THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

SENATE: ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE: TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENTS

8 MAY 2024

Present: Professor April McMahon (Chair), Raheel Ansari, Professor Andrew Brass, Professor Adam Danquah, Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso, Professor Gabrielle Finn, Professor Robert Ford, Professor Danielle George, Professor Peter R Green, Katie Jackson (from minute 7), Andrew Mawdsley, Professor Ellen Schafheutle, Professor David Schultz (from minute 7), Professor Fiona Smyth, and Dr Nicholas Weise.

In Attendance for all items: Craig Best (Director of Student and Academic Services), Janine Holdway (Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery), Clare McCauley (Uniac) (attending as an observer), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), Dr Simon Merrywest (Director for the Student Experience) (to minute 8), Dr Julian Skyrme (Director of Social Responsibility), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

In Attendance for minute 7: Sarah Williams (Teaching and Learning Manager).

1   Welcome
Noted: the Chair welcomed Clare McCauley (Uniac) who was attending the meeting as an observer. The Uniac audit would include a review of academic governance, which formed part of the Audit and Risk Committee's 2023-24 Audit Plan.

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

3   Minutes of the Previous Meeting
Agreed: to approve the minutes of the 13 March 2024 meeting.

4   Matters Arising
Noted:
   a) the Matters Arising update;
   b) that, arising from minute 6 from the 13 March 2024 meeting, consideration was being given to the assessment framework aligning with interdependencies, including the Canvas rollout. An update would be circulated to committee members by correspondence. **Action: Director of Student and Academic Services**

5   Actions to be addressed from the Annual Report on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Cases
Received: a report on the actions to be addressed from the Annual Report on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Cases.

Noted:
   a) that the report would be corrected to reflect that the University Centre for Academic English (UCAE) was in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (SALC);
   b) the observations within the report were reflective of international students, and should also reflect British Asian students;
   c) that students should be aware of the appropriate assessment practices, and where their responsibilities lay in relation to engagement in malpractice. Consideration would be given to additional actions that could be taken to support this. **Action: Director for the Student Experience**
   d) there was a need to ensure student engagement with continuing development, including the plagiarism training provided by the Library. It was suggested that opportunities could be provided to increase the volume of writing, and that this could be embedded into programmes generally;
   e) it was suggested that good practice in relation to malpractice should set a standard for students while at University.

6 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2023/24
Noted: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) Forward Agenda.

7 Assessment Framework Review
Received: the Undertaking Assessment section of the Assessment Framework, and the Feedback Procedure, both of which had been created and reviewed across the University. Consultation had taken place via drop in sessions, focus groups for staff and students, ad hoc messages, and input from AQSC Teaching, Learning and Students.

a) Feedback Procedure
It was proposed that the Feedback Procedure, once approved, would be implemented for September 2024. A number of observations were noted:
   i. 2.0.1: colleagues had raised concern about all units having opportunities for students to obtain feedback for both formative and summative assessment;
   ii. 2.0.3: grade descriptors should be consistent by assessment types, rather than across units;
   iii. 2.0.4: that the method and form of feedback should not be included in the programme handbooks;
   iv. 2.1.1: it was recognised that feedback to students should be timely. However, there was a need to consider maximum flexibility, including future options for automatic extensions. A sentence would be added to the procedure to reflect that colleagues would need to consider feedback as part of the assessment design process;
   v. 2.1.2: should include the Heads of School Operations' responsibility, to reflect that the process was also driven by Professional Services (PS) colleagues;
   vi. 2.1.3-2.1.5: concern was raised about the 21 calendar day deadline for providing feedback, particularly if material was received late by the marker. It was suggested that a mechanism could be introduced to indicate that the timescale for providing feedback would start from the date that the material was received by the marker. It was agreed that the timescale for larger pieces of work (30 or more credits) would be increased to 42 calendar days. It would be made clear that the timescales would not include bank holidays or University closure days. Unforeseen delays in providing feedback should be approved by the faculty. However, the reasons for unforeseen delays should not be included in the feedback;
   vii. 2.1.8: students submitting material more than 10 calendar days late would not be given a mark for their work. This should not apply to students with an approved extension;
   viii. 2.2.1-2.2.2: the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) had prescriptive marking

schemes where students could easily understand where they had lost credits. Consideration should be given to use of the wording 'where appropriate'. It was acknowledged that it would be difficult to personalise marking when marking anonymously;

    ix. Section 4: should be moved to an appendix;

    x. members were invited to send requests for additional changes to the Feedback Procedure to the Associate Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students); **Action: All members**

    xi. it was acknowledged that the agreed changes could have wider implications on the policy or on other policies, and this would need to be carefully considered;

    xii. the procedure would be re-drafted to reflect the discussion, and circulated to committee members prior to presentation to Senate. **Action: Associate Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students)**

Agreed: to recommend the Feedback Procedure to Senate for approval, following re-drafting to capture the points agreed, and re-circulation to committee members prior to presentation to Senate.

    b) Undertaking Assessment
It was agreed that there would need to be a defined way to approach the substantial number of comments on the Undertaking Assessment section of the Assessment Framework. Following discussion, the following points were raised:

    i. a small working group would be convened to work through the comments on the Undertaking Assessment section; **Action: Associate Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students)/Faculty Vice-Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Faculty of Science and Engineering)**

    ii. the comments from the Faculty of Humanities had not been included in the spreadsheet and would be sent to the Teaching and Learning Manager; **Action: Faculty Vice-Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Faculty of Humanities)**

    iii. additional comments on the Undertaking Assessment section could be sent to the Associate Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students) by 13 May 2024; **Action: All members**

    iv. an edited version of the Undertaking Assessment section, reflecting the comments received, would be circulated to committee members; **Action: Associate Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students)**

    v. the deadlines for reviewing the policy and procedures in the Outcomes of Assessment section of the Assessment Framework would be re-circulated; **Action: Teaching and Learning Manager**

Agreed: that the Undertaking Assessment section of the Assessment Framework would be updated and circulated to committee members, prior to presentation to Senate for approval.

8   Access and Participation Plan (APP) Update
Received: an update on the progress of the University's APP for 2025-26 to 2028-29, including the risks to the Equality of Opportunities Risk Register.

Noted:
    a) that the target areas were covered in the annual equality review, which included elements of access and disability;

    b) the targets had been set following a review of performance and previous targets, and a comparison with other Russell Group universities. It was noted that the OfS might require us to identify targets that were more ambitious;

    c) the final APP submission would be circulated to the committee members when completed; **Action: Director of Student and Academic Services**

    d) Objective 3 detailed the target to reduce the gap in completion rates between students with

no reported disability and those with reported disability, from 4.6pp to 2pp (+15 students), and it was confirmed that this related to actual student numbers. The University would aim to maintain the current number of students in this category;

e) it was acknowledged that there could be intersectionality within the different target areas, where disabled students may be represented in a number of different target areas;

f) some of the current work was data-driven decision making, and this work could continue without waiting for feedback from the OfS. This included the Disability Plan, which could be taken forward;

g) the Director of Student and Academic Services was thanked for progressing the APP.

9 Quarterly Update on TLS Functional Areas
Received: the Operational Management Groups (OMG) Escalation Summary report.

Noted:
a) that a quarterly update on TLS functional areas would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee; **Action: Director of Student and Academic Services**
b) feedback on the format of the OMG Escalation Summary report could be provided to the Director of Student and Academic Services; **Action: All members**

10 Update to the Policy on Advising Taught Students
Received: the proposed updates to the Policy on Advising Taught Students.

Noted:
a) that clarity was required regarding 4.1 in respect of student advisors. Advice would be sought as to whether students on joint programmes would have an advisor in each school, or one academic supervisor and access to appropriate information and support about the other school. The Policy would then be updated accordingly; **Action: Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery**
b) the last sentence of 4.2 would be separated to become a separate point; **Action: Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery**
c) a point of contact during welcome week was considered important, particularly for one-year PGT students who could find it difficult to integrate.

Agreed: to approve the updates to the Policy on Advising Taught Students.

11 Student Disciplinary Matters: Student Suspensions
Received: the report on Student Disciplinary Matters – proposed revisions to Regulation XVII and the Support to Study Procedure.

Noted: that the proposal detailed a move to a single route for student suspensions, and included wording changes to Regulation XVII and the Support to Study Procedure.

Agreed:
i. to approve the insertion of the Vice-President for Research at paragraph 9.9 within the Support to Study Procedure for suspension appeals;
ii. to recommend to Senate that the following amendments be made to Regulation XVII:
- reference to the President and Vice-Chancellor (i.e. suspension approvals) to instead refer to the Director for the Student Experience (or delegated nominee);
- reference to the Chair of the Board of Governors (i.e. suspension appeals) to refer to both the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students and the Vice-President for Research (or delegated nominees);
- wording updates within Section 5.

12 Student Digital Equity Charter
Received: the Student Digital Equity Charter.

Noted:
    a) the Student Digital Equity Charter had originally been drafted as a policy. However, as it would be co-owned with the students, it had been developed as a Charter detailing a commitment to improving digital equity for students;
    b) the future resource implications required to implement the Charter would need to be considered. At the current stage, the University was demonstrating its commitment to making the improvements, and the Charter highlighted these aspirations;
    c) concern was raised about students studying remotely, and having low connectivity. It was confirmed that students would need to confirm that digital aspects were available when signing up for a distance learning programme.

Agreed: to recommend the Student Digital Equity Charter to Senate.

13 Policy on Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement
Received: the Policy on Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement.

Noted:
    a) that the Policy had undergone a significant re-write, with a focus on student wellbeing and regulatory statutory reporting;
    b) the Policy had been written collaboratively, and consultation had been undertaken with each faculty and school board. Discussions had also taken place with UMUCU. The Policy would be made available to all staff and students for comments via two University-wide sessions prior to Senate. In addition, if members of Senate were unable to attend either of the University-wide sessions, the University Academic Lead for Digital Learning/Engagement Analytics Academic Lead would meet individually with members, or in small discussion groups.

Agreed: to recommend the Policy on Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement to Senate for approval.

14 Additional Guidance on Attending Faith Festivals
Received: the Additional Guidance on Attending Faith Festivals.

Noted: that the Guidance would be updated to remove the reference to 'four impacted days' and would instead refer to 'any impacted days'. **Action: Director for the Student Experience**

15 Requests for Agenda Items by Members of the Committee
Noted: no requests for agenda items had been received. Any such requests for future meetings should be made to the Governance Office at the earliest opportunity.