DECEMBER 2021

TLSD Academic Development and Policy (ADP) Bulletin

Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development

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1. Staffing updates

- **Emma Hilton Wood**

Emma Hilton Wood will be leaving the University after 16 years, with her last day being 16th December. She is moving on to work for the Royal Northern College of Music as Academic Registrar.

We thank Emma for all her help, support and leadership during the past 16 years in TLSO/TLSD and wish her all the best in her new role!

- **Peer Support and Student Partnership/Success teams**

We are pleased to welcome the following new Student Engagement Graduate Officers to our Peer Support and Student Partnership/Success teams:

Peer Support cohort 2021/22
- AliEldeen Kamal - Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Peer Support) alieldeen.kamel@manchester.ac.uk
- Leanne Grey- Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Peer Support) leanne.grey@manchester.ac.uk
- Emily Robertson - Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Peer Support) emily.robertson@manchester.ac.uk
- Charlotte Beresford-Jones - Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Peer Support) charlotte.beresford-jones@manchester.ac.uk

Student Partnership/Success cohort 2021/22
- Ester Demideh - Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Student Success) ester.demideh@manchester.ac.uk
- Mila Paisley - Student Engagement Graduate Officer (Student Partnership) mila.paisley@manchester.ac.uk

2. New or updated policies and procedures

- **Updates to Regulation, Policy and Guidelines for Monitoring the Attendance, Engagement and Wellbeing of Students**

The Teaching and Learning and Strategy Group (TLSG) and Senate have recently approved updates to [Regulation XX: Monitoring Attendance, Engagement and Wellbeing of Students](), the [Policy on Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement]() and the associated [Guidelines for monitoring student attendance and engagement]().

A full review of the documents had been suspended whilst the [engagement monitoring project]() was completed. Following a pilot of a [new digital system to record and report on student attendance](), the new tool is planned to be fully rolled out across the University from next academic year. The Regulation, Policy and Guidelines have been updated to refer to the new engagement monitoring project/digital system for recording and reporting on attendance, as well as to amend any out of date information in the documentation and to strengthen the wellbeing element of attendance monitoring procedures.

A further full-scale review and consultation of the documents is recommended to take place by September 2023.

The updated documents are all available on the main [Recording and monitoring student attendance, engagement and wellbeing webpage](). Messages are also in preparation to provide details directly to students of the arrangements in place for recording and monitoring their attendance, engagement and wellbeing.

Information for students about attendance monitoring, particularly the new digital system, has been communicated to them via email and there are also details on the ['Welcome' webpage]().

- **Updated Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances**

The Basic Guide has been updated to reflect the arrangements put in place for the 2021/22 academic year (e.g. removal of references to the Assessment Pledge, which has now been replaced by the Assessment Commitments) and more information for students on possible outcomes from a request for mitigation.

The updated document can be found at: [Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances]()

2. New or updated policies and procedures (continued)

- **Updated Guidance on Mitigating Circumstances related to IT Issues**

Guidance was put in place last year to support the decision for unavoidable computer/IT issues to be accepted as a possible ground for mitigation circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic. This guidance has recently been revised slightly to bring it up to date for the current academic year, acknowledging that IT issues can still be considered as a possible ground for mitigation this year. The updates include:

- details of support available for low income students who do not have access to Wi-Fi facilities or if their IT equipment breaks, etc.;
- a link to the new 'help with exam and assessment issues' support web page;
- clarification that, if a student has continuous or multiple IT issues (e.g. regular disruption of their internet provision), they should contact their School at the earliest convenience to discuss;
- confirmation that a screenshot or photograph of any error message is preferable to a video of IT issues students are facing;
- clarification that failure to back up work regularly and leaving completion or submission of work so late that students cannot find another suitable computer or printer to complete/submit their work, would not normally be accepted as grounds for mitigation;
- a new line stating that students who have opted to study remotely from outside of the UK will have been informed of the relevant IT requirements to enable them to successfully undertake their required work and study.

The updated guidance can be found on the main [Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions web page](), with a direct link to the document being: https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=51373.

A 'tracked changes' version of the Guidance can be found [here](), for reference (University user name and password required).

- **Updated Procedure for Student Self-Certification of Absence from Learning**

The Procedure has had a small number of revisions made to it including the following:

- Clarification that the procedure relates to teaching and learning activities but does not extend to exams or assessment: if students' illness or absence is likely to affect their attendance at, or performance in any exams or assessment, they should consider submitting a claim for mitigation, under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances.
- Clarification that students are expected to submit their self-certification form as soon as possible, but normally within two working days of the end of their period of absence.
- A new statement confirming that Schools should monitor the number of self-certification forms a student submits so that if a student submits multiple self-certification of absence forms in one academic year, particularly if these are for the same condition, Schools should contact the student to speak to them and to check if there are any support needs or relevant onward referrals required to specific support offices or other resources.

2. New or updated policies and procedures (continued)

- A new statement confirming that if international students are absent from study for 10 days without the knowledge or permission of the University, the institution is legally required to inform the Home Office (UKVI), which could result in the student's visa being rescinded.
- Confirmation that although student self-certification forms will not be accepted to cover absence from exams or other forms of assessment (and student are advised to submit a claim for mitigation in these circumstances, to have their circumstances taken into account), submitted student self-certification forms could be used as a form of evidence towards a claim for mitigation under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances. However, the student's claim for mitigation would be stronger if they also provided appropriate, independent, third-party supporting or collaborative documentation.

The updated version can be found:

- o on the Student self-certification of absence from learning web page,
- o and directly as a PDF document at: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=48679

A 'tracked changes' version of the Procedure can be found here, for reference (University user name and password required).

- **Updated Student Guidance on Academic Malpractice**

The Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and other Forms of Academic Malpractice has been revised slightly in order to tie up the definitions of types of academic malpractice with those found in the University's Academic Malpractice Procedure.

The updated Guidance document can be found at:

- o Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and other Forms of Academic Malpractice

- **Updated Guidance for Obtaining Consent for Recording Student Participation in Teaching Activities**

The original 'Guidance for Recording Student Participation' has recently been updated slightly to clarify the details for obtaining consent from students for recording their participation in teaching activities, and to tie it in more closely with the recently updated Policy on Recording Lectures and other Teaching and Learning Activities.

The updated Guidance can be found at:

- o Guidance for Obtaining Consent for Recording Student Participation in Teaching Activities Teaching and Learning Surveys

2. New or updated policies and procedures (continued)

- **New 'teaching-policy' email address**

A new email address of teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk has been introduced and will, over time, be included on all of the teaching and learning policy and procedure documents produced by the Academic Development and Policy (ADP) team of TLSD. This email address will be used as the main point of contact for any queries relating to ADP owned policy documents.

3. Programme management – Annual Review of Teaching and Learning

This year's Annual Review of Teaching and Learning (ARTL) is due to take place on **Thursday 27 January 2022.** The ARTL is an annual and extended meeting of the Teaching and Learning Group Strategy (TLSG) and is a mechanism for ensuring the oversight, review and further development of the University's policies, procedures and structures for the support and enhancement of teaching and learning. This event is the culmination of the continuous monitoring of programmes in the university, with an emphasis on self-review and action planning. Similar to last year, the event will be facilitated by our students in partnership with UMSU and details will follow in the New Year so that we can enhance and learn from the event in 2021.

The deadline dates for Facults to submit their SEAPs in preparation for the ARTL will be **12 January 2022**, and further details have recently been sent to Faculty Vice Deans and Teaching Learning Managers.

4. Student Experience Surveys

- **Unit Survey dates**

The unit survey dates for this semester are 13 December 2021 to 9 January 2022. Core questions have been approved by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG) and have been shared with Unit Survey contacts, along with the usual invitation to add any local questions.

- **National Student Surveys (NSS)**

This year's NSS is due to take place between 7 February and 30 April 2022.

Promotion of NSS 2022
Continuing arrangements from last year, the OfS have announced that to reduce the burden on providers, English HE institutions are not required to promote the survey to their students.

If providers are at risk of not meeting the publication threshold, they will be put into a booster phase whereby additional email reminders and an additional SMS will be sent to their non-responding students. The booster phase will start automatically if a provider's response rate is below 43 percent by mid-March, and will continue until mid-April.

4. Student Experience Surveys (continued)

Additionally, it has been noted that the new questions asked about the impact of Covid on student experiences will not be asked in 2022.

This translates to **optional** local promotion which will be supported centrally by updating our central supporting toolkit and digital assets to align with 2022 OfS guidance.

We will also continue with our commitment to donate to four charities for each completed survey. The charities are selected for their alignment with our university values and strategic aims, and or because our student community already has an active relationship with them. We then survey our final year students in the New Year so they can choose the four charities that they wish for us to make an equitable sum to. It is wonderful news that this year we are doubling our commitment and donating £2 for each completed survey!

These interim arrangements are caveated with the delivery of a new survey strategy that is being developed by Transforming Teaching Together @Manchester this session which, amongst other things, will present an opportunity for T&L to align with SC&M to implement a systematic and strategic approach to the promotion of surveying.

5. Transforming Teaching Together @Manchester

- **Unitu staff bulletins**

Unitu is an award-winning online platform that helps universities and students' unions to collect and analyse student data in real time, and deliver faster improvements to the student experience. Staff and student guidance about Unitu is available on our Unitu website.
We also now publish regular Unitu bulletins, which you can find on our Unitu bulletins webpage, for up to date details about Unitu.

6. Student Success and Engagement/Peer Support update

- **Student Engagement and Partnership in Action**

Now that we have our 2000+ trained Students across Peer Support and Student Partnership, we have some highlights to share of the impact they are having on Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience in their roles.

Firstly, as part of our QA processes we have been observing our PASS Leaders in action over the last couple of weeks. We saw 115 sessions with a total of 230 leaders in action; running quizzes, icebreakers, like Music's fun and successful highlight/lowlight and song of the week, and scheme specific activities such as supporting Russian students in developing their language skills. It is an excellent opportunity for us to see our fantastic community enhancing the learning of other students and offering them feedback to further develop their skills. We have been feeding back our observations to schemes so they can further improve and enhance the support on offer as well as looking what we can develop programme wide to support our leaders!

We also met with some of our Student Coordinators at a debrief session where we caught up on all the exciting innovations they are making to support leaders, mentors and first years. Our focus was on awards and it was amazing to hear the enthusiasm among our coordinators to be award winning schemes/individuals. We are looking forward to the hard job of deciding which of our outstanding community will win come March!

6. Student Success and Engagement/Peer Support update (continued)

On a similar note, our Student Partners have been kicking off their projects, meeting with their staff partners and learning more about what they are and what they can bring to the table. We have students partnering with staff in a number of different areas such as – shaping the future of learning at UoM through FLP, projects looking at watch along parties, students shaping Peer Mentoring for International Students and many more. We also have a brand-new project getting started very soon that will see student and staff partners supporting incoming international students and delivering 'virtual student experience' sessions!

Seeing our 24 Student Partners and 2000 strong Peer Support volunteers in action (particularly now we are back on campus) has been wonderful. We are excited to bring you more updates of the incredible work they are doing and hopefully share more successes (particularly through LEAP) in future updates!

7. Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL)

- **NEW! Report cheating services via** cheating.spam@manchester.ac.uk

The Contract Cheating Task and Finish Group has worked with IT Services and the Advice and Response team (Student Conduct and Discipline) to implement a new service to help combat contract cheating.

Students (or staff) can now:

- o Forward any email they receive directly from an essay mill or purported 'academic writing service'

- o Submit concerns about a website that appears to enable contract cheating, collusion or other forms of malpractice (masquerading as 'essay writing help', 'ask an expert', 'homework help' etc.)

to: cheating.spam@manchester.ac.uk

In the first 10 days since its launch, on 15 November 2021, the service received 450 emails. The Advice and Response team will be going through the inbox to gain intel from the information provided and will seek to block domains from campus machines and/or emails to student email addresses if possible and appropriate.

7. Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL) (continued)

The planned actions for dealing with these emails is outlined below:
a) IT Services will be asked to block essay mills/suspicious sites from contacting our students (similar to the current practice with phishing emails)
b) Suspicious sites would be blocked from on campus machines
c) If necessary, work would be carried out with the Legal Team to get reported sites to stop using the University logo or materials etc.
d) As part of this process, we should be able to get a sense of the "climate" out there in terms of contract cheating.

Colleagues are asked to help get the message out to students about this service, as one way in which they can take action against cheating. Staff may find the following resources useful in communicating about this issue with students:

- o   The **Contract Cheating Toolkit** (particularly the 'Messaging to students' section)

Student-facing resources and messaging about Contract Cheating
- o   [Guidance to students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice](#)
- o   A UoM student-authored piece [Contract Cheating: what it is and how to avoid it](#) on the Student News microsite
- o   The [University of Manchester Library My Learning Essentials](#) resource '[Avoiding plagiarism'](#) includes examples about contract cheating
- o   A warning about [Scams and Risks](#) associated with Essay mills on the Student Support Microsite: Finances section
- o   Advice on [Avoiding academic malpractice](#) on the Student Support Microsite: Assessments and Exams section
- o   A digital poster [Work Hard, Work Honestly](#), produced by a University Student Focus Group (July 2020)

- **Time for TEA!**

The Institute of Teaching and Learning blog [TEA: Each, Explore Apply](#) shares teaching and learning stories from across the University. Creating an inclusive teaching environment, tips on Dual Delivery teaching, engaging students with difficult content, decolonising the curriculum… these topics and more are covered in short, conversational pieces with a practical focus. Why not treat yourself to five minutes with a cup of tea and a refreshing perspective on all matters teaching and learning from Manchester staff and students.

We'd really like to hear your responses to the stories we feature, or suggestions for contributions – email the ITL team at teaching.learning@manchester.ac.uk

7. Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL) (continued)

- **Teaching and Learning Online Network (TALON)**

A reminder that the University's Teaching and Learning Online Network (TALON) on Yammer is a great place to share events relating to teaching and learning practice, discuss any topics you find particularly interesting, or to ask questions from colleagues across the institution with expertise and/or interest in this area. Anyone can 'join' the group using the button towards the top right of the screen, and if you post a question you will get an email notification when someone responds.

- **ITL welcome three new Academic Leads**

We are thrilled to share details of the three newest members of the ITL team who have joined us as Academic Leads. These roles will be key to supporting our overarching vision to embed teaching excellence across the University at all levels. Collectively, they will focus on our Student Success and Academic Development programmes.

They each bring a wealth of experience with them from working across the University and hold Senior Fellowships with AdvanceHE. We are very much looking forward to sharing news about their work in due course.

Read on to find out more about them...

Jennie Blake (Head of Teaching and Learning Development at the Library and a National Teaching Fellow) is an advocate for inclusive and accessible teaching and will be working primarily on our Student Success programmes, to which she brings her experience of leading on the strategy and development of the Library's teaching and learning activities.

Hannah Cobb (Professor of Archaeology and Pedagogy and Associate Director for eLearning and Teaching Innovation in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (SALC)) will focus on enhancing and broadening our suite of Academic Development programmes.

Dr. Nick Weise (Lecturer in Natural Sciences, departmental Teaching & Learning Enhancement Lead (Chemistry) and Faculty Academic Lead for PGR Training (Biology, Medicine & Health)) will work across both Student Success and Academic Development. His interests include inclusive, effective learning environments, integrating diverse student voices and building social/cultural capital.

8. Contact

If you are aware of other staff members who would like to be added to the Academic Development and Policy TLSD Bulletin mailing list to receive future editions of the Bulletin, please contact Miriam Graham (email m.graham@manchester.ac.uk).

If you are from a Collaborative Partner and you are having difficulties accessing any of the linked documents or web pages, please also contact Miriam Graham (m.graham@manchester.ac.uk).

The Academic Development and Policy/Peer Support area of the TLSD website is available at: http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/

To find out more information about the Division of Teaching, Learning and Student Development, please visit: http://www.dse.manchester.ac.uk/our-directorate/tlsd/

Wishing you a very happy, peaceful Christmas and New Year period!

Season's greetings