



Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Department Leadership Team Meeting

Minutes

Date: Tuesday 13th December 2022

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94506219008>

Part 1 Attendees;

Mike Burton (Head of Department)
Ann Webb (Deputy Head of Department)
Helena Gittins (Deputy School Operations Manager)
Cathy Hollis (Discipline Head of Research)
Mads Huuse (Line Manager)
David Topping (Line Manager)
David Schultz (Line Manager)
Jon Pittman (PGR director)
Rhodri Jerrett (Admissions)
Luis Garcia-Carreras (Employability)
Rob Gardham (PS PA)
Russell Garwood (IT Director)
Mandy Edwards (Discipline Head of Education)

Apologies; Romain Tartese (Forum Chair), Sophie Nixon (Chair of EDIA Committee), Carl Jackson (PS Safety), David Polya (Line Manager), Scott Heath (Line Manager)

Summary Actions

ACTION – Handover with new Fieldtrip Coordinator once appointed with Rhodri/Carl/Mike/Mandy – to ensure transfer of knowledge (RJ/CJ/MB/ME) - ONGOING

ACTION – Ensure all risk assessments on field trips are included in ILO activity (new FTC/PGDirs) – ROLLED OVER

Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous meeting were confirmed.

HoD Introduction and report

Mike Burton (MB)

10 applicants for academic leave will be put forward to SLT this Thursday (15 Dec). We should be aiming as a Department to support 8-10 sabbaticals a year, providing cover is possible.

An investigation by an independent Panel into an allegation of academic malpractice has been initiated, concerning a PhD student of the Dept. This is ongoing and updates will be provided once the process has concluded.

Brendan McKormick-Kilbride has been appointed as new GTA lead, recruitment for the EnvSci ProgDIR role is ongoing and recruitment for the new HoD from April 2023 has nearly completed, although no updates at present.

Shell sponsorship of MSc course

Jonathan Redfern has acquired funds from Shell to support 1 Home student on the Geoscience pathways. As we are the only Earth Science Dept. in the country still offering Petroleum Geoscience, there is a need to be clear why this is still being offered.

Options for the studentship include promoting in its current format, providing contextualisation, requesting ring-fencing to exclude Petroleum Geoscience, or rejecting altogether. Discussion leaned towards the ring-fencing option, but it was agreed to take this to the Forum for wider opinion.

It was agreed there should be some DLT or Forum oversight of funding such as this coming in, in the future.

Reports – please refer to grouped report handout

Recruitment & Admissions Update

Rhodri Jerrett (RJ)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

Employability Update

Luis Garcia-Carreras (LGC)

The External Advisory Board has been confirmed for the afternoon of Tuesday 14 February 2023. The Careers Service has reported improved engagement from EES students.

Teaching and Learning

Mandy Edwards (ME)

Report submitted

SEP changes will be implemented from January.

Following the Away Day (10th Jan), teaching-focussed meetings will be set up over a couple of days to discuss key points.

PGR Report

Jon Pittman (JP)

Report submitted

There were no definite updates about a timescale for the reorganisation of the PGR management structure.

Director of Research

Cathy Hollis (CH)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

EDIA

Sophie Nixon (SN)

Report submitted

No updates.

IT Report

Russell Garwood (RG)

Report submitted

Regarding the academic malpractice allegation, RG raised the amount of negative feedback on social media and suggested there be a policy to follow in future i.e. making comments. It was discussed we can say investigations are ongoing, but any other comments could be detrimental.

PS Update

Helena Gittins (HG)

RG (Rob) will be leaving the PA role in January and the Ops team will be receiving two new members of staff in the New Year.

AOB

None.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11th January 2023, 2pm.

DLT Grouped Reports December 2022

5. Recruitment and Admissions

EES DLT, December 2022: Admissions and Recruitment

2023 Recruitment and Admissions:

Open Days:

A reminder that dates for further open days are 17/06/2023, 24/06/23, 20/09/23 and 14/10/23 for 2024 intake and 22/06/24, 29/06/24, 28/09/24 and 12/10/24 for 2025 intake.

Offer-holder days:

The first offer holder day of the 2023 scheduled for 14th December has been postponed because of rail strikes.

A new schedule of Offer holder days is as follows:

1 Feb, 15 Feb, 08 March, 22 March (online), 26 April.

The format of the in-person offer holder days will be similar to last year:

	Applicants			Guests
	A	B	C	
12:00 - 12:15	Arrival & Registration (Williamson Foyer)			
12:15 - 13:00	Welcome and Accommodation talk (G.03)			
13:00 - 13:30	Clouds (G.16)	Dinosaurs (G.45)	Tour of Williamson	Introduction to EES (G.03)
13:30 - 14:00	Tour of Williamson	Clouds (G.16)	Dinosaurs (G.45)	
14:00 - 14:30	Dinosaurs (G.45)	Tour of Williamson	Clouds (G.16)	Tour of Campus
14:30 - 15:00	Tour of Campus	Tour of Campus	Tour of Campus	Tour of Williamson
15:00 - 15:45	Cake & Coffee and chat with ambassadors/academics (G12/G14)			

Mike A, Mike B and I will look at putting together a schedule for the online Offer holder day before the next DLT.

Explore Your Planet:

Run by Katherine Harrison, this event, aimed at showing Year 12 students (first year of A levels) how various science A levels are used in Earth and Environmental Sciences, happened on the 9th November.

Cecilia and Joe P have successfully recruited and trained new student ambassadors for the Offer Holder Days..

Rhodri Jerrett, EES Admissions Tutor

Appendix

Plan for Offer Holder Days from march 2022

OFFER HOLDER OPEN DAYS MARCH AND MAY 2022

Schedule

- 12:00 – 12:30 Arrival and Registration (all)
- 12:30 – 12:45 Welcome Talk (all) G.03
- Split into two groups
 - 12:45 – 15:00 Taster Sessions set around Williamson/campus tour (offer holders)
 - 12:45 – 13.45 Talk with accommodation, followed by 13.45 – 14.30 – tour to MECD (parents)
- 15:00 – 15:45 Q+As with Tea and Coffee (all)

Parents (16th March)

- 12:45 – 13:00 Break into groups in G.03
- 13:00 – 14:00 Introduction to Earth and Environmental Science Degrees – Rhian
Accommodation – Paul Burns
- 14:00 – 14:30 Split into 2 groups for tour of campus – Rhian and Mike Burton
- 14:30 – 15:45 Tea and Coffee

Students (16th March)

- 12:45 – 13:00 Break into groups in G.03
- Group 1:
- 13:00 – 13:30 Clouds, G.16, Paul Connolly
- 13:30 – 14:00 Tour of Williamson
- 14:00 – 14:30 Basalts, G.45, Mandy Edwards and Alison Pawley
- 14:30 – 15:00 Tour of Campus
- Group 2:
- 13:00 – 13:30 Basalts, G.45, Mandy Edwards and Alison Pawley
- 13:30 – 14:00 Clouds, G.16, Paul Connolly
- 14:00 – 14:30 Tour of Williamson
- 14:30 – 15:00 Tour of Campus
- Group 3:
- 13:00 – 13:30 Tour of Williamson
- 13:30 – 14:00 Basalts, G.45, Mandy Edwards and Alison Pawley
- 14:00 – 14:30 Clouds, G.16, Paul Connolly
- 14:30 – 15:00 Tour of Campus

7. T&L Update

Discipline Head of Education Report for DLT December 2022

Assessment calendar – We have finalised an assessment calendar for all second semester units covering all 4 years of both of our undergraduate programmes. The calendar lists the units, with details of the assessments in date order. There will be two versions of the calendar sent out – one will be for the students and it has some general comments that explain that the calendar is for EART units only, that we have tried to avoid having multiple deadlines on a single day but that sometimes this is unavoidable and that the non-regular teaching week is not a holiday. The staff version will state that these published dates are fixed for the semester and that any change must first be agreed with the DHoE.

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meeting – Our second meeting of the semester was held on 7th December. We could report that the doors to Brunswick Park are now open during the day. We

are setting up a small working group, including the DHoE and Vicky Coker to work with the students to establish the best ways to communicate with our students and show them how we have responded to their feedback from surveys like the UEQs and the NSS. This action will be included in our Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) for 22/23.

School of Natural Sciences Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee (SoNS STLSEC) meeting on the 6th December – actions for the School SEAP to be submitted by each Department by the 13th December for agreement with the School. The actions are to focus on student voice and assessment and feedback. We will also carry forward our action to improve the student study areas of G20 and G33 as well as the refurbishment of several of our teaching rooms, including G12, G14, 1.12 and 2.45.

8. PGR Update

PGR report Dec 2022 – Jon Pittman

Admissions and recruitment:

An internal deadline of receipt of nominations for Round 1 PDS, Dean's, and PGRTA scholarships has been set as 8 February 2023 and there will be a selection panel meeting on 15 February 2023 to assess and rank nominations.

The department will use the one EPSRC studentship allocation towards two 50% match funded studentships with the other 50% coming from external sources such as industry. A call request has been sent out to staff. Projects must meet EPSRC remit.

Doctoral academy and PGR structure:

Changes to the academic PGR management structure and roles to coincide with the start of the Faculty Doctoral Academy have been approved by Faculty. This includes a modification to the responsibilities and associated FTE for the department Head of PGR role. FTE will be on a sliding scale between 0.1 to 0.3 depending on the number of registered PGRs in the department. The key responsibilities for Head of PGR (department) will be:

- Member of relevant departmental committee representing PGR
- Oversight of admissions & non-standard entry qualification guidance
- Promote and share funding opportunities
- Progression & examinations
- Advice and guidance to supervisors
- PGR pastoral support
- Appeals & complaints (informal)
- Implementation of Doctoral Academy initiatives
- Ensure UoM & Doctoral Academy policy and procedure applied

There will also be the creation of three roles at Faculty level to provide strategic oversight of the PGR experience and research direction: Academic Leads for PGR Recruitment and Admissions, PGR Progression and Completion, PGR Research Culture (each with 0.1 FTE).

All new roles (HoPGR and Academic Lead roles) will be advertised shortly.

Annual Monitoring for PGR:

The Annual Monitoring for PGR report (reviewing academic year 2021-22) from EES is due in January to allow completion of the Faculty Annual Monitoring report. If anyone has anything in particular relating to PGR that they would like me to raise in the report (e.g. relating to achievements/good practice, key issues, student feedback, support, research outputs, feedback from stakeholders, etc) please let me know by mid-January at the latest.

Jon Pittman

9. Research Update

Departmental Head of Research

Report December 2022

The FSE Capital and Estates call for large items (over £50K) solicited a number of bids from DEES. We did not have to rank internally this year, as this was done at School level. We are awaiting the minutes of the meeting, but more information has been requested for the new Thermo XRF instruments suggesting that this will be considered at Faculty level. The request for a replacement electron probe has been referred to the capital replacement fund, and I am waiting on more information from Chris Muryn.

The request for upgrade of the thin section workshop in Simon Building was submitted to FLT last week. Thank you to Ray for pulling this together. I have not yet been informed of a decision.

The panel for the January NERC Pushing the Frontiers call met on 1st/2nd December and feedback has been provided to applicants.

The internal call for proposals for funding from the NERC Discipline Hopping fund is now closed and proposals will be evaluated before Christmas.

With Hugh Coe and Paddy Hackett, and support from Cassy, we are forming a working group comprising key staff across UoM who are highly engaged with NERC. This will meet for the first time in January and aim to allow us to collectively gather and share information on NERC activities.

Discussions between John Ludden (formerly Herriot Watt, now associated with the Georg Geothermal Research Cluster in Iceland), UoM and NERC are ongoing to evaluate potential UK involvement with the Krafla drilling project in Iceland. There is an internal meeting of interested parties in DEES on Wednesday, and a national meeting scheduled at UoM in January.

In response to an article published in Science on 6th December, a university investigation is now underway regarding an alleged case of academic malpractice against one of our PhD students. Whilst that investigation is ongoing, there should be no comments made to the press by any member of the Department.

10. EDIA

EDIA DLT Report, December 2022

Sophie Nixon is new to the role and is still familiarising herself with the committee etc, but some key updates below.

- Sophie to meet with Cathy Walton for official EDIA handover early January. Shortly after this Sophie will hold her first committee meeting, open to all who would like to attend. Key points from that meeting will be incorporated into the next report
- Sophie is currently away with 9 female postdocs across the university leading a **Women in STEM writing retreat for fellowship proposals**. Rachel Cowan, Professor of Inclusive Researcher and Academic Development, is also attending. The purpose of the retreat is to provide guidance, support and dedicated time in a nurturing environment to dedicate to developing competitive fellowship applications. Laura Richards (DEES) is co-leading. This retreat was funded by the Wellcome Trust EDIA Fund, which runs out March 2023, but the longer term goal is to make these retreats a mainstay for UoM ECRs, female and male, in recognition of the need to increase the provision of support to ECR researchers, and especially women.
- **Funding schemes for BAME students.** Geospatial Scholarship Fund (<https://geospatialscholarshipfund.com/about-us/>). Offered to black and mixed black heritage students within the fields of geography and geoscience. There are UG awards of £30,000 (£10k/yr) to spend on fees or maintenance to study geography or geoscience, and Masters awards of £20,000 (full time 1 year), to study within these disciplines. These complement the UoM Black Student UG scholarship scheme (£9,250 fee waiver per year & min stipend of £3,000 for up to 4 years), as well as the SoNS Diversity PhD Scholarships (tuition fees and annual stipend of £17,668 for 3.5 years). Awareness of these schemes is low but there is a push to have this compiled in one place on the DEES website. Russell Garwood and Katie Joy pushed for this before but met resistance (duplicating information), we will try again as this will help signpost prospective DEES students to help.
- **Resources for students struggling with the Cost of Living Crisis.** Please familiarise yourselves with these resources to be able to signpost students in needs - <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/cost-of-livingwhich> has loads of great advice <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/finances/cost-of-living/>. There is also information about local foodbanks at <https://manchestercentral.foodbank.org.uk/about/about-our-foodbank/>
- Sophie will hold an **EDIA Coffee Meet in the MIB in June**. This is a roving event that each SoNS EDIA lead takes a turn to run. This will be held in the John Garside Building to ensure students and staff based in MIB (which from January includes 3 DEES PIs, their postdocs and PhD students) can meet with their department lead, discuss / raise EDIA concerns and network. There will also be a speaker invited discuss LGBT issues. More info to be circulated nearer the time - it will be open to all DEES staff to join.

11. IT Report

- The first of our two talks regarding research IT infrastructure was well attended in EES, and there was a significant period for coming Q&A afterwards, which I think was useful. We have a recording of the talk that we will shortly be circulating. The second one - on data archiving - will now be held in the new year.

- The researcher profile update has been delayed due to a Pure issue - we don't have a new launch date yet
- The silence from the University regarding the DePalma allegations is receiving a fair bit of criticism on Twitter - it could be worth DLT discussing whether a response is warranted / would help / is possible, or whether it would just make the situation worse (although that ship might have sailed by now).

12. Technical Review update

- Lisa Jameson is moving to a new, non-technical role in FSE.
- We have recruited a new grade 5 senior technician (EES teaching) who will work with and report to Veronica Buckingham-Bostock. Maisie Gamble will be joining us imminently.
- Williamson needs a building-wide protocol for responding to gas detection alarms. Alison plans to discuss with Carl Jackson (probably more relevant to the Safety committee). While the technical team are named emergency contacts, the faculty has requested that lab PIs are also named as contacts should they need to be contacted out of hours to advise. Up to date door signage important.
- RADER Basement refurbishment snagging is still ongoing. We were assured all items would be finalised by 8/12/2022 but although some items have been concluded, there are items outstanding. Mike Billington is aware.