

APPROVED

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

**SENATE ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
(TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENTS)**

19 OCTOBER 2023

Present: Professor April McMahon (Chair), Mr Ansari, Professor Andrew Brass, Professor Ford, Professor Peter R Green, Ms Jackson, Mr Andrew Mawdsley, Professor Ellen Schafheutle, Professor David Schultz, Ms Valcescu and Dr Nicholas Weise.

In Attendance for all items: Craig Best (Head of Student and Academic Services), Janine Holdway (Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery), Simon Merrywest (Director for the Student Experience) and John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager) (minutes).

Apologies: Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso, Professor Gabrielle Finn, Professor Danielle George, and Professor Fiona Smyth.

1 Welcome to New Members: Andrew Mawdsley, FBMH, Raluca-Elena Valcescu - Biology, Medicine & Health Officer (UMSU), Raheel Ansari - Science & Engineering Officer (UMSU), and Katie Jackson - Humanities Officer (UMSU).

2 Declarations of Interest

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

3 Review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and Membership, and Review of the Committee's Operation

Received: the Committee's terms of reference and membership.

Noted: that in response to comments raised in discussion regarding the application of the Committee's delegated authority from Senate, members were reminded that:

- a) on the establishment of the two Academic Quality and Standards Committees, a commitment had been agreed to review their operation after 12 months. This review would take place during 2023-24 as an element of a wider review of the progress and benefits that have arisen following the agreement in 2022 of the revised protocol for academic governance between the Board of Governors and Senate;
- b) this wider review had been included by Audit and Risk Committee in the 2023-24 University Internal Audit Programme, and would be led by Uniac;
- c) members wishing to submit comments on the operation of the Committee were requested to provide these to the Governance Office in the first instance, and they would be fed into the review;
- d) the Director for the Student Experience and the Senior Governance Manager would meet with a small number of Committee members prior to its January 2024 meeting, to consider

points raised in discussion in fuller detail. **Action: Senior Governance Manager**

4 Forward Agenda

Received: the Committee's 2023-24 Forward Agenda.

Noted: that requests for agenda items should be made to the Governance Office.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the 1 June 2023 meeting.

6 Matters Arising

Noted:

- a) the Matters Arising Update;
- b) that the Support to Study Procedure had been approved via e-mail correspondence on 11 July 2023 to ensure that it was in place for the start of academic year 2023-24. Comments received from members had been incorporated.

7 Chair's Update

Noted:

- a) the challenges presented in mid-2023 by the cyber incident at the University, and the Marking and Assessment Boycott, and the Chair's thanks to those colleagues who worked to address the cyber incident, and 2023 Confirmation and Clearing;
- b) the University's TEF outcomes had been announced on 28 September 2023. Its overall provider rating was Silver, with aspect ratings of Silver for Student Experience and Gold for Student Outcomes;
- c) recognition of the quality and value of the TEF submission from the University of Manchester Students' Union.

8 Annual Academic Assurance Review Report 2022-23

Received: the 2022-23 Annual Academic Assurance Review.

Noted:

- a) that Senate had approved the Approach to Annual Teaching, Learning and Students Academic Governance Assurance Review in March 2022. This introduced a new cycle that combined performance reviews (Annual TLS Deep Dive and an Annual Review of TL&S) with an Annual Assurance Review (AAR) which enabled Senate to provide academic assurance to the Board of Governors;
- b) the Annual Academic Assurance Review Report (AAR) provided:
 - i. assurance that the academic standards and quality assurance of programmes met and adhered to the internal procedures set out in the University Quality Framework and Regulations and consequently complied with external regulatory requirements;
 - ii. an overview of performance review (TLS Deep Dive);
 - iii. an assessment of trends, good practices, and risks mapped to appropriate internal and external benchmarks, utilising a single data source in the areas of Student Experience, Student Outcomes, Access and Participation, and linking to relevant measures from the Board's balanced scorecard;
 - iv. an update on the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023;
- c) in discussion, the following: 1) potential impacts on academic assurance caused by operational challenges; 2) experiences from FEB and UEB in 2023; and 3) Students' Union representatives' view that the University's potential could be realised through positive innovation and change;
- d) the following regarding NSS performance:
 - i. that the redoubling of local efforts to promote engagement in the NSS had been a measurable success and resulted in an overall response rate of 74.3% (an increase of 12.2 percentage points);

- ii. The excellent performance of the SU against the re-worded and more transparent question relating to their support for students;
- iii. benchmarking of the University's NSS performance against Russell Group comparators, and the challenges presented by an NSS Overall Positivity rating within the lower quartile of the HE sector;
- iv. the value and positive impact that local-level activity can have in improving the student experience and NSS performance;
- v. the value of NSS free text comments in informing activity.

Agreed:

- a) to recommend the 2022-23 Annual Academic Assurance Review to Senate;
- b) that the 2023-24 Review would include reflection on areas where operational challenges had led to a clear material impact on academic assurance;
- c) regular updates would be provided to the Committee on the activity of the SEP operational management groups that had been established. **Action: Head of Student and Academic Services**

9 Updated General Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals

Received: a proposed re-drafting of General Regulation XIX (Academic Appeals).

Noted: the re-drafting of the General Regulation had been informed by extensive consultation with various stakeholders, and input from Legal Affairs. The proposed re-draft was less formal, made greater use of plain English and supportive language, and included more support information.

Agreed: to recommend the updated General Regulation XIX to Senate for approval, subject to minor amendments reflecting points raised by members.

10 Updated Policy on Examinations

Received: proposed amendments to the Policy on Examinations.

Noted: that minor updates were proposed to enable devices to be allowed near to desks in examinations, provided that they were: 1) switched off, and 2) placed in the bag provided.

Agreed: to approve the updated Policy on Examinations to be implemented with immediate effect.

11 Updated Policy on Refunds and Compensation

Received: proposed amendments to the Policy on Refunds and Compensation.

Noted:

- a) that the Policy had been updated following feedback from members of TLSIG, DSE colleagues and Legal Affairs;
- b) the OfS had noted that the University's Student Protection Plan and Policy on Refunds and Compensation did not sufficiently cover the scenario of oversubscribed programmes. The proposed amendments would rectify this.

Agreed: to approve the updated Policy on Refunds and Compensation to be implemented with immediate effect.

12 Additional Business Raised in the Meeting

Noted: a suggestion that consideration of the impact of AI on academic assurance could be a germane subject for a Senate briefing.