



## SoSS School News

Your round up of news and events across  
the School of Social Sciences

# Head of School Report - Brian Heaphy

Dear Colleagues

I hope you are well, and that you are coping with the current lockdown as well as possible. It was really good to see so many of you at last week's School Board. I haven't been communicating with you intensely via email this January because I know you have been marking and preparing for Semester 2, and there have been a large number of emails about policy coming through.

As far as the implications for lockdown for campus presence are concerned, as you will know, the general rule is that we should work from home until further notice following Government guidelines, and only in very exceptional circumstances (linked to well-being and the impossibility of working from home) will people get permission from Alison or myself to access an 'open space' in one of the University Buildings (not the building you usually work in).

If access is needed to an on-campus University facility to record lectures, a request must be submitted to Alison, and I will consider it. All research should be undertaken from your home – and virtual research should be undertaken instead of face-to face fieldwork. In truly exceptional circumstances you can apply to restart research, but it is unlikely that I will approve any travel or face-to-face research under the current circumstances.

As Mario outlines below we (the University) have responded to students' requests to repeat of last year 'no disadvantage' policy with an 'assessment pledge'. This has raised a set of operational challenges for PS teams and academics which Mario, Jo and their teams are addressing.

As you will have seen from the President's and others' communications there is now a budget for small items (up to the value of £50) to support work at home, that can be claimed through Heads of Departments. There have also been communications about work furniture and IT that is worth being familiar yourselves with. DABs and RSAs remain in place.

Please use the appropriate form for spending requests/approvals, and submit them to Clare Hunt, and not directly to me.

We are currently going ahead with 11 permanent appointments across the School. Any additional posts to be factored in to next year's budget will depend on approvals once our financial targets have been agreed. We have also approved School funded PGR spending for next year.

I can't emphasise enough my appreciation for how much the success of the School so far this academic year has been a result of PS and academics' outstanding responses to the unique challenges we have faced.

Thank you, and I wish you all the best for the coming semester.

## Teaching and Learning News - Mario Pezzino

### Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who has taught in semester 1 and all the PS colleagues who have managed our programmes and supported our students so far. I have witnessed immense efforts and, in general, encouraging appreciation from our students. Online exams are now on the way and we are working to address a few new challenges related to the recent lockdown and the University response in the form of the Assessment Pledge (see below).

### Assessment Pledge

I would expect that the majority of colleagues in the School are aware that on 19th January 2021 the University published an Assessment Pledge in light of the ongoing

COVID pandemic. With the onset of a further period of lockdown in January 2021, students studying humanities subjects were advised by the government to remain at home and, even for those in Manchester, to avoid attending campus. The Assessment Pledge recognises these circumstances and aims to support students completing assessments at this time and for the remainder of this academic year.

The timing and content of the Pledge raise a number of complex operational challenges, ranging from the management of automatic extensions, to the design and implementation of enhanced moderation and grade scaling. I am aware that the uncertainty behind the implementation of the Pledge has required colleagues to process large volumes of queries, both from students and staff. I am very grateful to everyone involved in this. Faculty, Directors of T&L and Heads of T&L (in consultation with T&L leads and PS managers) in the four Schools are working to address these challenges. While key decisions are agreed, communications and guidance to staff and students are also currently being produced.

[Read the full Assessment Pledge](#)

## Leadership in Education Awards Programme (LEAP)

Registration is now open to the **Leadership in Education Awards Programme (LEAP)** and will close at 5pm, 9th February. The programme supports you in documenting and evidencing your teaching excellence, and can award Associate, Fellowship, Senior and Principal HEA Fellowships

## Library Assessment Support

The library continues to provide **Assessment Support** to students.

In addition, academic staff can request to embed a curated “package” of revision resources into programme level Blackboard spaces. Simply complete an online form and/or contact [Janette Watson](#), (Economics/Politics/Philosophy/Sociology/Social Anthropology/Social Statistics) or [Paul Tate](#), (Law/Criminology).

**Complete the online form**

## NSS

The **NSS** is back. The week commencing the 8th of February the University will launch the NSS campaign across University-wide channels. This year, the University is offering two incentives to students completing the NSS: (i) a prize draw for Amazon vouchers (10 prizes of £400 of Amazon vouchers - prize draw will close at midnight on the 31 March 2021); (ii) for each response submitted the University will also make a £1 donation to charity.

Jo Kaiserman (SoSS Head of T&L) and I shall discuss with Departments and Programme Teams the plans for School and Programme level promotion of the survey.

## Sharing good practice in T&L in SoSS

I have discussed with the departmental T&L leads in the School the importance of sharing good practice and, in particular, our recent experiences with teaching our students remotely. Departments have been asked to identify examples of good practice and success that could be shared widely with the rest of the School. During the next School T&L Committee we shall discuss ways to share this information (e.g. short videos, Q&As, webpages, webinars, etc).

## Review of post-18 education and funding

For those of you interested in policy, funding and regulation of the HE sector, the Government has published an interim response to the review of post-18 education and funding (Augar review, **post-qualifications admissions consultation** and **TEF**).

The **Russell Group** and **Universities UK** have published their initial reactions. The review and the response of the Government clearly raise a series of very important considerations. I would expect that conversations at every level (University, Faculty and School) will take place in the future once there will be more clarity and input from the Government.

[Read the interim response to the review](#)

## Research News - Claire Alexander

### REF

The final preparations for our REF submissions are now almost complete, and will be signed off by Faculty on 1st February. There are a number of 'backroom' administrative tasks still to be undertaken by the central administration before they hit the button to submit in March, but we hope that the end is in sight.

Many thanks to the UoA teams, to all impact case study authors, and to all colleagues who have taken part in the long process of reviewing outputs, impact cases and environment statements. Particular, and heartfelt, thanks to our wonderful PS support – Gillian Whitworth, Clare Canning, Carly Chadwick, Elaine Edwards and Louise Gorton - who have been the bedrock of all of our preparations, and kept us on track.

And thanks of course to all members of the School who have written books and papers and chapters, made films and collated data bases, brought in research funds, supervised PGRs and engaged with the wide range of academic and non-academic partners, which have given us so much rich material from which to develop our submissions.

Congratulations to Tarani Chandola (Social Statistics), Alastair Hall (Economics) and Georgina Waylen (Politics) who were all appointed to REF subpanels in the last round. They join Helen Beebee (Philosophy) and Penny Harvey (Social Anthropology) who were appointed last year. REF subpanel membership is a testament to their reputation and role in shaping the field, and we are delighted to have such a strong representation in this REF exercise.

### New Awards

Congratulations to the following colleagues who have been successful in grant awards:

Sherilyn MacGregor (Politics) – Leverhulme Research Grant ‘Environmental Sustainability in Immigrant Households’

Debbie Price (Sociology) – NIHR Grant “The impact of Care Act Easements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 on co-resident older carers of partners with dementia”

Natalie Shlomo (Social Statistics) – ESRC Research Development Methods, ‘Methodological Advancements on the use of Administrative Data in Official Statistics’

Debbie Price (Sociology) – ESRC IAA ‘Pension Advisory Group’

Hillary Pilkington (Sociology) – ESRC IAA ‘Talking Our Way Out of Conflict: Developing a Practitioner Toolkit’

Elaine Dewhurst (Law) - MICRA Seedcorn fund award ‘Uncertain Futures: Inequalities affecting women over 50 years at work in Manchester’

## Thank you

Finally, at the end of January, Gillian Whitworth will be leaving her School role (as Research Support Manager and REF manager) for a new Faculty role overseeing strategic grant applications. Gillian has worked in the School for 20 years, and has been a wonderful support to PS and academic colleagues across this period. I have been especially grateful for Gillian’s experience, wisdom, patience and good humour during my tenure as School Research Director, notably in guiding us through the recent REF preparations. She will be very much missed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her, and wish her well in her new role.

## Social Responsibility - Dimitris Papadimitriou

### Congratulations...

To Saba Mirshafiei, who has been selected as a member of the new Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel.

Greater Manchester’s Race Equality Panel aims to tackle inequality, injustice and

discrimination in society, through the advancement of equity, fairness and positive relationships in public organisations and the services they deliver.

[Find out more](#)

## Socially Responsible Students

Our student Pro Bono Society kept themselves busy in Semester One with a full schedule of volunteering and fundraising activities!

Throughout the term, the society organised a mentoring scheme pairing A level and GCSE students with university students for monthly mentoring meetings. On top of this they also created the Higher Education Project, a series of webinars for secondary school students about university life and studying law.

Fundraising activities throughout the term included a Halloween Quiz, the Great Legal Raffle and **'Go the Extra Mile for Justice 2020'**. Fundraising activity around Christmas raised a total of £140 for Refugee Action

## Engagement and External Relations - Claire McGourlay

Raise the profile of your research papers with our research beacons

Tagging your profile increases opportunities for papers to be cross promoted and found by policymakers, industry decision makers and other academics.

Pure allows you to link relevant records held in Pure to any of the University's Beacon areas.

Records could include publications, activities, datasets, prizes or press coverage.

[Find out how to tag your Pure profile](#)

# PGR Wellbeing Update

## Supporting PGR well-being.

There are a number of resources for supporting PGRs well-being, collated below:

- Wellbeing and mental health section of **PGR Code of Practice**
- Supervising Stressed Students **Video**
- The PGR Supervisors **Toolkit** which contains a section on support and wellbeing, including the wellbeing and **mental health flowchart** for supervisors
- **Guidance on how to spot the signs of stress**
- **Supervisors flowchart**

There are also 2 courses supervisors can do:

**Supporting PGR Mental Health and Wellbeing for PGR Supervisors**

**Case Studies for PGR Supervision in the Context of Mental Health Difficulties**

# Head of School Operations - Alison Wilson

## We welcome to SoSS:

Wendy Wanmer (Timetabling Assistant) and Elliot Henderson (Programme Assistant) and Toby Nicholas, Nazra Haque and Emily Wells as Grad interns to the UG Hub. Serena Robinson has joined the PG Hub as a Grad Intern and we will soon be welcoming Sindra Zira as Programme Assistant in the PG Hub.

## Teaching and Learning PS Support

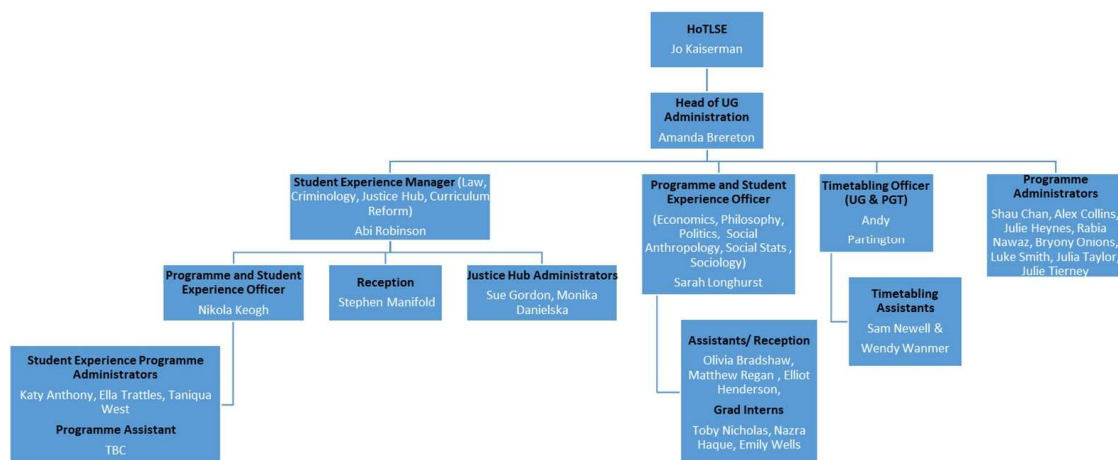
We have recently made some adjustments to the structure of the T&L PS teams. We have moved to a model of 2 hubs: a UG hub (based in ALB) and a PG hub (based in Williamson). This is a temporary structure in lieu of SEP which is to be rolled out from Summer 2021 to Spring 2022. (Updated organisational charts are below)

The rationale for this move is to allow us to be more agile in responding to the continuous changing environment we find ourselves in. We need to align practice and



process across the former schools wherever possible so that we can quickly adapt with minimal disruption. Our structure also needs to better allow for providing cover for staff absences/losses due to organisational change and staff sickness. This model also frees up some time for Abi Robinson to oversee Curriculum Review in the Department Law.

## SoSS Undergraduate Hub



## SoSS Postgraduate Hub

\*Mat leave

\*\* will be transferred over to the new Programme Administrator

Applications and Admissions PS Support

You are already aware Admissions and Applications moved to be managed by the Faculty from 1st October. Under the new structure as a result of the SEP changes HUMS will have 2 Grade 7 Admissions managers. Whilst this is a reduction from the 4 that we currently have across the Faculty, the Grade 7 role is a different to the current one, and HUMS will have 5 Grade 6 Admissions Officers which means that each School will have a dedicated Admissions Officer to focus on their arm of the Admissions Team.

The HUMS admissions team will be structured so that there are four school-facing teams, albeit those school teams will be flexible and agile so that we can direct staff to where their skills and experience are needed the most. Emma Rose is currently putting a matrix structure in place with strategic leads for UG and PGT, and line management for school staff.

Amanda will take a strategic lead on UG Admissions and line manage the SoSS and SALC teams. Tania will take a strategic lead on PGT Admissions and line manage the AMBS and SEED teams

Although still in the Faculty, Amanda will be stepping away from her current School focused role. However, SOSS' dedicated Grade 6 Admissions Officer (to be confirmed) will be focused on the School's admissions, managing the team and working with the School Leadership Team and working with academic colleagues. The Grade 7s will have strategic oversight and be there to support the School and the school's admissions team, engaging with the School Leadership Team when required. I am sure you will all be delighted that we are not losing Amanda totally!

## Engagement and External Relations

As you are aware Will Bevin-Nicholls left at the end of September under the VS scheme. I am delighted to announce that Sarah Tiffany-Dodman has formally taken on the leadership of the team from the 1st January, although she has been working with the team from October.

Sarah's old role of Head of School Departments no longer exists but we will shortly be recruiting a Senior Department Administrator to manage department support and provide support to the HoDs.

## Student Experience Programme (SEP)

### **Cohort 1 ('student marketing and recruitment' / 'applications and admissions'):**

- Formal consultation with the Campus Trade Unions was concluded with their agreement. There were no compulsory redundancies.
- New structures and revised job descriptions for 'student marketing and recruitment' and 'applications and admissions' have been agreed and will be implemented.
- The HUMS admissions team will be structured so that there are four school-facing teams Amanda Grimshaw will take a strategic lead on UG Admissions and line manage the SoSS and SALC teams. Tania Smith will take a strategic lead on PGT Admissions and line manage the AMBS and SEED teams.
- Now the leadership is in place the process of matching permanent colleagues to roles and confirming initial assignments will begin
- Vacancies remaining at the end of this process will be ring fenced for redeployees and in-scope staff. This will give colleagues on fixed term contracts, whose skills and expertise we value, the opportunity to secure a permanent post.

### **Cohort 2 ('teaching, learning, student experience and campus life' and 'postgraduate research'):**

- The timeline for Cohort 2 has been finalised.
- Engagement on emerging high-level proposals will recommence from late February, with professional services staff, academic colleagues and students.
- To help us maintain our core activities, implementation of the new structures will be staggered from summer 2021 to spring 2022.
- Consultation on proposed changes to roles at Grade 6 and above is expected to begin in July 2021, with implementation from December 2021.
- Consultation on proposed changes to Grades 2 to 5 roles is expected begin in November 2021 with implementation from June 2022.

- All staff in SoSS on fixed term contracts in Cohort 2 are having their contracts extended until 31 March 2022.

## Finance Update

Following a change in staff in the Finance Directorate the key finance contacts for the school are:

Head of School Finance: Lizzy Langton  
Management Accountants: Suzanne Davies and Gareth Martin  
Senior Finance Officer: Karen Hildreth  
Finance Officer: Stuart Baker

Please email all queries to [seedandsossfinance@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:seedandsossfinance@manchester.ac.uk)

## Information Governance

### Sharing personal data – data breaches

The University must ensure that it fully complies with the provisions of data protection law. It's really important that all staff members who work with personal data familiarise themselves with data protection principles and our obligations. Failures or weaknesses in our processing of personal data can result in significant harm and distress to individuals who may be affected and may also cause significant reputational damage to the University. <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/igo/data-protection/>

Please adhere to the **email guidance** set out on Staffnet.

If there are any data breaches within our School please let Sarah Tiffany-Dodman know (IG Guardian for SoSS).

### Information Risk Register

The Information Governance Office have developed a specific Information Governance Risk Register Assessment in OneTrust for academic research projects, following feedback that the standard IGRR assessment didn't quite work for such projects. It only needs to be completed in certain circumstances (i.e. high risk processing).

This aim of the screening assessment is to identify projects or activities where there are likely to be information risks, in order for advice and guidance to be provided by the Information Governance Office and IT Security, to minimise those risks. It must be completed by the business owner or project manager as early as possible, if any of the following apply:

- You are involved in the procurement or development of a new IT system
- You are making changes to an existing IT system
- You are involved in a non-IT-related project or activity that involves collecting, using or sharing, information or data (whether it's personal data or not)

[Find out more](#)

[Read the President's update](#)

[Read the latest Humanities eNews](#)



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