**School of Environment, Education and Development**

**Faculty of Humanities**

**SEED Programme Committee:** [UG PPEM]

**Date:** Wednesday 4th December 2024

**Time:** 15:30pm – 17:00pm

**Location:** Humanities Bridgeford Street Building, Room 1.69/1.70

Please send any queries to [seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk)

**Minutes**

**Staff Attendees:** Anna Gilchrist (AG) (UG Programme Director – Environmental Management), Amy Matthews (AM) (IAG/Secretary), Razieh Zandieh (RZ) (UG Programme Director – Planning and Real Estate), Caglar Koksal (CK) (Lecturer in Urban Planning), Ian Mell (IM) (Head of School – PPEM)

**Staff Apologies: None reported.**

**Reps in attendance:**

Name – Year group/Cohort info

(Environmental Management – EM) (Planning, Real Estate – PRE)

Year 1 – Ilya (EM), Will (EM), Charles Mann (CM) (PRE), Athina Ayubi (Mina/AA) (PRE), Rafael Lim (RM) (EM)

Year 2 – Ray Chu (RC) (EM)

Year 3 – William Wilkins (WW) (EM), Enance, Jonah Mellor (JM) (PRE), Jessica Peers (JP) (EM)

Year 4 – Noah Taiwo (NT) (PRE), Albie Greenstreet (AG) (EM) - Both reps returned from professional placements.

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

AG welcomes all attendees to the group. Ian Mell (IM) will be attending the second part of the session.

AG notes this is formal process whereby students can feedback to the department on a student rep level. Students can raise any issues they have been experiencing and can also see what has been done as a result of previous issues being raised e.g. in previous programme committees.

AG notes when Enivornmental Management students would like to make any comments, they will leave the room as PD, so students are able to discuss freely.

All comments will be minuted via AM and will be noted confidentially. AM confirmed this.

1. **Introductions**

Students and staff introduce themselves to the room. AG noted that over the past two years a numbers of changes have been undergone amongst the programmes – undergraduate review e.g. in terms of exams and assessments. AG noted a few more changes are currently underway. IM as Head of department noted there have been 4 new staff appointments to the department. IM confirmed a new Environmental Impact and Assessment Management staff member has been appointed called Amy. Rob Roberson has been appointment from University of Glasgow in the Change making and Global Development maker 2 more staff have also been appointed in different areas.

AG thanked the student reps for their attendance in the meeting and emphasised that part of the rep role is to report back to students for feedback and also the importance of NSS survey. AG emphasised that this survey is hugely important for students to fill out in their final year of study. AG emphasised the important of the NSS metric, noting that it gives the university and the department an idea of how they are doing e.g. in terms of student satisfaction.

AG asked for reps in final year to encourage their fellow final year students to fill this out, noting that as the PPEM final year courses are small in size, it is therefore increasingly important. AG noted that students in earlier years e.g year 1 and year 2, students will be encouraged engage and discuss the NSS survey e.g. make students aware of the survey, what it is for – before students go into final year. AG reiterated that the NSS is great format for the university to use e.g. it is a great way for applicants to view the university – parents etc.

AG asked the student reps to ask for students to provide feedback about formative assignments and feedback about the course e.g. what is useful, what isn’t and how it can be improved. AG asked the reps to think about feedback and different modes of assignments they currently have and what students think.

AG confirmed that no placements students were present at the meeting e.g. Year 3 students on professional placement. AG noted that CG will meet with these students and follow up and follow up accordingly.

1. **Minutes/Actions of the last meeting**

AG noted the minutes from last week. They have been reviewed.

1. **Rep Consultation**

Student rep consultation begins with Year 4 reps with Professional Placement.

**Year 4 – PRE w Placement**

* NT provided comments on behalf of Year 4 students who had returned from professional placement. NT reiterated for the student’s semester 1 had been going well for students and they had a good selection of modules to choose from this semester and were enjoying the units they had selected. NT emphasised that students had been particularly enjoying the future cities module in particular. NT emphasised that students were happy with that unit and the assignments associated and they were also happy with their other units as well. NT noted that students were happy overall with their units and assignments. NT mentioned that the general Availability of office hours from staff members has been really good and welcomed by students. NT reiterated staff availability had been extremely good.
* NT noted in terms of the spaces between assignments, this has been good and students have been able to management their workload, time management etc.
* NT noted that students felt that in terms of the dissertation project, students feels well managed at the moment. NT provided comments from two students returning from placement, noting their had been slight confusion from students e.g. in terms of catching up on units such as research methods and that lack of support given to placement students. NT noted that in some cases students have been at a disadvantage e.g. you have to self-teach yourself research methods - watch videos etc.
* NT provided student comments regarding dissertation project, mentioning that in past dissertation advisors were allocated based on staff experience and specialisation. NT noted in comparison this year students have not experienced this e.g. supervisor allocated not as specialised as they would like. NT reiterated that in terms of teachings, student are generally happy and the teaching cannot be faulted this year.
* AG asked NT about feedback from students and if they received any physical feedback from them. NT confirmed that they haven’t received any physical feedback from students at this time. NT noted that students did provided comments and praise regarding staff drop ins for assignments and assessments.
* AG noted for this cohort unfortunately placements students are at a disadvantage in terms of catching up on research methods unfortunately, whereas this year students complete the research methods before they go on placement.
* AG noted in terms of dissertation and specialism, staff are there to aide students, but not necessarily in terms of specialism, AG mentioned that unfortunately as there are lots of students to support, it means it is difficult for student s to necessarily to get that match/ specialist topic or staff member.

**Third Year**

* Eunice, third year EM student commented that they are in the final year of their programme. They noted there was a good balance between Real Estate and Urban Planning content. They also noted that their professors were good and that students appreciated the drop ins that staff offered, finding them very helpful e.g. in terms of discussing assignments queries and or lecture topics.
* She noted that there was good balance in terms of the timing of assessments and submission times e.g. students can organise when to submit work – time management etc. Highlighted that the support given from professors was also very good e.g. students feel supported and did not feel unprepared in terms of their assignments.
* AG asked if NT and Eunice taken Real Estate and Investment Finance unit. They confirmed that they had both taken the unit. AG confirmed that the course was taught alongside PGT students. AG asked both reps how they found the course with the PGT students. Eunice noted that enjoyed the unit and understood the content and also noted that they when they had asked peers, they had similar comments.
* Eunice noted they also had not received any physical feedback yet regarding the Real Estate and Investment Finance unit and submitted a piece of work this afternoon. AG confirmed that staff have a 15 working days turnaround time to mark the work and for students to then receive the feedback. AG thanks Eunice for their comments regarding the real estate and investment finance unit.
* Eunice noted in terms of their dissertation project – they personally feel supported by their supervisors and enjoyed their monthly meetings.
* AG thanks NT for these comments and that the dissertation restructure has been good and well received e.g. to start earlier in the academic year e.g. Semester 1 instead of February.

**Year 3**

* Third year rep JP noted they are enjoying the course. They noted on a personal level they have been doing the Global Urban Future unit and they have really enjoyed it, submitted their assignment work and and received feedback.
* JP also noted some course mates are concerned about their future careers, JP personally suggested that they were unsure why they are concerned about this. AG noted Bertie Dockerill is now in place as an employabilty advisor for PPEM and he can be contacted if students had any concerns about their careers, Student Rep - R noted students can also speak to their academic advisor for career advice. AG emphasised that within Bertie role he has ramped up resources for students to take advantage of– e.g. speed events, employability vacancies etc. AG suggested that in the future, staff could also possibly can also run a session if that would help. AG noted they would speak to Bertie regarding this.

**Final Year – Environmental Management (EM)**

**Year 4 – Placement return**

* AG noted they happy from their studies this year, emphasising that they were happy with how the semester is going so far. AG emphasised that the feedback they had received so far they had found it really useful. AG noted that the formative feedback they had received was also good as it was a good way to learn from guidance.
* AG noted as NTs comments, reiterating the research methods feedback, AG emphasised that it was a shame they were in at a different stage in the cohort when the restructure happened e.g. new students have benifited from the new structure.
* WW noted in terms of Environmental Law unit in particular the summative feedback they had received and was really good and beneficial to them.
* WW commented on the EIA unit, noting that the new unit lead by Rochelle, had been really beneficial to students and was particularly useful for professional work - WW noted in terms of the teaching of the unit, staff did do separate sessions for PGT and UG students. WW mentioned that the class size was quite large over 70 students were in attendance, WW noted that on many occasions the class had to move rooms lots of times e.g. in terms of timetabling. WW mentioned that in earlier sessions some students had to sit down on floor. WW noted this was eventually fixed by the teaching moving every single week. WW emphasised although this was not an ideal situation, other than that issue the unit was very good.
* WW mentioned from their perspective that they were getting enough support from advisors in terms of their dissertation project.
* WW noted in terms of assessments there were two assessments that were due a day between each other – so very close together, so time management was key.
* IM noted in terms of timetabling and rooms. IM noted that was a big spike in PGT student numbers. IM mentioned in terms of the timetabling for the EIA unit, after the first session the timetabling issue was noted that they made the centralised timetabling aware. IM noted although the timetabling structure of the unit was far away from being perfect, it was vital that the team got people off the floor as soon as possible e.g. From a health and safety perspective.
* AG thanks WW for his comments and noted it was good to receive the positive comments and feedback.

**Third Year (Planning and Real Estate)**

* JM noted that they recieved feedback from a student who got in touch regarding a peer mentoring issue. AG asked JM to follow up with the student about this issue and then they can provide comments and guidance. AG noted that they can also follow up with NT as peer mentor student lead.
* JM expressed student comments about dissertations projects– students expressed concern on how to write a literature review and general academic writing. JM noted that one student also felt mis matched with their advisor and that this was being reviewed.
* Lack of clarity of what lecturers were looking for e.g. what they expect from students
* JM noted that they personally are feeling very happy with third year so far and reiterated that they feel like they have been given lots of information to formulate ideas with.
* JM noted in terms of timetabling, they felt the schedule and timetable has been really good e.g. they and others have had lots of free time to study independently. JM does note as a result they do personally often stay at home more to study, but this benefits them and it means that they want to use resources more. JM noted they also enjoy online learning as well e.g. via resources, blackboard etc. JM noted this free time does allow them to also focus on personal development e.g. outside of the university setting.
* JM confirmed that they were also doing the personal development unit as well like other students and they had been enjoying it.
* JM noted in terms of negatives, they mentioned that more careers guidance would be appreciated and that there had also been issues with the SEATS attendance system. JM noted that they received negative responses from attendance system, which was unwelcome and that there are issues with the app e.g. struggled to log in initially, now got a new phone can access the app. JM confirmed these issues have now been resolved.
* AG thanked JM for their comments regarding this and acknowledged there had been issues with the attendance system but these have hopefully now been resolved.

RZ asked students for comments on the Future Cites unit.

* JP provided comment regarding the unit and noted that some students find the weekly content online hard to keep up with e.g in terms of only being able to learn online, might procrastinate etc.
* NT noted that as this was an online only learning module, it can impact on whether or not students would decide to take it. NT mentioned on a personal level they were hesitant to take the unit as it was not hybrid module e.g. online and in person, whereas it was fully online.
* AG noted other optional units can be offered to students in future. AG noted students do have options of taking Geography units, which can be beneficial as the units can be relevant to planners e.g. North American Cities.
* NT noted his friend is a Geographer and they would be interested in study planning options. AG thanked the final years for their comments.

Year 2 – Planning and Real Estate

– AG noted that unfortunately no Year 2 PRE students reps were present to provide comment on the programme.

Year 2 – Environmental Management (EM)

* EM student rep RC provided comments on the programme so far. Noting that so far the course and assessment are going well. RC noted that they had received feedback from peers regarding the unit - UCIL Climate Change and Society. RC noted the unit is timetable in the format of an hour x 2 which often leads to low attendance e.g. single digits in attendance in terms of student numbers.
* RC provides comments on the Data Analytics module, noting that for many students they find the structure of the unit hard and confusing to understand – unable to access videos of the lectures etc. RC noted in the past for Applied Project – step by step videos of software that had been used previous were shared not for this year. RZ asked RC if students received the handout that corresponded to this e.g. to refer to. RC noted that students had not received this. RZ thanked RC for the confirmation. AG noted that they can speak to Helen regarding this.
* AG asked RC of they have received any feedback. RC noted that they hadn’t yet and they should receive some next week.
* AG asked if anyone has any additional feedback to let them know.
* AG asked the reps if they liked having the option of having 30 credits to select optional units. AG asked if this was communicated well. RC noted they didn’t know they could select different courses from other schools e.g. free choice units.
* WW noted in some cases it was easy to find some options than others when selecting modules e.g. EIA hard to fine on the student system.
* AG confirmed there was progress to be made. WW that the course unit selection process is better than it used to be.

Year 1 – Planning and Real Estate (PRE)

* First year PRE rep AA provided comments for their first year peers, AA noted students they are concerned about Designing Urban Futures – academic keeps mentioning their companies they use. AA emphasised their frustration that the unit lead is using their own company’s framework e.g. no other companies or frameworks. AA noted that many other students also found this rather patronising. AA noted on a personal level, they personally do not go to lectures and workshops anymore as a result of this. AA reiterated that many students will often disengage in the lectures as the unit lead would just be talking about their companies.
* CM noted that only one method is spoken about in the unit content. CM noted this was called so connect and this meant many students felt this was frustrating and not valuable to them, so as a results students would not engage with the materials – so students wouldn’t get much out of the two hours e.g. in terms of learning.
* IM asks the reps if they and their peers had a preferred way of teaching. CM noted that the company talked about solely - So Connect involves lots of team work scenarios and workshops and although this was useful, other styles should also be incorporated e.g. class style, more talking.
* A number of reps noted that they agreed with comments CM said, emphasising that students felt like they are being forced to engage with a certain agenda, and it is frustrating in terms of obtaining their degrees as if the unit lead if profiting off students by distributing their materials. Reps emphasised that more formats could be used and it is unfortunate they have not in this instance.
* CM noted many students like staff members including Bertie Dockerill, noting that in particular their unit is particularly enjoyable.
* Rep F noted that in terms of the Introduction to Real Estate unit, in their opinion the workshops and lectures are not useful and that the lecturer sounds like a robotic at times. Rep F suggested that more engagement and personality could be added into teaching as the workshops are not helpful. Rep F suggested that some students find it hard to understand and find the sessions not very useful e.g. as if you are learning nothing. The reps suggests that a number of ways of teaching could be implemented.
* AG noted that where teaching styles are considered so people have more personality than others, but noted it is a different issue in terms of getting things out of your unit. AG asks if the lectures and workshops are useful.
* Rep AA noted that students could ask questions on a padlet, as currently the lecturer often just repeats things, which isn’t necessary helpful. AA suggests that students would prefer a tutorial format for the workshops and that this would be more useful. CM noted Padlet could be utilized, as the questions could be answered in workshops. CM noted that at moment the workshops don’t feel useful e.g. students may as well do it yourself and some students feel like you could do it on your own. CM noted there is not much guidance or structure in the workshop and emphasised that often work in session is not getting done, in some cases people walk out of sessions etc.
* RZ asked if discussion board on BB is used for this unit. CM and AA said is not used by students at this time. Rep F suggested that if a discussion board was used the response would possibly be the same on the Padlet. Emphasising a padlet could be used. AG noted this is something to investigate and feedback on.
* AA noted unit the unit also had fieldwork component with only a lecture and more support was needed before this e.g. more support workshops.
* AG asked students if they were experiencing an in-balance in terms of units. Rep RM – an MPLAN student noted that in terms of unit selection it would be good if Real Estate units could be optional as they would personally like the opportunity to take urban planning units.
* AG noted that in the first semester, the aim is for students is about getting to get up to speed e.g. for some students they may already know/ have planning knowledge, but others may not. AG noted that in these cases, some students may therefore not find content interesting, but all students then get to the same level. AG mentioned that in semester 2 students have more flexibility in terms of unit choices e.g. could do rural planning units in semester 2 etc. AG emphasised in terms of creating a programme structure for Semester 2, its aim is for students to get more of a flavour of RE/planning after Semester 1 has been completed e.g. students have learned the basic planning and real estate content.
* CK mentioned that they are the programme director for both the MPLAN and MPRE programmes. CK noted that both basis are covered in Year 1, Semester 1 material so you can understand your colleagues and peers in both demains e.g. on other side of the table. CK confirmed that they noted students comments and concerns regarding this and emphasised that students can take plenty of planning modules later into the semester.
* AG and CK noted the multi-disciplinary knowledge that students will gain during their degrees e.g. in both mindset and knowledge. AG also mentioned that students will gain accreditation in the form of RICS and RTPI and both of these are awarded at end of degree. So all content needs to be covered so students can gain these accreditations.
* RM noted that Intro to Planning and Intro to Real Estate there is cross over when assessments are due. AG thanked RM for this information and noted that she would speak to BD regarding this. AG suggests that it may be possible to put back by one week e.g. 9th Jan. IM noted it is not against regulations for two pieces of CW to have deadlines crossover as they are pieces of coursework. CM and AA noted that this should be a cause for concern from students as they should have time to work on these pieces of coursework.

Year 1 Environmental Management – First Years

* First year rep Ilya noted in terms of the careers unit they are taking, they noted the unit involves group work, which they feel is often hard to execute in workshops e.g. in some cases it can take half an hour to get put into groups.
* Reps also noted in terms of feedback from Joanne’s unit was not useful in comparison to others e.g. feedback such as “check the website” is not useful and not as good as feedback from AG and IM for example. The reps emphasised that it felt like Joanne’s unit feedback was very generalised in comparison.
* Reps provided feedback on AG’s EM programme/modules. AG left the room at this point. Reps commented that they really enjoyed AG modules and that the feedback provided by AG was very useful and helpful. CK asked if they like the balance between fieldwork and lectures. Rep Ilya noted that in some cases this was intense e.g. three days of fieldwork but it was enjoyable. Ilya suggested the possibly of reducing fieldwork hours, but emphasised it was extremely useful to see examples in real life examples e.g. through being in the field.
* IM noted that for staff it important for them to find a balance of how much is enough in terms of teaching e.g. for students to benefit. IM suggested that they it is a difficult task e.g. don’t want students to feel like they are missing out e.g. on experiences like fieldwork or important information. IM emphasised it is a difficult balance e.g.when students are on campus, lots of days in etc. CK noted post covid it has been a task to create the right balance for students e.g. in terms of belonging and students feeling part of a community. IM noted there is a balance to strike in terms of teaching and learning e.g. in terms of doing enough/too much and that this can change year on year e.g. cohorts.
* CM and other reps noted that in terms of the DSF unit, when on blackboard they have been encountering issues accessing current lecture recordings. The reps noted that they appear to be from are from 2020. AG noted this should not be the case and up to date recordings should be accessible.
* Reps noted that the slides in the DSF unit are often very picture and diagram heavy, noting it is hard for students to take all the information in, and because they can’t access the current slides it hard to refer or catch up e.g. as slides appear to be different. IM emphasised students should be able to access units podcasting’s videos at Manchester from this academic year. CM noted they have been asking the unit lead for the 2024 unit recordings.
* CK emphasised that they can investigate this. IM asked Ilya if they could follow this up further. Ilya noted they did not know how it was accessed on Blackboard. AG noted every lecture unit should be captured automatically and that this will be investigated and that they will communicate how to access lecture recording.
* Reps commented on the Applied Environment Science (AES) unit, noting that the Padlet had really useful, noting when lectures may quiet and people may not want to speak up, they can use the Padlet to get questioned answered. Reps did not thought that the formative assignment for the unit doesn’t seem to be indicative of the summative assignment and that this is something that they would like to feedback e.g was disconnected. Reps suggested that if this was more connected this would be very helpful. AG noted in terms of this unit, in future students can receive some past papers to use to benefit their learning.
* Reps commented in terms of DSF, students have found it hard to work on their essays e.g. working out an essay planning, navigating the round view software.
* WW emphasised that for foreign students, it is really helpful for slides to be concise and simplified rather than lots of slides. WW noted that the DSF slides do not follow this e.g. 100 slides for a lecture can be very overwhelming to students. AG thanks WW for these comments and mentioned that they would make a note of this. WW also mentioned that in the lectures, the lecturer can barely finish teaching on time and suggests that too much content is presented for students especially where English isn’t first their first language.
* CK asked how students are finding their first year so far. Year 1 Ilya noted– they are taking the Applied ES unit – DEM and noted it has been quite hard to decipher the unit and the content.
* AA noted that in terms of taking DSF it was not what they expected it to be e.g. had difficulties with the so connect software and also the lecture format e.g. lots of slides and pictures made it hard to digest the information as lots of to look at alongside lots of talking from the lecture made it hard to follow at times. AG asked if aims are shown at the beginning of the lectures. AA noted they were. Rep Ilya mentioned that it often felt like intended outcomes are not met and students are often left feeling confused with the content.
* CM noted that software Round View was hard to deceiver and students were pushed to use this for a certain technique, despite this it was hard to find what the objective was in using the software.
* CK asked the reps if this was what they are expected their first year to be. AA expressed dissatisfaction that they were doing so many hours of DSF unit rather than more real estate focused content – which is their degree that they signed up to do, emphasising this was not what they had expected and that they thought they would be doing more planning and re-estate content.
* CM noted that had personally been disappointed with content so far and were looking forward to next semester’s units. AG noted herself and CM has spoken about not feeling challenged. AG thanked CM for their comments.
* AG asked if students are given readings, additional learning, to go over and alongside the taught sessions. CM noted that resources are given and are useful but is initially it hard to navigate blackboard. CM suggested it would be useful in beginning of first semester to receive more guidance and advice on how to navigate the system.
* AA noted in their friend’s course, smaller tasks after lectures would also be good to replicate. CM echoed comments with DSF feedback echoed by Ilya.

1. **Any other business**

AG thanks all reps for their comments and regarding DSF they are extremely useful. Rep WW noted that they have spoken up about this unit and other students have done so over their whole degree, so comments regarding this would be appreciated.

AG emphasised the important of NSS and student feedback is extremely important. AG noted in terms of data – feedback via multiple sources is extremely relevant and important to make change. AG noted the weight of evidence is getting stronger e.g. in terms of units etc. IM emphasised that comments are made, and it is then formally noted it can be investigated and followed up e.g. if only made informally – via comments it cannot.

AG noted in terms of the DSF unit, that the other software such as Ketso and Round View have their place, and currently the DSF unit is not being taught in the best way teach sustainability, as it is clear that other softwares and methods can be used. AG emphasised that sustainability is key in Year 1, infrastructure is extremely important in Year 2 and tree removal in Year 3.

IM emphasised that AG and himself spoke yesterday regarding the DSF unit and that weight of evidence is stacking up to make changes to this course unit. Student rep Ilya asked if students should put their thoughts in the unit surveys regarding the DSF unit and others. AG emphasised that this would be extremely useful from a staff perspective.

AG asked students to complete teaching and learning surveys before the end of the semester. AG thanked students in advance for completing this.

AG thanked all student reps for their attendance and comments.

1. **Date of next meeting**

TBC. AG noted the next meeting will take place in Semester 2. Date is TBC.

**Summary of Actions List**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Number** | **Agenda Item** | **Action** | **Lead** | **Deadline** | **Status/Notes** |
| 1 | Year 1 EM feedback. | AG to provide information about how lecture recording for 2024/25 can be accessed. | AG |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |