



Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Department Leadership Team Meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 14th September 2022

Part 1 Attendees;

Mike Burton (Head of Department)
Ann Webb (Deputy Head of Department)
Helena Gittins (Deputy School Operations Manager)
Katie Joy (Chair of Widening Participation committee)
Mandy Edwards (Discipline Head of Education)
Cathy Hollis (Discipline Head of Research)
David Polya (Line Manager)
Mads Huuse (Line Manager)
David Schultz (Line Manager)
Jon Pittman (PGR director)
Rhodri Jerrett (Admissions)
Luis Garcia-Carreras (Employability)
Carl Jackson (PS Safety)
Rob Gardham (PS PA)
Romain Tartese (Forum Chair)
David Topping (Line Manager)

Apologies; Russell Garwood (IT Director), Scott Heath (Line Manager)

Summary Actions

None carried over and none new.

Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous meeting were confirmed.

HoD Introduction and report

Mike Burton (MB)

New starters who have joined us include Data Science Lecturer Zhonghua Zheng and Global Ecology Lecturer Joshua Lynn. The Chair in Environmental Sustainability, Duncan Cameron, will begin in January 23, and shortlisting for the NCAS Lecturer is taking place next week.

Sabbaticals have started with cover in place. The deadline for next year's will be in November.

Three PGR TAs have been allocated to EES, and Katherine Harrison has also been allocated to help with the scalable projects.

The next Promotion cycle is underway. Mentors once allocated will attend a School meeting to receive further instruction.

KJ raised the issue of people on NAP not being eligible for promotion. This is being clarified by Merren Jones.

Given the cost of the refurbishment to the thin sections lab, it was proposed to combine this with the business case for refurb of teaching spaces to be approved by Faculty.

The FCM has now been rolled over for 22/23. Biol codes are no longer in our control so we can't allocate courses.

An advert for the new HoD should be coming out in October. Planning for overlap between the successful candidate and MB should be in the first quarter of 23.

Away Day

The new proposed date to hold this is Tuesday 10th January 2023. This was agreed upon by DLT.

Reports – please refer to grouped report handout

Recruitment & Admissions Update

Rhodri Jerrett (RJ)

Report submitted

There was a discussion about contributing to weekend open days. Points raised included workload, ability, attractiveness to parents and prospective students, providing only for those who hold offers, and staff vs student ambassadors. MB will take forward as an agenda item to the Dept. Forum.

Employability Update

Luis Garcia-Carreras (LGC)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

Teaching and Learning

Mandy Edwards (ME)

Report submitted

A significant increase in deferrals which are a first sit attempt or second attempt have been reported. A task and finish group will be set up to look at the assessment process.

A broader deadline has been agreed for marks in to Campus Solutions to avoid the delays previously experienced.

ME updated on roles with T&L – the DASS role (including PGT) will be supported by Elizabeth Kurtis. Olivia Bradshaw is the new Education Officer. The Alan Turing Hub is the place to refer for mental health crises.

PGR Report

Jon Pittman (JP)

Report submitted

RT raised if there were going to be more calls for the 'super-GTA'. This will continue pending formal sign-off from the Dean.

Director of Research

Cathy Hollis (CH)

Report submitted

CH thanked David Neave and Katrina Jones for setting up the Departmental seminars – a fantastic line up of speakers have been organised for this year.

EDIA

MB suggested a WP report being included/merged with EDIA/SR for future meetings.

DP raised the question of British Council funded projects promoting women and STEM and whether this work is included in people's FCM workload allocations.

IT Report

Russell Garwood (RG)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

PS Update

Helena Gittins (HG)

There are staff shortages affecting the level of support that Ops can offer at the moment.

GTA allocation and contract work is happening over the next fortnight.

Carl Jackson (CJ)

A fire evacuation took place last week due to a faulty sensor which has now been sorted.

AOB

RT asked if DLT reports could be shared with the Forum. Individual report writers to email Romain to request any edits.

Date of next meeting

2pm, Wednesday 12th October 2022, Room 2.16 Williamson for in-person meeting.

DLT Grouped Reports September 2022

5. Recruitment and Admissions

Admissions and Recruitment Staffing:

As of September 2022, Rhodri Jerrett has taken over from Rhian Jones as Admissions Tutor. I wish to express my thanks to her.

Mike Atherton is still the EES Admissions Coordinator, Lauren Davies at Faculty level. Joe Phelan and Jez Lloyd are the main contacts in Marketing (faculty). Cecilia Medupin helps with student ambassador recruitment.

Admissions, 2022 Entry, summary:

I will provide an update from Mike Atherton after the meeting.

UG:

Row Labels	H	O (blank)	Grand Total
BSc (Hons) Earth and Planetary Sciences	32	6	38
BSc (Hons) Environmental Science	39	33	72
MEarthSci (Hons) Earth and Planetary Science with a Research Placement		2	2
MEarthSci (Hons) Earth and Planetary Sciences	2		2
MEarthSci (Hons) Earth and Planetary Sciences with Industrial Experience	2		2
MEarthSci (Hons) Earth and Planetary Sciences with International Study	4		4
MEnvSci (Hons) Environmental Science with a Research Placement	5	1	6

MEnvSci (Hons) Environmental Science with Industrial Experience	6	1	7
MEnvSci (Hons) Environmental Science with International Study	6	1	7
(blank)			
Grand Total	96	44	140

PGT:

Row Labels	H	O	(blank)	Grand Total
Master of Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management		12		12
MSc Geoscience for Sustainable Energy	4	5		9
MSc Petroleum Geoscience	1	21		22
MSc Pollution and Environmental Control	2	104		106
(blank)				
Grand Total	7	142		149

2023 Recruitment and Admissions:

Open Days:

There are university open days on 1st and 15th October. I will be coordinating these with the help of Rhian as a one-off, and Joe, primarily.

Staffing of the open days: I sent out a doodle poll to invite staff to the open days. The following indicated availability (this is not the assigned staffing).

15th October still looks a bit thin on the ground. Contribution to open days and other recruitment events are to be documented by me in future, to be added retrospectively to individual workload model. I would prefer to “use” staff’s goodwill just once (there are only 4 weekend open days). It would be useful if the pathway leads could nominate somebody who can speak about each pathway to prospective students, in the event that nobody appropriate nominates themselves.

We have lost some student ambassadors through graduation, but Cecilia and Joe are in the process of recruiting more.

The format will largely follow last semester’s open days organised by Rhian.

There will be two further open days (for 2024 intake), likely in June 2023.

Offer-holder days:

There are plans for at least four Offer-holder open days during the academic year. These are held during the week. These are likely in march-April. These events will include centrally organised introductory presentations and department taster events.

UCAS interviews:

Rhian and Mike (and I) have decided to discontinue interviews (at least for one year). Among the rationales behind these was that they indicated to prospective students that their applications were taken “seriously”. However, (1) following the end of Covid, in-person (rather than online) interviews are a major time and money expense for families, (2) we were rejecting students based on no-shows to interviews, perhaps unnecessarily, (3) the notion that interviews improve recruitment was not supported by any data, (4) they are a time expense for staff.

Explore Your Planet: Katherine Harrison is leading on the EYP programme for the coming academic year. This is aimed at showing Year 12 students (first year of A levels) how various science A levels are used in Earth and Environmental Sciences. The first event is scheduled for the 9th November.

Other recruitment: Joe Phelan and Jasmine Barrow are organising a pre-application lecture series set to showcase the role our subjects have in crafting a more sustainable future. It would be useful if staff from our department could deliver one of these at least. Joe and I are contacting potential staff to gauge interest.

I will update on other issues as I get my head round them, at the next DLT!

Rhodri Jerrett, EES Admissions Tutor

6. Employability Update

1. Plans for 2022/2023 careers provision.

All students

- Welcome week: Penney (careers service) to come along for the employability intro chats.
- STEM careers fairs: 12-13th October.

1st years:

- One timetabled session by the careers service in March/April.

2nd years:

- 1 hour timetabled session (29th Sept. 1-2pm)
- 1 careers-focused tutorial (ideally to take place between the timetabled session and the STEM careers fairs).

3rd years:

- Self-led module optional module. Appears on transcript only if they complete it. ~10-15/70 students did it last year.

Future plans:

- Would like a dedicated careers session during year 3. Either 1 hour timetabled, like for second years (but attendance can be an issue), or embedded into an existing module to encourage attendance (possibly ‘communicating science’).

- For next year I would consider extending timetabled sessions to 2 hours. First hour more lecturey, second hour more hands on.

2. Identifying transferable skills across the curriculum

This is an update on a plan I mentioned in a previous DLT, and outlined in more detail at T&L in November last year. The idea is to capture the transferable skills developed in every unit we teach. The motivation for this is that students (and probably academics) struggle to articulate the skills gained from the degree, and generally they are quite vague (e.g. 'communication skills' can cover persuasion, negotiation, teamwork, presenting, etc., which are all quite different). Unit specs also typically focus more on subject-specific knowledge, rather than broader skills, even though the latter are probably more important from an employability perspective. The idea was that I would come up with a comprehensive list of skills that all unit leads could select from, which would ensure sufficient detail and consistency, while also minimising the work needed from everybody else.

I have now come up with a comprehensive list of skills, split into categories, drawn from our programme-level ILOs, QAA benchmark statements, and more generally the literature on skills sought after by employers. I have also set up an online form, which should take ~5 minutes to complete, that each unit lead would fill in to collect this information. How to proceed from here is still to be decided, although one possibility would be to test it out with a number of units in semester 1, with the aim of rolling it out more broadly in semester 2.

The form can be accessed here (feel free to fill it in to test it out):

<https://forms.office.com/r/AaD2Rrd4Ka>

And this is an example of the output I can generate for each unit, that could be included with the unit information, or put on blackboard, for students to see.

EART31201: Meteorology and Forecasting

In this unit you will develop the following transferable skills:

Analytical and critical thinking

- Assessing data quality and uncertainty.
- Conceptualising across a range of spatial and temporal scales
- Applying simple theories to understand more complex phenomena.

Problem-solving

- Developing predictive models.

Research and learning

- Critically reviewing and evaluating different sources of information and data.
- Learning independently.

Decision-making

- Drawing conclusions with uncertainties from ambiguous datasets.
- Using different tools to inform decision-making.

Wider context awareness

- Integrating evidence from a range of sources.

Digital

- Finding and using existing datasets online.

Resilience and adaptability

- Reflecting on progress and adapting the approach as required.

7. T&L Update

Discipline Head of Education Report for DLT September 2022

This is my first report as the new DHOE, so my report is brief.

To follow on from the July report:

TEF: We have been asked to report on our fieldwork activities with examples of good practice to be returned to the School for inclusion in their TEF work. Work is progressing on the MPEC projects led by Andrew Lowe, James Allan and Dave Topping. We have been successful in gaining 3 of the Postgraduate Research and Teaching Assistants (PGRTAs) for EES. They will be involved with the development and delivery of components of the MPEC master's degree and will spend either 20% or 40% of their time on teaching.

Resit exams, Welcome Week and timetabling

The resit exam period is concluded. There was a significant increase in the amount of deferral assessments attempted by students, as well as referral for failed units. Bart van Dongen is overseeing the end of the assessment period for the academic year and then I will take over for the academic year 22/23. The Resit Exam board will be meeting on Wednesday 14th September. We will hold a review of the processes from this year and discuss how to improve the processes for the academic year 22/23.

Plans are in hand for Welcome Week arrangements for our new 1st years, returning students and taught master's students. One change this year will be the introduction of drop In sessions where

pathway cohort tutors and PS staff will be on hand to answer discipline and academic queries. All other student enquiries are to be directed to the Student Hub based in the Alan Turing Building

Teaching and Student Rooms

We have taken back the management of Room G33 (next to the dinosaur). This room will be used as a base for the 3rd and 4th year students to work on their research projects and write up their dissertations. It will also be used for some small group teaching, but it is no longer on the Central Timetabling system. This room will complement the existing Undergraduate Study which has been reorganised to make it a more relaxing space with extra settees and quiet areas as well as being a place for our students to meet and talk together. We have created a student microscope room in G20, just off the Study. This room now has 4 modern petrological microscopes, 2 are Wi-Fi enabled so students can export images of their thin sections. A staff presence will be maintained in the rooms, but I will also have a separate office on the 1st floor. We have created a Department Archive Room in 2.22A. Exam scripts and student information that we need to hold paper copies of will be held securely there. This Archive holds the map collection and resources related to fieldwork. Access to the room is arranged with Veronica Buckingham-Bostock. Computer clusters in Williamson Teaching Rooms. Rooms 2.45 and 2.20 have been updated with new curved monitors and upgraded computers. They have been given a good tidy up as well by Emma Finch and Kofi Owusu. The rooms have 54 and 28 individual stations respectively. They can be booked for classes and Room 2.20 has a separate room that can be used by students working on their research projects

Teaching Welcome Meeting

We have arranged a meeting on the 5th October when we will introduce the staff holding roles involved with the oversight and administration of academic processes, including new members of the Earth Support team. We will also show how and where staff can access important information for the coming year.

We will not focus on what and how we teach in this meeting.

8. PGR Update

Admissions and recruitment:

We are expecting 48 PGRs to join the department this September/October although the final confirmed number will not be known until the end of October as some self-funded PGRs may not arrive.

There are 35 funded PGRs starting from various external and internal funded schemes:

- 2 President's Doctoral Scholarship students
- 4 Dean's Doctoral Scholarship students
- 4 Chinese Scholarship Council students
- 2 Manchester-Melbourne Dual Award student (one starting Year 1 in Australia)
- 2 STFC DTP students
- 6 BBSRC DTP students
- 2 EPSRC MADSIM students
- 1 EPSRC DTP student

- 1 EPSRC DTP CASE student
- 3 EPSRC Aerosol CDT students
- 1 EPSRC iCASE student
- 1 Diamond Doctoral student
- 1 Nuclear Waste Services student
- 1 Industry funded
- 1 Internal funded/DKO Fellowship student
- 2 PGRTA students (with another PGRTA studentship funding an existing Year 2 PGR)
- 1 UoM-IIT Dual Award student (starting Year 1 in India)

There are Welcome Week inductions and information sessions taking place next week (on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd September) including a supervisor info session on Friday 23rd September. A Faculty PGR welcome event will take place on 31st October. Details have been sent out to all new starters and I will be inviting supervisors of new starters to the optional supervisor info session and sending updated handbook information.

Claire Erskine and Helena Gittins are checking PGR desk space in Williamson for recently departed students and we will be making desk allocations for new starters at the start of October.

Project proposal calls for the BBSRC DTP studentships closed this week. Other funded studentship calls will appear later this semester.

UKRI stipend increase:

There will be an increase to the UKRI minimum doctoral stipend. The minimum stipend from 1 October 2022 for Academic Year (AY) 22/23 will be £17,668 full time equivalent, an increase of 10% on the previously announced £16,062 and an increase of £1,606 for all students in receipt of a full UKRI stipend. The stipend increase will apply to all UKRI doctoral students in receipt of a UKRI stipend who are due to commence or are continuing their UKRI-funded studentship. UKRI expect co-funders to play their full role in supporting students but recognise that the changes have come at short-notice so UKRI is temporarily waiving co-funding principles and will cover the full increase to all students in receipt of UKRI funding until 31 March 2023. After 31 March 2023, co-funders will be expected to match the 10% increase.

There will also be no new money so this will reduce the number of DTP studentships available and the allocation of EPSRC DTPs to departments will change – we are waiting for the update on this. We are also waiting to hear if UoM intends to match stipend for its own funded studentships – if so this will also reduce the number of studentships available for 23/24.

Updates to NERC DTP call:

David Johnson has been taking a lead on NERC DTP proposal planning and discussions. It is unclear how a future call will be structured with the knowledge that future DTPs will be organised at UKRI level allowing more multi-disciplinarity with all DTP/CDT budgets held at UKRI not in individual RCs. We should hear more details by December 2022 following a review of DTP2 and consultation. Existing DTP2 partnerships may therefore be extended by a year meaning that we miss out from potential NERC-remit studentships for another year.

In the meantime, plans for a future partnership will continue (details were provided in a previous report). The university senior research management were receptive to the idea of a Greater Manchester-focused bid with UoM as a lead, but we were told NOT to include Bolton. Therefore we have been encouraged to make informal contacts with MMU and Salford. We will also develop back-up plans that explore other avenues, such as linking up with some of the N8 University partners even

if this means simply being a partner to an existing bid. We have been encouraged to use our contacts to explore the situation with existing DTPs by key N8 partners (e.g., Lancaster, Sheffield, Leeds, York).

PGR PS staff challenges:

Claire Erskine is currently extremely busy with both admissions and general PGR admin activities as she is covering both roles and therefore is not always able to respond to requests immediately therefore please can staff be patient. There are many structures across the university (IT, Student Services, Finance, Admissions, etc) that our PGR activities rely on that have been short-staffed or are experiencing other problems in recent months. This is on top of the on-going SEP programme, which is delayed in some of its implementation, and the introduction of new IT systems, such as the new admissions system. As such it has been a very challenging time for existing and potential new students and staff as PGR tasks are delayed. We are therefore prioritising tasks depending on the urgency for completion.

Jon Pittman

9. Research Update

Cathy Hollis took over from Gordon McFiggans as HoR on 1st September – thank you to Gordon for all his hard work in this role, and for handover discussions. With only a week or so in role, there is not too much to report but a few points can be highlighted:

- Margaret Hartley submitted the business case for the new electron probe to EPSRC in August. We may hear the outcome of the outline case in November, and if successful we will need to submit a full proposal very quickly (~ 4-6 weeks)
- The internal (DEES) sift for Future Leaders Fellowships attracted only one applicant, and they have been ruled ineligible, unfortunately. I will participate in the Faculty sift over the coming week.
- UKRI have agreed a stipend increase to DTP studentships of £2,000pa. This will put pressure on their budget and on UoM matching funds, and therefore there will be a reduced number of DTP studentships in 2023/24

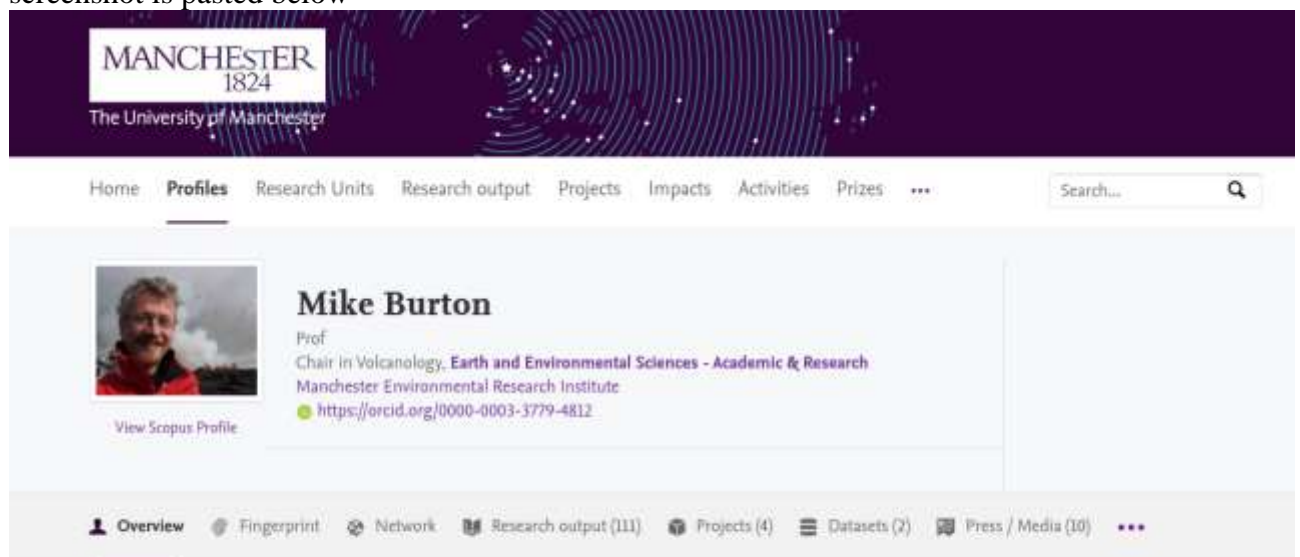
10. EDIA

Currently vacant.

11. IT Report

- Last year students undertaking some computational 3rd year projects struggled with the available computing power. This situation should be better next year through a few interventions:

- The cluster computers in 2.45 have been upgraded, which should address many of the less severe use problems with e.g. GIS software
- We have 8 higher end computers in an annexe to 2.20. This room is swipe card controlled, and we are proposing to give students access to it on request from their supervisors. Further details will be included early in the new term in a teaching email - this should address almost all project limitations
- We also note that students of FSE have free access to research IT's HPC and HTC facilities, and for use cases that are not interactive, this would be a very good alternative to using one of the higher end machines. See also the point below
- As a general point, EES makes less use of Research IT facilities than other departments, despite generally having complex problems that might benefit from the HPC facilities research IT offers. This may be cultural, or due to a lack of awareness of the services available. To that end we are arranging a quick introduction from the head of research IT infrastructure to try and make EES staff aware of the tools to which we have access.
- The fieldtrip page on the EES website has been updated to provide more details of the trips offered, and a complete overhaul is underway.
- An update to the Pure portal is underway that will impact on the web presence of all EES academics - a preview is available, linked from here <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/pure/researchers/pure-portal-project/> - a screenshot is pasted below



- I am happy to pass on any feedback when I pass on my own if this would be useful

12. Technical Review

Cohort 3 is now well underway. The initial role matching exercise for staff 'in scope' was completed during the first half of July following completion of the union consultation period. Staff matched to a role were notified by email and taken out of scope quickly. Formal notification letters from P&OD (HR) will commence in a matter of days/weeks. The formal implementation date for Cohort 3 is 1st November. Some roles deemed urgent/critical for Semester 1 teaching will commence in September.

Following the initial role matching exercise approximately 45 roles remained unfilled. These were released to all FSE Technical Operations staff as an expression of interest. Many roles have now been recruited to and the process is still ongoing. Roles not filled internally will be advertised externally.

One Grade 5 Senior Technician (DEES Teaching) role remains unfilled and we hope to get this released as an expression of interest to FSE technical staff week commencing 12th September. This role will report to and work closely with Veronica.

Our August technical review update can be found at:

[News and updates](#) | [Faculty of Science and Engineering](#) | [StaffNet](#) | [The University of Manchester](#)

Technical Budgets:

22/23 technical budgets have been approved. Budget holders in DEES should all have received an email from Kevin Jackson confirming the approved budget. Requisition approvers and monthly budget statement recipients have also been reviewed and updated where necessary. Please let me know if there are any issues with the budget statements.

Replacement of Abby:

Interview for the grade 5 Senior Technician role took place week commencing 4th July. Jordan Gaskell was the successful applicant and started his new role in August. Jordan joined the Department from his previous Grade 4 role in Department of CEAS. We congratulate Jordan and wish him the best of luck in his new role.

Thin Sections Lab:

Feasibility study for the renovation / refurb of Simon Workshop has now been completed. The costs have come back at £130,000 - significantly more than expected. We will now work with Mike Burton and Chris Hardacre to determine what avenues are available for funding / part funding.

Williamson Building Refurb:

Proposal has been costed. The Department is working on the business proposal, which will need submitting to Faculty asap. ideal time for the refurbishment is Summer 2023, However that is subject to approval, funding availability in challenging financial climate and availability of contractors.

PAT Testing

Williamson and Simon laboratories have been completed. Offices to follow. Alison Smigova will keep all staff up to date on schedules, etc.

Williamson Basement Snagging

This has been escalated to Mike Billington (FSE Head of Estates) in a push to have them completed asap.

LEV Repairs

There are a number of outstanding LEV repairs. Again, these have been escalated to Estates. Alison Smigova awaiting a response.