

ISSUE 5 • JUNE 2023

FSP MONTHLY DIGEST

Welcome to the Faculty and Student Partnerships (FSP) Monthly Digest

This is a platform to share news and updates from across the Directorate. Each issue is published on the first Friday of every month. We welcome and encourage submissions. If you have any items to submit, please send these by the last Friday of every month to:

uml.engagement@manchester.ac.uk

Message from Katy, Associate Director (FSP)

Our Digest is getting fuller every month, which is fantastic but there are now far too many contributions for me to keep mentioning them all individually! I can assure you though that every one of this month's articles will give you an interesting insight into the work of our Directorate and I am sure will allow you to make new and valuable connections between the work of our teams.

Having said that, I do particularly want to draw attention to the feature on the work of our Royal Literary Fellow, Chris Rose, as this is a very specialist service enhancement, that we are very lucky to be able to offer to our students. So, if you aren't already aware of it, please do make sure you scroll down and check it out.

This month I've been involved in work around the University and in the sector that I want to share with you.

As a senior member of staff, I am sometimes asked to take a share of activities and duties outside of the Library that contribute to the general running of the University, often associated with the application of our People & OD policies. For example, over the last month or so I've been taking the role of Investigating Manager in relation to a complaint that has been made under the Dignity at Work and Study Policy. Whilst time consuming, I value contributing to this sort of thing very highly as not only does it feel right to help the University uphold its values, but it also gives me an opportunity to help shape any change that might be needed for the greater good.

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[Watch the video message](#)



Externally, I attended another SCONUL Executive Board meeting. This was my third meeting and having contributed to discussions on the new strategy, which has just been published, I feel I am now beginning to find my feet in this elected role. I've also been asked to take a co-chair role on one of their strategy groups which will help to embed me even further. I am sure there will be opportunities to get some of you involved in projects and communities of interest down the line, so I'll make sure to keep you all posted.

For Academic Libraries North (ALN), I've been continuing in my role as a mentor to a colleague from another library, which is progressing well. I hope those of you that are participating as mentees are getting as much out of the scheme as I am. Or if you fancy getting involved as either a mentor or a mentee, ALN have just announced they are opening a second wave of the scheme, so do take a look at their website if you want to know more.

Back at base I have been very much aware of how busy the Library has been this last month. It seems we are now even busier than we were pre-COVID and whilst it's great that our students are making such intensive use of our spaces, it has meant we've started to see the return of some of the less desirable exam time behaviours creeping back in. So, I want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our front-line staff, who I know have been having to handle some quite unique, tricky and sometimes frankly unpleasant situations. You have been amazing.

Once things have quietened down, we must reflect on your experiences and make plans to help us prevent and be even better prepared for next year.

Thankfully not long to go now before we hit the relative peace of the summer. That's all from me this month, so bye for now.

News and updates

Customer Services

The Library welcomes pre-sessional students for 2023

Last year, the Customer Services Team worked alongside Teaching, Learning and Students and the University's Language Centre to help welcome pre-sessional students. The sessions went so well that we've been asked to repeat them again this year!

Pre-sessional students join the University in three separate cohorts: 10 weeks, 6 weeks and 4 weeks (which is the amount of time they have until the start of term).

The welcome sessions usually involve a tour of Main Library and a stop in our "information exhibition", where the students can chat with staff, review the information that we share on the tour and take part in a short quiz.

In 2022, we saw over 460 students and (if everyone turns up this year) we are intending to have over 800 students visit the Library across July and August 2023. We've reached out to other areas of the University to ask if they would like us to include anything in our "exhibition". We want to give the students a warm welcome to the Library and help them to feel a real sense of belonging to The University of Manchester.



Accessibility and Inclusion Specialism

Lydia Street

A small group of the Customer Services Team have been working on the Accessibility and Inclusion Specialism over the past year in order to support and improve our services for DASS registered students.

When we first began this work, we revised and streamlined many of the processes we have in place for supporting students. Following this, we built workflows for each process that act as a succinct learning path for anyone joining the specialism. Then, when it came around to rotating the specialisms this year, we have been able to put those practices into place with a new specialism team, which has been wonderful to see.

We manage a shared inbox to ensure we are dedicating the essential time assisting with each person's Library needs. This has included supporting access to the Accessible Equipment rooms at both the Main Library and the Alan Gilbert Learning Commons, carrying out inductions across all of our Library sites to help students become familiar and comfortable with our buildings and services, providing alternate formats for books where necessary, as well as other support needs as outlined in their Personal Learning Support Plan.

Each of us has also undertaken available training that may help us provide and promote inclusive services and have taken the time to familiarise ourselves with the extensive range of assistive software available through the University. Alongside this, we have looked into improving the spaces we offer for DASS registered students and have spent time investigating the practices of other establishments to see if there is anything we can replicate or add to our already amazing range of support.

When I see how much work we have done and how many students we have helped during their time with us, I feel honoured and proud to be part of such an important specialism!

Engagement

ALN Librarians' Group meeting

Gemma Smith attended the quarterly ALN Librarians' Group meeting. This was an excellent opportunity to share good news stories and best practices with fellow university librarians.



Topics of discussion included equality, diversity, and inclusivity initiatives at our institutions, and exploring future plans and areas that require further development. The group also reflected on post-lockdown libraries and services, including changes in ways of working and changes in student use of library services, resources, and support.



Developing comms plans across Library teams

Engagement Team members work with different Library teams to help promote services and offers to key audiences using different communication channels. Here are some of the campaigns we are working on:

Gemma Smith coordinated with the [Office for Open Research](#) to invite researchers to apply for the Fellowship Programme, which is a unique opportunity for researchers to advance their careers and contribute to the development of open research training at the University. News items will be published from 12 June.

Janette Watson is working closely with Teaching, Learning and Students (TLS) to develop a comms plan on the Library's [Summer Training and Support](#) offer. Over the summer, TLS run a series of workshops, online resources and drop-in support, including sessions on completing final assignments, writing dissertations, preparing for resits or expert guidance for research.

Rachel Garraway liaised with Teaching Collections to inform academic staff about getting their reading lists ready and choosing their core eTextbook for the 2023/2024 academic year. The [news item](#) provides full information about what academics need to do to update reading lists and how to apply for or change eTextbooks for students.

Reetu Child supported the Manchester Digital Collections group to launch the digital edition of the [Heinrich Simon Papers](#). The digital collections and associated digital edition chronicle the life and achievements of August Heinrich Simon (1805-60), the Prussian lawyer, civil servant, independent legal author, reformer and revolutionary of 1848 through archives held at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library and the Cadbury Research Library (University of Birmingham). Read more about this new digital edition on [this link](#).

Deaf Awareness Week celebration

As part of the Deaf Awareness Week celebrations, a group of Library staff got together to learn some British Sign Language (BSL) and share their knowledge. The session was organised by Lydia Street (CS) and Esther Miller (Engagement Team) and was a fun way to raise awareness of BSL and showed how easy it is to learn a few signs.

There are some [British Sign Language basics](#) slides from the session on the All-Staff Teams area which have guidance on a few greetings and links to useful BSL resources. You can also view a [Library Instagram post](#) on the session.

If you would like to learn some BSL, or practice skills you already have, a group meets every two weeks to learn, share and practice. The group is very informal and staff drop in when they can. If you would like to come along, please contact [Esther Miller](#) for the calendar invites. All abilities welcome.

Teaching, Learning, and Students

Tea with the Associate Vice President (AVP)

The Library Student Team have been supporting Judy Williams' (Associate VP for Teaching, Learning and Students) on-campus 'Tea with the AVP' sessions. At each event they help out by chatting with students and encouraging them to talk about how they are and share any barriers they are facing.



Judy Williams (right) with a student

In the words of Student Team members Stefan, Fariha and Szaffi they find the experience a positive one:

"We welcomed students, explained the impact of the feedback that we were gathering, and initiated conversations that aimed to explore their concerns in a deeper way. We then encouraged them to share their feedback anonymously and were able to connect with students who felt more comfortable talking about their studies and student life. We enjoy it because it allows us to hear a wide range of views from students about what the University is doing well, and what we can improve on. It makes us reflect on our own experiences whilst studying at Manchester, as well as considering why we have enjoyed being here for the last couple of years."

A huge thank you to the brilliant Student Team for setting up, supporting sessions and collating the data afterwards! You can find more about Tea with the AVP here: <https://youtu.be/m2V8outJ4P4>

Meet Chris Rose, Royal Literary Fellow (RLF)

As part of a partnership scheme, the Royal Literary Fund has been placing practicing published writers in universities for over 20 years now.

I was lucky enough to be asked to be the Royal Literary Fund Fellow in Residence at The University of Manchester Library two years ago. It's a very fancy title for what is actually a very straightforward job: I have an office in the AGLC, and I'm there every Tuesday and Wednesday during term time. Students book an appointment for up to an hour with me to discuss their writing – of any kind. I see all kinds of students – from first year undergraduates who haven't really experienced the idea of academic writing before, through to final year PhD students, postgraduate researchers and members of staff. I've worked with students from Chemical Engineering, International Disaster and Humanitarian Management, Theology and Business Studies, to give you some idea of the range. I'm clearly not a subject expert in all of these (or very many of them!), but I do know about writing.

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I sometimes work with remedial writing (that is, students who for one reason or another are having difficulty putting a sentence together, and making that into a paragraph, or understanding the concepts of register, say), right through to some excellent students at all levels who are smart enough to know that getting a second pair of eyes on your work is always a help.



Chris Rose, Royal Literary Fellow

The questions they come to me with are so often about accuracy, clarity, or style, but also some very precise things – 'when exactly do you use a semi-colon?' More importantly than that, I often feel, is that I give students the chance to talk about their work in a way that is academic, but – as I am at one remove from the University, and the service is completely confidential – utterly unjudgmental. Often, we find ourselves talking about their wider areas of interests, or research, or the difficulties that may be impeding their writing in other ways (work, family, motivation.) In the current extremely pressured academic environment, this – I think – is an invaluable service.

This academic year, I'm here until Wednesday, 14 June and will be back for next year at the end of September.

Do encourage your students to come along, or – if you're stuck with something you're working on – come along yourself. To make an appointment, drop me a line at chris.rose@rlfeducation.org.uk



Open Knowledge in Higher Education

Open Knowledge in Higher Education (OKHE) is a TLS-led unit of the PGCert in Higher Education programme. The PGCert HE aims to help staff from across the university to:

- think critically about their contribution to the University
- develop a deeper understanding of the national and global Higher Education context
- progress in terms of professional confidence, personal effectiveness and long-term career strategies

The OKHE unit examines the context, contributions, and constraints of openness in higher education. We encourage learners to question what openness means within the sector and how it intersects with their work.

Our learners span a variety of backgrounds with academic and Professional Services (PS) staff from all faculties bringing a wide range of perspectives. The sessions are delivered online and are highly interactive using group activities and discussions to help learners identify themes/areas they want to explore. As part of our commitment to open knowledge, we use Medium for all our course content. This includes pre-work, podcasts, videos, session summaries and past submissions. Learners participate using comments to add their thoughts and opinions throughout the unit and Medium is also used for formative and summative assessments.

The PGCertHE programme webpages have been updated for 23/24 academic year and applications are now open, so please take a look and discuss with your line manager if you are interested. The closing date for applications is 30 June 2023.

For any queries please contact Jess Napthine-Hodgkinson, Chris Millson, Michael Stevenson, or post in the Library Teaching Teams channel.

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