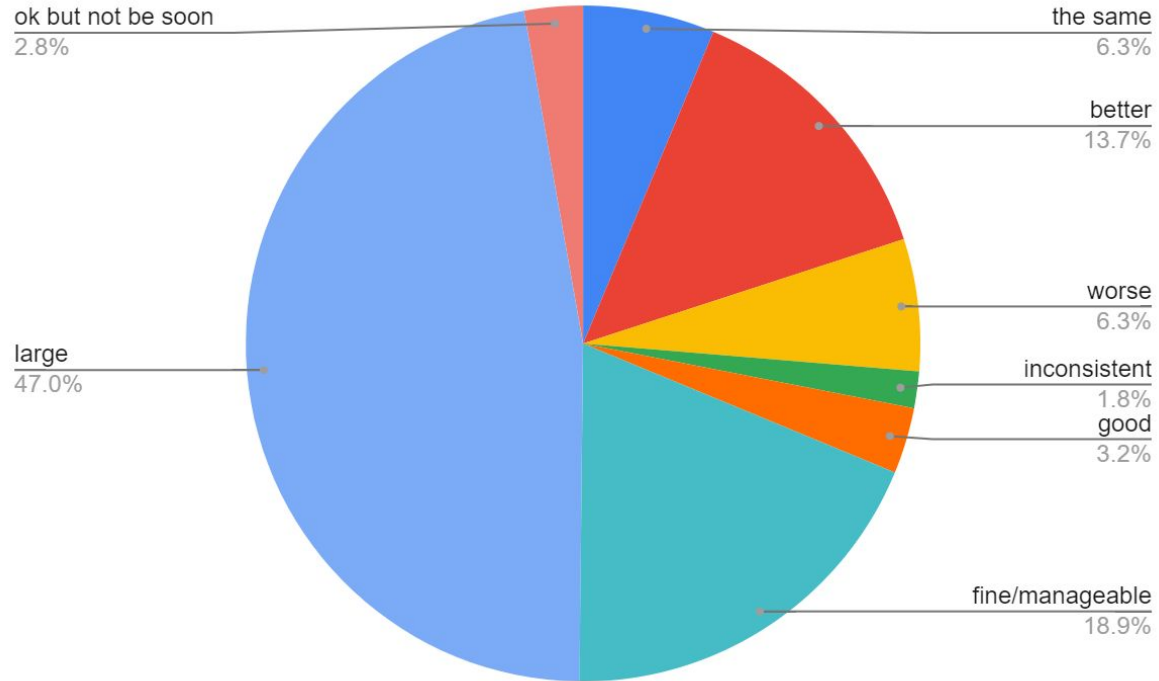
Only 25% of students noticed an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing from semester one, with nearly 40% reporting that it had worsened.

Some comments and suggestions on what the University could do to help...

- Change mitigating circumstances to include stress and anxiety
- The Chemistry 'Wellbeing Wednesday' emails are patronising and ignore what students actually want to hear about (this was commented on a number of times)
- Increase support capacity for counselling services
- Open more study spaces – this would improve our wellbeing (being able to leave the house etc)
- Allow resits for third year students, regardless of circumstances
- Ensure lecturers are producing synch content that can be completed in the allocated time slot
- Educate staff to be sensitive and aware of mental health issues
- Look after the wellbeing of care workers
- Recognise that burnout, zoom fatigue and struggling with motivation is affecting a lot of us
- **Students have commented on how helpful it is with the 2 optional extensions put in place**
- **Students are once again asking for a more effective more disadvantage policy**
- **A lot of students feel their wellbeing would improve once in-person activities resume**

How is your semester two workload?

285
responses



Some specific comments...

“I think it's very similar to last semester, the only difference is that I have adjusted to online teaching not that the department has made any changes”

“Challenging but in a way that is expected at university level”

“Manageable – a little more than last semester but that is to be expected as I find these modules more challenging.”

“too much i had to go 48 hrs without sleeping last weekend to get all my work done”

“terrible, I am behind in everything and every time I try and catch up I end up going through the material too quickly and not understanding anything. This means that I am behind in all my assessments and lectures as well as having very little understanding of what I am learning.”

“Ok. Lecture/ weekly content is much more manageable. All deadlines in the final week of term but the week deadline extension is very helpful. “

Any other comments

- Individual supervisors and advisors have been very helpful – Ray Burgess was mentioned by name
- Thanks for all the staff's efforts
- Consider easing the level of exams
- Have a 'light content' week

The comment that stuck out the most to us was this: *"I can't wait to no longer be a student at UoM because it just seems you don't care about your undergrads.. We just feel like a [student] number"*

SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT BY: Kevin Taylor (Research)

MONTH: 16/03/2021

School Priority	On agenda (Y/N)
Priority 1: REF	
<p>The Faculty has been working closely with the Unit of Assessments and the departments to finalise REF returns. The school has a set of strong returns as a result and the School would like, once again, to thank all those people working on the REF for their dedication and time. This has been a big piece of work and is very much appreciated</p>	For info
Priority 2: Internationalisation and Horizon Europe	
<p>Opportunities that may be of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Seedcorn Research Fund with KTH & Stockholm University – call opens 15th March 2021; closes 19th April 2021; details at https://www.manchester.ac.uk/collaborate/worldwide/collaborations/manchester-stockholm/ - Applications from joint project supervisory teams for projects for the (FSE) University of Manchester – IIT Kharagpur dual award PhD programme are now open; deadline 22nd March 2021; decisions on approval 29th March 2021; applications from students open 1st April to 22nd April 2022; up to 3 scholarships with full funding of tuition fees and living allowances; a further 2 scholarships with partial funding; all scholarship decisions due by 29th May 2021; contact your Departmental PGR Director or david.polya@manchester.ac.uk for further details <p>Updates on EU funding developments and Horizon Europe can be found at: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/eu/research-funding/</p>	For info
Priority 3: Culture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At recent PDRA and PGR fora, discussions and questions on teaching contributions, PGR supervision and lab access. Questions arising from these meetings are being followed up. - The IDEAS forum continues to develop and arrange workshops, developed from a bottom-up approach, across the Faculty. If you are interested in proposing topics/session, please drop me a line (kevin.taylor@manchester.ac.uk) or visit: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-support-services/research-business-services/ideas-forum/ - The Faculty Research Staff Forum website is now live: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-support-services/research- 	For info

business-services/researcher-development/research-staff/research-staff-representation/ Contains contact details of all Reps.	
Priority 4: Interdisciplinary Research	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The University are developing a Sustainable Futures Platform, chaired by Colette Fagan, VP for Research, to coordinate and stimulate interdisciplinary research across this area. Further details and events will be upcoming over the following months. - The Energy Beacon Strategic Board, chaired by Nigel Hooper (AVP for Research), will discuss the development and evolution of this beacon. <p>School researchers are engaged in these discussions, and further engagements will be sought. If you would like to learn more feel free to drop me a line (kevin.taylor@manchester.ac.uk)</p>	For info

SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT BY: HoSO, SOM, HoRIFs and TSLE
MONTH: March 2021

1. Student Experience Programme (SEP)

Engagement on proposals for Cohort 2 of SEP is taking place throughout March. There are four engagement sessions running for academic colleagues in FSE. These are scheduled for:

22 March – 9.30 to 11.30am
22 March – 2.30 to 4.30pm
25 March – 10.00 to 12.00noon
26 March – 1.00 to 3.00pm

2. Technical Review

The technical review reached an important milestone on the 26th February – an executive summary to University leadership on the timeline for implementation of Cohort 2. Further updates on progress are available via monthly comms and on FSE StaffNet:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/faculty-structure/technical-review/>

3. Active Bystander Training

We managed to secure one training session as part of the pilot for active bystander training which will be delivered by the EDIA Team on 21 April, with an on-line element to be completed beforehand. Numbers are limited to a maximum of 18 participants so HoD and business area leads are being asked to nominate attendees in the first instance.

4. HR Updates

Your Voice, Our Manchester – a short online survey for staff

Please complete 'Your Voice, Our Manchester – your invitation to take part in a short staff survey'. The email came from the email address admin@peopleinsight.co.uk. So that the pulse survey does not take too much time to complete, 23 of the 25 questions simply require a tick box response, and two questions are open-ended and provide opportunities for staff to give more detailed responses and comments at the end of the survey.

Once completed a screen message will appear to confirm that the survey has been submitted. Staff will not receive a confirmation email.

HR updates from StaffNet which you might find useful:

- We have an additional two days of holiday over the Easter break – the annual leave calculator is being updated and should be available from early next week: [Additional paid leave over Easter | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)
- Some information about payroll deadlines changing: [Payroll deadlines are changing | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)

- REP closed on Friday, 26 February: [Rewarding Exceptional Performance Scheme | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#) Panels are being convened and decisions will be notified to line managers and applicants as soon as possible
- We will be paying the increased Living Wage rate from February onwards to those staff affected: [Increase in Living Wage | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)
- A reminder that even though home-schooling has ended for the majority, there is still a wide range of support available to staff during these challenging times: [Support available while working during lockdown | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)
- The Universities Superannuation Scheme: Seven things to know feature to help inform staff of the key issues central to pension negotiations:
<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/display/?id=26020>
There is a University's open meeting on Wednesday, 24 March at 12:45-2pm regarding pension matters.

5. Information Governance

The completion rate for the mandatory Information Security and Data Protection course for School of Natural Sciences is 73% - with a further update on completion rates due this week. Our Information Governance Coordinators (DSOMs) will continue to follow up with colleagues who have not yet completed the training.

6. GTA Process – end to end review

Task and Finish groups have been identified to focus on the following key areas:-

- Academic engagement – to review GTA Lead Job descriptions and the interface with PS colleagues and how we can use the FCM to support the GTA process.
- Training – to agree process, structure and timing for GTA training.
- Operations – review the Operations and HR process including payroll aspects.
- Stakeholder engagement - to include HR, Operations, academics and GTAs. A survey will be sent to GTAs to obtain their feedback on experiences of the current process.
- Contracting – to review contractual terms, including duration and Right to Work documentation and renewal of contracts.

7. Community of Practice – Casual staff

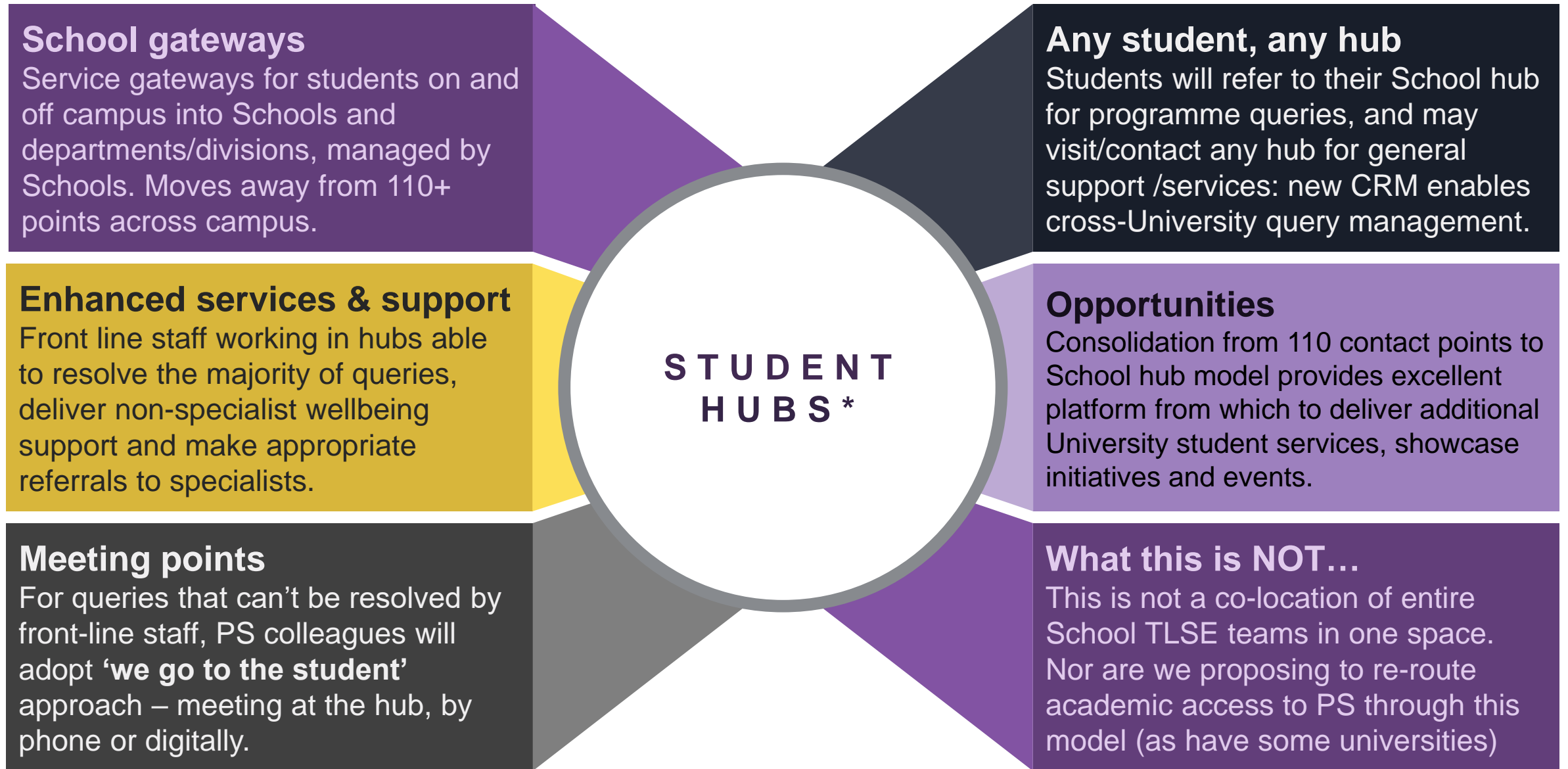
We have established a new CoP looking at the Casual contracting process, working with HR Services to review the current process and forms.

8. Athena SWAN

Work is continuing to collect data for the Athena SWAN application which the Faculty SR team are leading for both Schools. The Dept of Physics and Astronomy will soon be submitting a JUNO application to the Institute of Physics.

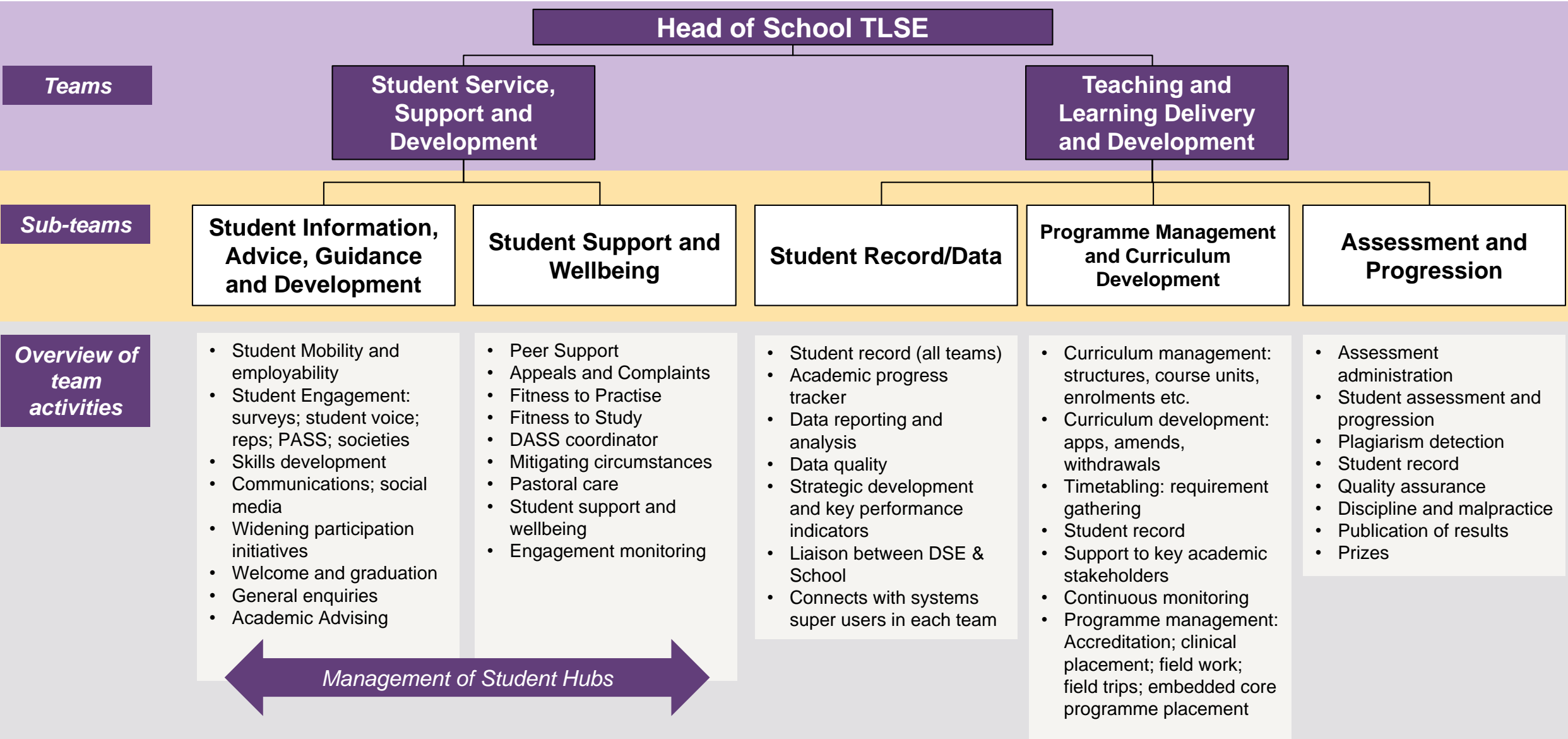
What we are asking you to do...

- Consider and discuss these developing proposals within your local areas
- Provide your feedback via our online form as soon as possible and no later than 31 March 2021:
 - What benefits can you see from the developing proposals?
 - Are there any significant challenges/risks that we are so far missing?
 - Are there further opportunities to be realised from the developing proposals?
- **Next steps:** Your feedback will be used to further shape our new organisational design, as demonstrated in earlier phases of the programme
- Engagement will continue throughout the programme, your local Student Experience leaders will keep you abreast.

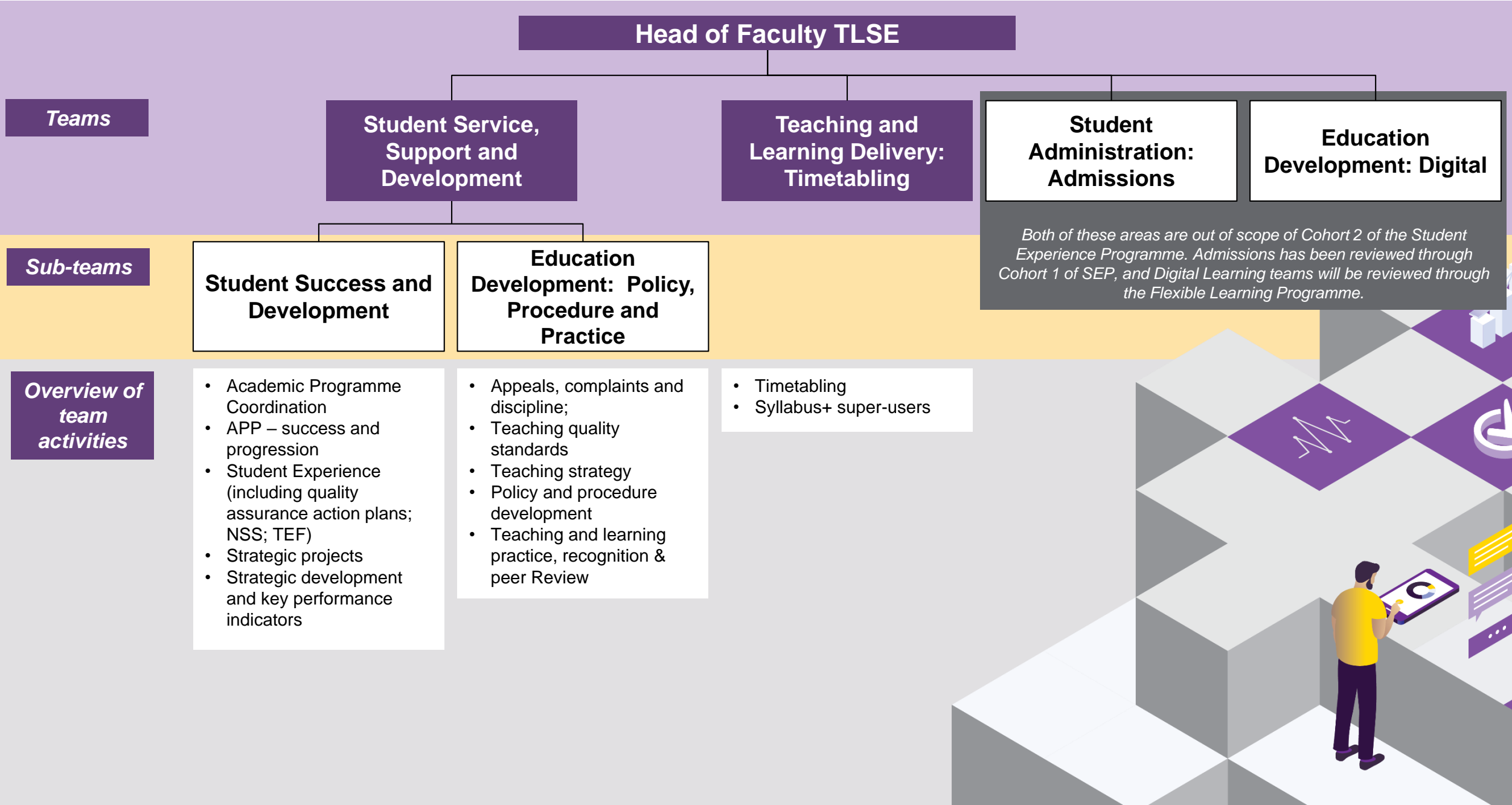


*Interim title, suitable signposting terminology to be determined via engagement

Developing School TLSE structure



Developing Faculty TLSE structure



Developing DSE Student and Academic Services structure

Teams

Student Success & Development

- Careers Service including internship programme
- Student volunteering
- Peer support
- Coordination of welcome, induction and transition
- Stellify programme and awards
- Student success elements of APP

Education Development

- Quality framework including student voice and surveys
- Policy and procedure development and management
- Institute of Teaching and Learning
- Digital education
- Placeholder for other aspects of flexible learning

Teaching & Learning Delivery

- Scheduling and coordination of teaching timetable
- Scheduling and implementation of assessment timetable
- UCIL operations
- UMW operations
- Appeals and complaints including liaison with OIA

Business Improvement Support and Delivery

- Student systems support and ownership
- Exploitation of system functionality to support students and staff
- Process improvement
- Management of the student record including data quality
- Student 360

Student Administration

- Student admissions
- Student finance
- Student immigration advice and compliance
- Service delivery including registration and 'start of year'
- Management of institutional datasets

Overview of team activities

Developing DSE Campus Life structure

Teams

Disability Services

Occupational Health

Counselling and Mental Health

Advice and Response

Overview of team activities

UMAC

- Disabled Students Allowance assessments
- Relationship with Student Finance England
- Income generation

DASS

- Assessment and support plans
- Staff training
- Support mitigating circs, exam boards appeals etc.
- Ensure statutory compliance
- Assistive tech and data Management
- Personal Support Worker Service

- Health surveillance
- Management a School referrals
- Applicant assessment for regulated courses
- Ill-health retirement
- Pre- placement assessments
- Mobility or travel
- Health promotion

- Counselling
- Mental Health and Risk Management
- Relationship with Greater Manchester Hub/NHS
- Psychological wellbeing practitioners
- Group and workshop programme
- Staff training

- Conduct and discipline
- Fitness to study
- Preventative wellbeing
- Specialist study mentors services
- Sexual violence and harrassment
- Safeguarding
- Staff training

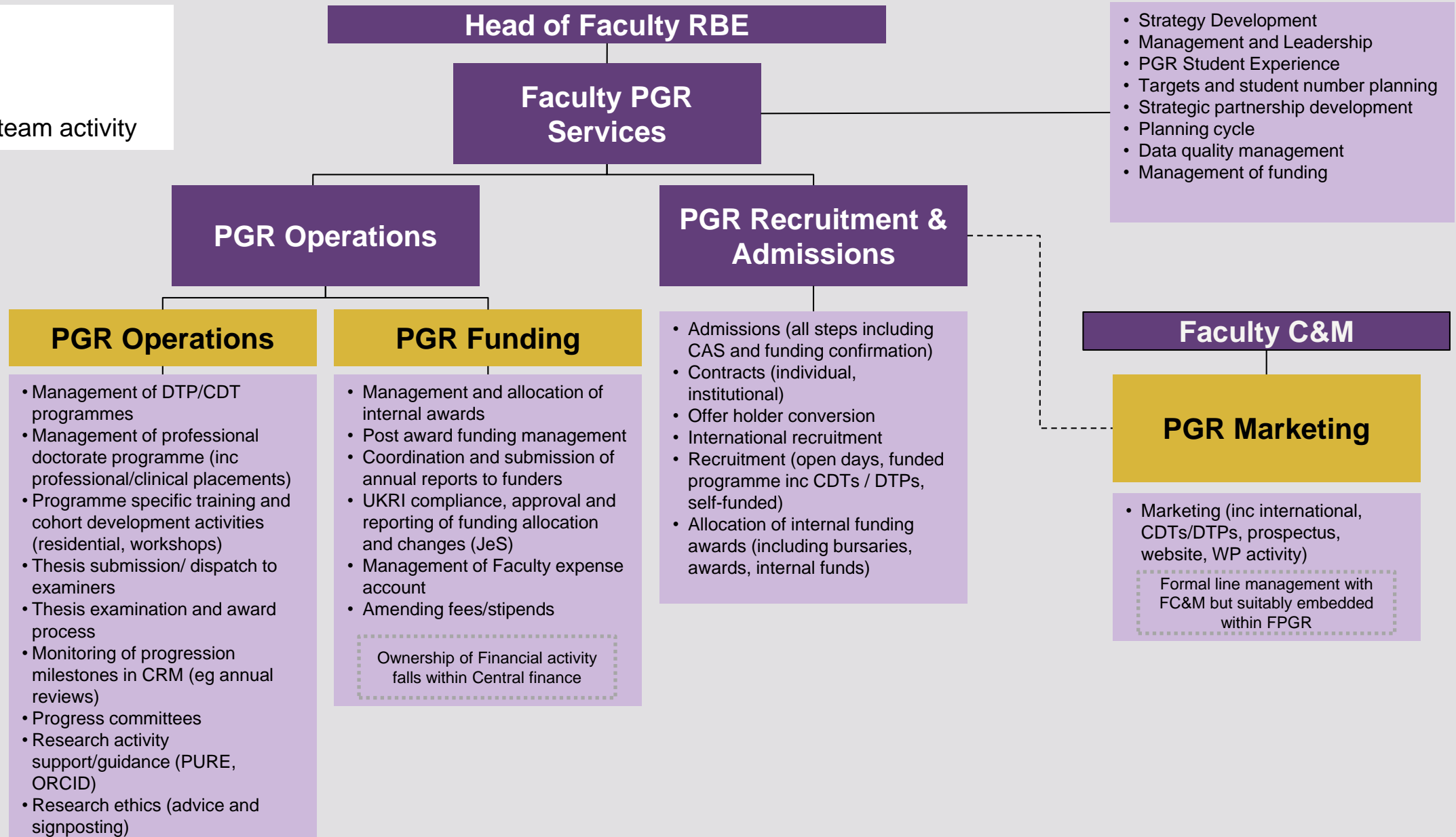
Developing Faculty PGR structure

Key

■ = Team

■ = Sub team

■ = Overview of team activity



Faculty of Science & Engineering

Meeting of the School Board – School of Natural Sciences

Date: 16 February 2021

Dear colleague

Policy and Procedure on Contracts of Employment– School Comments

The University Policy and Procedure on Contracts of Employment clarifies the types of contracts that the University uses for different working arrangements and explains the use of fixed term contracts and permanent contracts and the potential redundancy/termination arrangements that apply.

The Procedure outlines the mechanism for Collective Consultation between the University and the recognised Campus Trade Unions on the likely number of fixed term contracts and permanent contracts which are externally funded and which have grant/project end dates and which are due to be terminated over the forthcoming months. Such consultations include seeking ways to avoid the dismissals and reducing the numbers of employees to be dismissed and at all stages of both collective (i.e. with the Trade Unions) and individual (i.e. with the members of staff affected) consultation. Steps are taken to seek redeployment, extension to contract etc in an attempt to avoid as many dismissals as possible.

In accordance with University Statutes and Ordinances (Ordinance XXIII Procedure for the dismissal of members of staff by reason of redundancy pursuant to Statute XIII, Part II) a University Staffing Committee has been established to consider the proposals for dismissal of staff due to redundancy and in this regard, under the above circumstances.

The School's views are sought on the following:

In this School, for the period 1 March 2021 – 31 August 2021, there are currently 175 staff on fixed term or permanent contracts whose funding is of finite duration, and who are therefore at risk of redundancy at the conclusion of their contract of employment. Through collective consultation as described above, and individual consultation between the members of staff and their line managers, efforts are being made to seek further funding and or redeployment opportunities in order to avert the consequence of redundancy.

Experience to date shows that most of the staff in this category who wish to continue working at the University will be successfully retained in employment.

Eva Azariah
Human Resources Officer
Faculty of Science and Engineering