

APPROVED

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

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

12 March 2025

Present: Professor Gabrielle Finn (Chair), Gabrielle Bailey, Professor Andrew Brass, Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso, Nahid Farzalizadeh, Professor Danielle George, Professor Peter Green, Professor Jenn Hallam, Dr Andrew Mawdsley, Dr Simon Merrywest, Dr Katie Moore, Professor David Schultz, and Professor Fiona Smyth.

In Attendance for all items: Emma Stansfield (Teaching and Learning Officer, Policy and Procedure), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

1 Welcome and Apologies

Noted:

- a) that apologies were received from Professor Rob Ford, Katie Jackson, Dr Jen McBride, and Professor April McMahon;
- b) the Executive Director for the Student Experience was welcomed to his first meeting as a full member of the Committee.

2 Declarations of Interest

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

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Noted: that a member requested the following amendments:

- a) minute 7 h) to be re-worded to ensure clarity;
- b) the repetition at minute 11 a) - c) to be deleted.

Agreed: to approve the minutes of 29 January 2025, following minor amendment.

4 Matters Arising

Noted: The Matters Arising update.

5 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2024-25

Noted: The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) Forward Agenda.

6 Policy Review

Received: The Policy Cycle 2024-25 Category B Report, outlining the proposed changes to Category B policy and guidance documents which were circulated for consultation during the 2024-25 policy cycle.

Noted:

- a) that the proposed changes to the Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees, and the proposed discontinuation of the Guidance on Lecture 'Shout-Outs' had been widely consulted. These had been discussed by the TLSG Policy Review Group;
- b) noting best practice examples from peer institutions regarding the drafting of policy documentation, it was suggested that policies should be succinct, and that the need for executive summaries be reconsidered in order to enhance clarity of interpretation;
- c) that the following changes be made to the Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees: **Action: Teaching and Learning Officer (Policy and Procedures)**
 - a. remove reference to 'document' and replace with 'procedure' where applicable;
 - b. clarify the wording around 'suffix' and 'classification'. Reference to the degree regulations could help with terminology;
 - c. delete the first sentence in Key Terms: Classifications and replace with 'Classification at the University of Manchester...'. Add 'Honours' to the classifications;
 - d. at 2.2.1, the head of school 'or another representative' should formally make a request;
 - e. at 2.3.2, a private meeting would normally be held with the 'programme director or another representative', rather than 'head of school';
- d) relating to students in their final year of study (2.2.5), it was confirmed that a number of PGT programmes were longer than a year in duration;
- e) the links and contact details at 4.0 would be kept up-to-date when the document was reviewed under the normal review process. Important changes would be updated immediately;
- f) an update was provided on the Ethical Approval of Research involving Human Participants in Taught Assessment Policy, and the Peer Review of Teaching Guidance, both of which had received significant comments during consultation. Further work would be undertaken before presentation to the Committee for approval at a future meeting;
- g) an update on future items for consultation was provided. An item on mitigating circumstances was currently undergoing consultation and would be presented to the next meeting for the Committee's approval.

Agreed:

- i. to approve the changes to the Procedures for the award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees, following minor amendment;
- ii. to approve the discontinuation of the Guidance on Lecture 'Shout-Outs'.

7 Periodic Review 2024-25

Received: The Periodic Review Report, providing an overview of the periodic reviews being undertaken in each faculty during 2024-25 and how these would be reported as part of the annual academic assurance cycle.

Noted:

- a) that the following periodic review dates had been confirmed:
 - a. FSE: Civil Engineering - 15 July 2025;
 - b. FBMH: Dentistry - 8-9 July 2025.

8 Quarterly Update on TLS Functional Areas

Noted: that, in the absence of the Director of Student and Academic Services, the report was deferred to the next meeting. **Action: Director of Student and Academic Services**

9 University of Manchester Students' Union Report

Received: The University of Manchester Students' Union Report which outlined the issues of survey fatigue, focusing on survey overload, and lack of communication of survey results and actions.

Noted:

- a) a student inbox exercise had highlighted that 119 of 586 student emails had related to surveys and focus groups. Members considered this to be unreasonable and asked the SU Officers to confirm over what time period this exercise had been carried out; **Action: SU Officers**
- b) it was suggested that the inbox exercise figures should be shared with the Survey Strategy Group, to ensure awareness of the scale of the issue;
- c) a student voice strategy paper, which supported the strategic oversight of surveys, had been discussed by the Student Survey Strategy Group, and would be presented to TLSG. The paper would be circulated to members for information; **Action: Associate Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students**
- d) there was discussion about mid-semester surveys, and how to ensure the surveys were not released concurrently;
- e) it was acknowledged that the student voice was considered more valuable than surveys. Student information could be accessed in a number of alternative ways, rather than via surveys, e.g. through trackers, student voice groups and campaigns;
- f) it was suggested that significant surveys, including those critical to progression, could be incorporated into the Canvas loading page;
- g) there was discussion about the resource involved in developing and executing surveys, including set up, analysing the information in the free text comments, and communicating the results;
- h) there were a number of important surveys which should be prioritised, including the SU survey, the NSS survey and school surveys;
- i) having a single point of contact for surveys would be beneficial. It was proposed that this should be discussed by the recently established Survey Group; **Action: Associate Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students**
- j) a full timeline of surveys to students could be developed, including statutory returns, e.g. the Graduate Outcomes Survey. This would help to control planning the timing of University surveys to ensure alignment.

10 Educate MCR Survey

Noted: a verbal update on the Educate MCR Survey, which provided a brief overview of the data collected. The key findings included:

- a) 90% were satisfied or very satisfied with their university experience overall;
- b) 89.8% had real-world applications and diverse research integrated into course content;
- c) 84% thought that library resources supported their learning;
- d) 85.5% agreed the university had communicated educational goals and learning outcomes of their course;
- e) 90.6% believed in their own abilities to overcome challenges and achieve their educational goals;
- f) 58.7% thought teaching is personalised to their learning needs;
- g) 49.7% felt they could influence decisions taken by the university;
- h) 42.5% of students rated their mental health over the past month as extremely good or good;

- i) 90.8% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with student support;
- j) a PowerPoint presentation providing background and results of the Educate MCR survey had been produced by Emma Bramwell (Education Manager, UoM SU) and would be circulated to Committee members; **Action: Executive Director for the Student Experience**
- k) it was acknowledged that occasions where students had been unable to access PowerBi and Wi-Fi had a negative impact on students;
- l) it was suggested that communication of survey results should include targets and expectations, along with the detail of challenges, and outcomes which were in the University's control to change.