

Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences
Recruitment and Outreach Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 22nd June 2021, 2pm

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/98075058726>

1. Welcome/Apologies

Present: Rhian Jones (Admissions Tutor/Chair), Mike Burton (Head of Department), Jon Pittman (PGR Recruitment), Bee Mistry-Bhudia (FSE Marketing and Student Recruitment Team Leader), Philip Manning, Katherine Harrison (Outreach), Bart van Dongen (Director of Teaching and Learning), Katherine Joy, Cathy Walton, Cecilia Medupin, Suzi Wright (Admissions), Jemma Stewart (FSE Recruitment and Marketing), Joe Phelan (FSE Recruitment and Marketing).

Apologies: Lauren Davis (Admissions Manager), Bill Sellers (Internationalisation), Dave Topping (2+2/Data Science), Russell Garwood (Web and Social Media), Phil Manning.

2. Actions from previous minutes and matters arising

The previous minutes were confirmed and all actions had been carried out.

ACTION: DT to summarise admissions for MSc Data Science (Environmental Analytics) during summer 2021 to decide whether additional help is required going forward in assessing applications and allocating teaching and resources. **ONGOING. BvD noted that a new academic staff member would be hired to support Data Science additionally.**

ACTION: BMB to liaise with Alison Evans about schools and colleges outreach/WP marketing and report back with central contact names. **PENDING.**

ACTION: BMB/JS to query whereabouts of summer school videos with FSE Marketing (submitted by Cecilia Medupin). **COMPLETE. Kirsty Hawksorth confirmed that FSE Marketing are looking at CM's recent workshop video with a view to creating a video for the Women in ES website (under construction).**

ACTION: BvD to monitor the possibility of future staff away days and items that could be raised regarding pooling and promoting outreach resources there. **NO PROGRESS/PENDING.**

3. Notes from recent IMG meeting and Virtual Open Day

RJ shared her notes with the committee.

Staffing: Lauren Davis has now taken over from Ashley Hall. Suzi Wright and Olivia Tansey will be working with EES over the summer.

Jemma Stewart will be working on EES marketing throughout July, and will hand over to Joe Phelan in August. RJ, MB and the team thanked Jemma for her work with EES.

Virtual Open Day for UG 2022 entry, 19th June (76 registrations and 38 in attendance, roughly 50%): The 1-hour EES presentation was facilitated by BMB. It consisted of an introduction from MB,

and a presentation on courses, careers etc. by RJ. Olivia Tansey was present and two very good student ambassadors. There were quite a few questions in the Q&A session. The session was recorded and will be made available on the website. It would be good to make the slides available to academic staff so that people can refer to them and use them in different contexts. Where is the best place for this? Blackboard staff resources?

ACTION: JS to upload slides from the UG Open Day to the Staff Resources area on Blackboard for general use.

Unibuddy: RJ asked if EES have enough students doing this? Is it likely to become busier over the summer? JS confirmed that those student ambassadors operating on the Unibuddy platform in the previous cycle had now left the University and new Ambassadors were needed to replace them. BMB noted that the next round of recruitment for Ambassadors was pending and due to take place shortly.

CW asked about representation (gender/ethnic diversity) amongst Ambassador recruitment in EES. BMB responded that this is integrated into the forthcoming recruitment approach from Ambassadors. RJ responded that in previous years the recruitment process has been done within the Department and usually all applicants have been appointed as Ambassadors – there has been a tendency for more female students to apply to the role, and there has been a good level of diversity.

Foundation Studies: EES now offer our courses “with an Integrated Foundation Year”. This is being promoted, and admissions for these courses will be dealt with by the Department admissions team from September. The Department should revisit the Foundation Studies course for EES and seriously discuss replacing one of the maths classes with something more relevant to EES. This discussion was raised last year but was shelved because of the pandemic. BvD asked if there was scope to make changes now before the start of the next academic year. MB enquired about Claire Robinson as the Foundation Year Co-ordinator. RJ noted that she mainly oversees the projects for the programme.

ACTION: MB and BvD to contact Claire Robinson about reviewing provision and considering programme alterations for the Foundation Year.

PGT: The VOD course introduction videos are now posted on the relevant web pages and embedded within the course profiles. [Sustainable Geoscience](#) has now had final approval and the website reflects this. There is a drop-in Q&A session for all EES PGT courses on 23rd June.

Data Science: Dave Topping was unable to make it to this meeting. It would be good if he could discuss with Bee how to improve the web pages for the Data Science MSc. A new data science academic position is going to be advertised soon.

ACTION: DT, BMB and JP to discuss website improvement for the MSc Data Science.

2+2: Also Dave Topping. Thinking ahead to the next academic year, Dave suggests a separate meeting to discuss how to approach marketing for 2+2. From Dave:

‘My concern is that even with a virtual event for the 2+2 programme, we are relying on our contacts there to drum up interest in time. I think this will only be solved by a visit. My feeling is I would be happy doing that with someone some point in the autumn, subject to what the travel restrictions would be. I’m also having to go and take part in some experiments in early September and have the maths course back again from mid semester 1. I certainly think it’s worth having a separate meeting about the 2+2 agreement’.

ACTION: DT to co-ordinate a separate meeting to discuss recruitment to the 2+2 programme.

MB raised discussions held with Jonathan Redfern regarding the Department PGT Study Pages, with a potential edit to focus on the energy transition and synergies and connections between many of the MSc programmes and Department research.

ACTION: MB to contact Jonathan Redfern, David Topping and Steve Boulton regarding the PGT Study Pages on the Department website and request that any proposed updates are sent to Jemma Stewart, Joe Phelan and Russell Garwood.

RJ's Notes from June IMG meeting:

The university will pay the mandatory quarantine costs for students entering from red-list countries. There is currently no plan to charter flights, and no plan to cover costs of covid testing for arrivals from amber list countries.

Confirmation and Clearing was discussed. We need to clarify that we can accept BBB in clearing, and also whether we will have a limit on BBB intake. From Lauren:

Following on from IMG yesterday, Becki asked how many BBBs EES accepted last year (2020 entry). I've just had a look at the EES_2020 Confirmation spreadsheet and from that it appears that we accepted 4 x BBB and 5 x ABC. Also appear to have taken 1 x BBC student. The BBC student and 2 of the ABC students were through Clearing though.

Scholarships for 2022 entry were clarified. For EES students we have:

Manchester International Excellence Scholarships

- Highest performing applicants from Africa, South Asia and South East Asia.
- 30 awards of £3,000 per year for the first year of study and then £1,000 per year up to year 4.

Manchester Excellence Scholarships

- Highest performing applicants within each discipline who meet the Widening Participation (WP) or WP+ flag.
- 40 awards of £3,000 per year for the first year of study and then £1,000 per year up to year 4.

Black UK Students Scholarship

- One award of a £9,250 fee waiver per year and a minimum stipend of £3,000 for up to 4 years.
- Aligned to [Cowrie Scholarship](#) principles

The above scholarships to EES students will be named William Boyd Dawkins.

BvD asked about renaming of the William Boy Dawkins scholarship. RJ noted that EES would have to make the case for renaming with a suggestion, but it is not essential to have any name associated with the scholarship as it could fall under one of the generic titles above.

4. Update on applications

Suzi Wright provided an update on applications.

Undergraduate

We have now passed the deadline for the majority of offer holders to reply – 99% of offer holders have replied. 30% have accepted – the total number of accepts is up 35% this academic year. Despite a lower conversion rate this cycle, there was an increase in applications which generated this growth.

Information by course: 43 BSc Earth and Planetary, 81 BSc Environmental Science in the number of accepts. BvD noted that the ratio this time is 54:98, last time it was 43:70. We have now seen for 2

years that numbers on pathways don't differ largely to the numbers that come in to the common first year. There is still not much of an increase in numbers enrolling on the Earth and Planetary Science programmes.

Estimate intake at the point of confirmation prior to Clearing, which is significantly higher than last year: 2 under target for Home, 80 under target for overseas. These do not include the Foundation Year numbers.

MB noted that we could potentially meet our targets without Clearing (not Overseas, but Home). An aim of a maximum of 140 new students remains in place.

Postgraduate Taught

Home accepts down 67%, Overseas accepts up by 36%.

All remain stable, apart from Petroleum Exploration Geoscience applications which are down by 28%. We continue to see growth in acceptance numbers for PGT courses. There are 3 accepts for Geoscience for Sustainable Energy currently.

BvD noted that some institutions have closed their Petroleum Geoscience programmes and the amount of accepts might indicate a higher conversion rate for UoM programmes in light of this.

An estimate intake number of being under target by 12 across all PGT programmes is listed.

5. Communications and Marketing

BMB shared a presentation of recent work and updates from student recruitment and marketing in terms of communications, web updates and events. BMB asked about any further requirements regarding UG conversion – communications, or, a session online. RJ suggested that Teaching and Learning would be the most important aspect for offer holders at this stage. BvD recommended caution on advertising anything without more clarification.

ACTION: BMB to share central UG Open Day recording email with Katherine Joy.

PGT Earth Works advertising is still live. In the last month there were 35,000 views and 30,000 direct views, and click rates were shared. 35 direct clicks were generated from the banner advertising drop in sessions.

The Facebook advert co-ordinated by Kory Stout performed well.

BMB asked Mike Burton about the best courses to include in the Sustainability Campaign. BvD will respond to BMB with a list of courses/programmes leaders.

ACTION: BvD to contact BMB regarding EES programmes for promotion in relation to the Faculty Sustainability campaign.

6. Student Ambassadors, current and future

RJ stated that there has been a move towards the central recruitment of Student Ambassadors, rather than the Departmental recruitment initiatives which have operated previously. BMB and CM to liaise regarding the process of recruiting SAs going forward. CM requested a structure and summary of how the recruitment of Student Ambassadors will work in the months ahead. BMB will act as the main contact with the Department to communicate the stages of the recruitment process and ensure a rigorous selection process with academic input. The start of the process includes an initial step in requesting the number of required Ambassadors per Department. As many current

Ambassadors are finalists, any continuing students currently working will be asked if they wish to remain as Ambassadors during academic year 2021/22.

ACTION: MB to send JS a 'thank you' message of recognition to Student Ambassadors for distribution.

ACTION: BMB to contact CM with more information about the Ambassador Recruitment Process in due course.

7. Manchester Distance Access Scheme

RJ noted that the MDAS programme has been pro-actively highlighted to applicants during this cycle. CM responded that there are currently 15 students enrolled on the programme but the division amongst Environmental and Earth Science is unclear. The course finishes at the end of July. There is an academic element (20 hrs online) and a non-academic element (study skills) to this programme that require passing. The offer holders who pass the course receive a one grade reduction in their offer and therefore their chances of accessing the degree increases. All participants are widening participation students.

There are 3 current students (on-course students) known to have previously completed the MDAS programme. Working closely with admissions will be necessary going forward to track conversion and progression. SW considered that not everyone who undertakes or complete the MDAS will come to Manchester. RJ noted that EES need to be able to identify these students and follow their journey/progress to monitor the success of MDAS and the Department's widening participation strategies.

ACTION: CM to continue liaison with SW and eventually Michael Atherton in Admissions about the recruitment and retention related to MDAS.

8. Data Science: admissions process and marketing needs

Covered in previous section.

9. Outreach: EYP and outreach planning

KH shared A Level Pools Power BI admissions data in relation to Explore Your Planet. Entry onto UoM Environmental Science degree programmes unsurprisingly includes those with A Levels in Biology, Maths, Geography, Chemistry, English and Physics. 'Other science' in the report includes Environmental Science and Geology A Levels. The profile of students that are recruited to UoM Earth and Planetary Science are different – Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Biology having a different emphasis – there are more Physics and Maths A Level students applying for the Earth and Planetary Science degrees, more Biology and Geography A Level students applying to the Environmental Science degrees. Future trends with this A Level Pool data are included with predictions for recruitment. Predictions involve a decline in 'other sciences' studied. This all gives weight to organising Explore Your Planet days within these subject silos (Maths & Physics, Biology & Chemistry, Geography, Geology & Environmental Science).

Delivering EYP in an altered format was proposed. Videos and online activity prior to a live online session. November and February delivery dates followed by a hands-on inward visit to the Department in June, with grants available to students with WP and ethnic minority backgrounds. An EYP brief will be circulated by KH to the Department to request staff help and tie-in to the A Level syllabus. Where the EYP activity sits in terms of A Level study is central to the delivery strategy.

Outreach is being organised through discussions with teachers about target communities with specific goals and events. There will be a call for contributions and actions related to this.

MB asked the committee to reflect on how Geology is lost within the new degree – and how this can be rectified and addressed in messaging. Could EYP include a specific Geology element? KH agreed – this had been proposed previously but didn't occur in practice. MB reiterated that the new degree has protected Geology but visibility is a little poor. RJ mentioned a recent blog post contributed by Stefan Schroder relating to the Geology Pathway that can be promoted.

ACTION: Pathway Profile for Geology to be uploaded and promoted by JS.

BvD asked about EYP attendees and recruitment and conversion. JS provided some analysis.

JS note on Previous events

1. Physics and Maths (on-campus) 20th November 2019. 31 registered. 15/16 attended. Six applications to EES traced. Three are enrolled and have completed Y1 of BSc Earth and Planetary Science.
2. Chemistry and Biology (on-campus) 5th February 2020. 22 registered. 19 attended. One application to EES traced – Conditional offer declined.
3. Physics, Maths, Biology and Chemistry (virtual) 25th November 2020. 92 registrations. 61 attended.
4. Physics, Maths, Biology and Chemistry (virtual) 23rd March 2021. 76 registrations. 21 attended (possibly x2 broadcasting to school groups within attendees).

JS/KH/RJ discussed how the University CRM system should be in place soon, spanning across Dynamics, Gecko, Spotler, and will allow for tracing pre-applicant registrations at events into applications and recruitments – the student journey.

BvD asked about A Level Geology taught in the Manchester area. KH stated that we know the schools that teach A Level Geology. Citizen Science style projects like the Martian Channels event held previously are the kinds of events wanted and needed by this group. The activities presented at EYP will need to link in to their A Level syllabus to ensure relevance and uptake. A specific event for Geologists within EYP is planned.

KJ asked about running fieldwork practical tasters with school groups. KH noted that whilst individual academics have been involved in this kind of activity in the past, the Department as a whole hasn't run this sort of activity before. KH thought that this should be explored.

10. AOB/Date of next meeting

End of August – date TBC – possibly 24 August.

Action Point Summary

ACTION: JS to upload slides from the UG Open Day to the Staff Resources area on Blackboard for general use.

ACTION: MB and BvD to contact Claire Robinson about reviewing provision and considering programme alterations for the Foundation Year.

ACTION: DT, BMB and JP to discuss potential website improvements for the MSc Data Science.

ACTION: DT to co-ordinate a separate meeting to discuss recruitment to the 2+2 programme with key staff.

ACTION: MB to contact Jonathan Redfern, David Topping and Steve Boulton regarding the PGT 'Study' Pages on the Department website and request that any proposed updates are sent to Jemma Stewart, Joe Phelan and Russell Garwood.

ACTION: BMB to share centrally distributed UG Open Day recording email with Katherine Joy.

ACTION: BvD to contact BMB regarding EES programmes for promotion in relation to the Faculty Sustainability campaign.

ACTION: MB to send JS a 'thank you' message of recognition to Student Ambassadors for distribution.

ACTION: Pathway Profile for Geology to be uploaded to the EES blog and promoted by JS.

ACTION: BMB to contact CM with more information about the Ambassador Recruitment Process in due course.

ACTION: CM to continue liaison with SW and eventually Michael Atherton in Admissions about the recruitment and retention related to MDAS.