

Meeting Minutes
Teaching Sustainability Project Taskforce
30 January 2025

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Fiona Devine (Chair), Elizabeth McCrum (PVC for Education, University of Reading), Fiona Smyth, Emma Rose, Sarah Dyer, Mario Pezzino, Camden Reeves, Emma Wilson, Manuel Lopez-Ibanez, Hannah Cousins, Katie Jackson, David Boyd, Ben Cawley, Craig Best, Lexy Cummins, Abigail Robinson, Jenny Knights, Rory Stanton, Julia Dobson, Peter Kahn, Kathryn Howard, Claire Ung, Helen Dunning (Secretary).

Apologies: Thomas Schmidt, Jayne Hindle, Peter Green, Rebecca Hodgson and Jennifer Hallam.

2. Minutes from the last meeting: for confirmation

The [minutes](#) were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Outstanding actions

- Jennifer Hallam to share paper on why the FSE FCM model is being used in BMH and details of the University of Leeds' 20 credit unit model.
- ER confirmed that Alison Wilson is working on a project which aims to provide an overview of the different WAMs that operate across the four schools in Humanities. A paper will be shared and discussed at FLT, date to be confirmed.
- At the 12 March 2025 Taskforce meeting school representatives are asked to provide an update on areas of growth in student numbers, taking demand, patterns and trends in recruitment into account.

4. Presentation and discussion with Professor Elizabeth McCrum

Elizabeth shared her insights and key lessons learned from her involvement in the University of Reading's curriculum review project. Her presentation was followed by a Q&A session. Key points as follows:

- Where programme teams worked together there was success, whereas individuals doing this alone took on a huge amount of work. Additional resource would have been preferred rather than adding to existing workloads
- What went better than expected? Colleagues appreciating the benefits in workload and improvements to student experience.
- Reading was willing to withdraw larger programmes and some of these programmes were withdrawn based on their overall performance. A period of 3 years was given to programmes identified that either were not recruiting or not performing well to give time to make necessary improvements.
- Reading had a small team of academic developers facilitating, working with teams and bringing in a wider pool of colleagues at some points. Guidance materials and a bank of resources on design and assessment were created. Professional services colleagues were supporting academics.
- Additional resource was introduced at certain milestones but on the whole work was carried out via existing resource.
- An intake of 30 students on a programme was decided as starting point for review, working on an underlying assumption that programmes with very small numbers led to negative impact on student experience.
- The project was taken an opportunity to embed distinctiveness within the curriculum.
- Staff were reassured they were not necessarily teaching bigger classes and that jobs were not at risk; the project was about creating capacity.
- Before the project, some programmes could have been described as 'collections of modules' and there was uncertainty about how modules fitted together. The project was a chance to bring people together and design programmes collaboratively, through programme leadership and programme teams.

- The importance of getting the amount of choice in modules ‘right’ (as opposed to “over choice” leading to offerings that are not clear and distinct) was highlighted. Students at Reading were employed as partners throughout the process.
- FD confirmed that work on joint degrees will be part of long-term process of programme design in the TS project.

5. Expectations for 10 June portfolio plan/vision: for discussion

- Expectations were outlined and discussed.
- Schools fed back on the work that has been taking place so far and which colleagues have been involved. FD confirmed that discussions should be taking place on the portfolio plan/vision in each department across the four schools.
- FD to speak further with Heads of School about how to facilitate discussions across schools, whilst avoiding working in silos.
- School representatives to present a short update at future Taskforce meetings on their progress and to share good practice.

Action: FD to speak with Heads of School about how to facilitate discussions across schools, whilst avoiding working in silos.

Action: ER/HD to share 10 June portfolio plan/vision template with school representatives.

6. Simplifying exit pathways

- FS highlighted that there are currently 57 different exit pathways in the portfolio. It was agreed that we need to support this activity, to retain students and support continuation. FS asked if there is a more efficient and simplified way of managing exit pathways, such as moving students to single honours programmes where this is appropriate.
- There is a need to monitor the number of students currently going through this route, and particularly to monitor attainment on these programmes.
- Further discussion is needed in the Languages Subgroup and will appear as an agenda item at a future Languages Subgroup meeting.
- **Decision:** The Taskforce agreed that they are supportive of retaining exit pathways but there is a need to reduce the overall number, simplify them and understand why students switch to them.
- Exit pathways will be added to the agenda for a future Languages Subgroup meeting.

7. UCAS Equal Consideration deadline: for agreement

- FD confirmed the actions agreed in the [minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024](#). ER responded to the queries that were raised.
- **Decision:** The Taskforce agreed that if a programme has received no applications by the UCAS Equal Consideration deadline, the programme will be withdrawn from offer for that academic year.
- As per the discussion in September, a separate discussion will now be held with the Languages Subgroup.

8. Professional Services Advisory Group update

- HC confirmed that the first meeting took place on 28 January 2025 and included:
 - An update from the Teaching and Learning Delivery Team
 - Time and resource needed for the new programme proposal and programme amendment process. A paper will be brought to future Taskforce meeting.
 - HC also confirmed recommendations on how this can be streamlined are being discussed and will be brought back to the Taskforce.

- ER and HC are considering the resources needed to support development and approval activities required to support the portfolio changes. It was noted that at an appropriate point in discussions, bringing in student interns to consult was suggested.

Action: HC and ER to update on progress assessing PS resources needed for programme development and approval at Taskforce meeting.

9. Risk management process: for confirmation

- LC confirmed the risk management process.
- The risk log is available on SharePoint and is currently being updated, then will be recirculated. It will also appear as standing item at Taskforce meetings going forward.

Action: LC to recirculate risk log.

10. Summary of actions and decisions

Actions:

Action	Owner	Deadline
Speak with Heads of School about how to facilitate discussions across schools, whilst avoiding working in silos.	FD	Next meeting
Share 10 June portfolio plan/vision template with school representatives.	ER/HD	As soon as possible
HC and ER to update on progress assessing PS resources needed for programme development and approval at Taskforce meeting.	HC	Future meeting
Recirculate risk log.	LC	Next meeting

Decisions:

- **Simplifying exit pathways:** The Taskforce agreed that they are supportive of retaining exit pathways but there is a need to reduce and simplify these pathways.
- **UCAS Equal Consideration deadline:** The Taskforce agreed that if a programme has received no applications by the UCAS Equal Consideration deadline, the programme will be withdrawn from offer for that academic year.

11. AOB and date of the next meeting

- The next Taskforce meeting will be held on at 10am on Wednesday 12 March 2025 in room G.018 in AMBS.