**School of Environment, Education and Development**

**Faculty of Humanities**

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

**Date:** Tuesday 25th March 2025

**Time:** 12:30pm – 14:00pm

**Location:** HBS Hanson Room

Please send any queries to seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk

**Minutes**

**Staff Attendees:** Peter Ryan (PR) (Programme Director for BA/BSc Geography/Chair), Amy Matthews (AM) (IAG/Secretary),

**4 Reps in attendance:**

**Year 1 Student Reps:** None present.

**Year 2 Student Reps:** Kanon Saito (KS) - BA Geography (Human Geography)**,** Zoe Philis (ZP)– BA Geography (Human Geography)

**Year 3 Student Reps:** Tarini Mohil (TM) – BSc Geography (Physical Geography)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies received

1. **Introductions**

PR welcomed all attendees. Staff and student reps introduced themselves.

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

PR confirmed the 1st semester Programme Committee minutes were accurate.

* Mouse in the HBS Lecture theatre - AM reported that, Estates and House Services were contacted to remove the mouse from the lecture theatre.
* Instagram Collaboration: AM contacted the UoM Geography Instagram account about collaborating with SEED Hub (e.g. event promotion). No response received yet.

**Action:** AM to follow up with the SEED Comms and Marketing Officer.

* Events: AM noted the proposed Year 1 event can still go ahead if students are interested.
* Fast-Track Master’s Applications: AM confirmed eligible students were contacted in November 2024, with a follow-up sent earlier this month. Students with questions should contact PGT Admissions.

TM noted differing timelines for Fast-Track applications across programmes (e.g. EMMR vs. Climate Change).

**Action:** AM to follow up with Admissions Team (Yulia Jenson) for clarification.

* Alumni Scholarship: TM reported that the offer letter did not reflect the Alumni (Loyalty) Scholarship.

**Action:** AM to follow up with the Awards, Admissions Teams to clarify on the Alumni Scholarship eligibility for TM.

1. **Rep Consultation**

**Year 1 Student Rep Feedback**

Non reported

**Year 2 Student Rep Feedback (Student Survey based)**

Dissertation Groups:

ZP reported that some Year 2 students feel their dissertation groups do not align with their chosen topics. Concerns were raised about whether this issue stems from students not providing enough information on the topic selection forms or from the grouping process itself.

PR acknowledged that both factors may contribute. PR confirmed that groups should ideally consist of around 10 students, and any significant size discrepancies may be due to non-attendance.

Past Essay Examples:

ZP shared positive feedback from the *Moral Geographies* unit, where students reviewed past essays with grades in seminars. This was found to be a helpful learning tool. ZP suggested similar sessions could be valuable in Year 1.

PR responded that similar sessions are already part of Year 1 tutorials, though not all the students may be attending them.

Padlet Pages:

ZP suggested having a dedicated Padlet page for each unit to streamline communication and resources. TM supported this, noting the usefulness of a Padlet in the GIS unit. KM noted they did not have one for Year 2 GIS, while TM confirmed one existed for Year 3 GIS.

**Action:** PR to consult learning technologists and programme staff about wider implementation of Padlet across units.

GIS Module :

KS raised concerns about inconsistency between TAs and the lecturer during a Year 2 GIS module. Students received conflicting guidance - TAs were helping with queries during practicals, while the lecturer discouraged providing this support, stating students should work independently.

TM confirmed this approach was also used in previous years. TM noted it is not related to the assessments questions.

**Action:** PR to follow up with the GIS teaching team to address consistency in support and communication.

UG Geography Review Workshop:

KS mentioned the Undergraduate Geography Review workshop was useful for feedback and praised the creative format (e.g., posters). However, attendance was low (only 3 students). More promotion of the event was suggested.

PR confirmed the workshop was a new initiative run by Helen and Jess and aimed to gather feedback on what students liked or disliked.

KS recommended holding more workshops of this kind.

PR agreed, noting the session produced valuable insights.

**Year 3 Student Rep Feedback**

Mediterranean Climates Unit:

TM provided positive feedback on the essay session, particularly Phil’s class on "how to get a first," which involved an overview of a high-scoring essay strategy. Students suggested this session would be even more helpful if scheduled before essay submission.

Dissertation Deadline Concerns:

TM stated that several students raised concerns about the early dissertation deadline (4th April).

PR clarified that teaching weeks remain the same as previous years; the earlier deadline is due to the timing of Easter.

Dissertation Support Sessions:

TM suggested more structured dissertation support sessions would be beneficial, such as: A formatting session after Christmas, followed by a proofreading/improvement session closer to submission deadline.

PR welcomed the suggestion.

**Action:** PR further consider the Dissertation Support Sessions suggestion.

Coursework feedback delay:

TM reported that coursework feedback for Feminist Geographies, expected on 9th January, was delayed by five weeks, impacting exam preparation.

PR acknowledged the delay and agreed this timing was not ideal.

Assessment Difficulty – Pyrogeography:

TM felt the Pyrogeography module was marked harshly, with low 60s and high 50s received across coursework and exam components.

PR noted that all marks are currently provisional and will be reviewed at the Exam board. If overall performance appears low, this will be addressed.

Fieldwork-related feedback:

TM reported safety concerns during Morocco fieldwork: Students were locked out of accommodation around midnight and struggled to contact staff. In another situation, a roommate was unwell, and assistance and emergency contacts were difficult to find.

ZS noted that during the Barcelona trip, students were provided with a 24-hour emergency contact number via WhatsApp.

PR acknowledged issues with mobile connectivity in Morocco and noted a designated phone should be available during trips. Emphasised the need for a 24/7 contact number, though acknowledged the system may not be foolproof.

TM also referenced a near-drowning incident in Crete. TM noted about Crete fieldwork, and someone also had an incident on that fieldwork trip. PR noted this also took place in early hours of the morning and review has taken place.

KS confirmed a similar system was in place for Crete going forward this academic year and mentioned a personal health and safety briefing that took place for students in case they missed any previous group sessions.

TM reported instances of food poisoning and altitude sickness during the Morocco trip but noted that overall, the trip was enjoyable.

**Action:** AM to follow up with the fieldwork team on behalf of PR and report back.

Turnitin Submission Issues:

ZS reported confusion with Turnitin formatting - file previews appeared distorted, though downloaded versions were fine. SEED Hub staff gave incorrect advice about this.

PR clarified that staff are unable to download submissions due to anonymity protocols.

**Action**: AM to pass this feedback to SEED Hub for clarification and staff training.

1. **Feedback related to Canva.**

AM noted that the training related to the transition from Blackboard to Canva started for staff and students will be notified in due course.

1. **International Student Recruitment:**

KS suggested there could be more targeted advertisements for international students, specifically for the Geography programme.

PR confirmed that efforts are being made to address this.

KS shared their experience as an international student, noting that when applying, there was limited opportunity to engage with course staff. They suggested that more online engagement opportunities would be helpful, especially for those unable to attend in-person open days.

KS noted that while there was an online Q&A this semester, more of these sessions could be offered, even before UCAS applications are submitted, to provide better insight for prospective students.

**Action:** PR to contact Chris Darvill to discuss potential improvements in online engagement and recruitment for international students.

1. **Any other business**

PR confirmed that the Programme for 2025/26 has already been approved.

No further business

1. **Date of next meeting**

Action: PR to confirm the date of the next meeting

**Summary of Actions List**

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| **Action Number** | **Agenda Item** | **Action** | **Lead** | **Deadline** | **Status/Notes** |
| 1 | 3 | Follow up with the SEED Comms and Marketing Officer regarding the Instagram collaboration between SEED Hub and Geography  | AM |  |  |
| 2 | 3 | Follow up with Admissions Team (Yulia Jenson) for clarification on differing Fast-Track application timelines. | AM |  |  |
| 3 | 3 | Follow up with the Awards and Admissions Teams to clarify Alumni Scholarship eligibility for TM. | AM |  |  |
| 4 | 4 | Consult learning technologists and programme staff about wider implementation of Padlet across units. | PR |  |  |
| 5 | 4 | Follow up with the GIS teaching team to address consistency in support and communication during the module. | PR |  |  |
| 6 | 4 | Further consider the suggestion for more structured dissertation support sessions | PR |  |  |
| 7 | 4 | Pass feedback to SEED Hub for clarification and staff training on Turnitin formatting issues. | AM |  |  |
| 8 | 4 | Contact Chris Darvill to discuss potential improvements in online engagement and recruitment for international students. | PR |  |  |
| 9 | 8 | Confirm the date of the next Programme Committee meeting  | PR |  |  |

**End of Minutes**