**HUMANITIES FACULTY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 20 May 2025

**Present**: Fiona Devine (Chair), Fiona Smyth, Emma Rose (Secretary), Ken McPhail,

Mabel Sanchez-Barrioluengo, Roz Webster, Richard Whalley, Sofia Parker,

Thomas Schmidt, Charles Insley, Dimitris Papadimitriou, Jon Shute, Juup Stelma,

Fiona Keenan

**Apologies**: Claire Alexander, Chloe Nahum-Claudel, Georgina Lewis-Vasco, Rachel Walton,

Maggie Gale, Patricia Perlman-Dee, Vicky Skinner

**In** **attendance**: Gemma Keaveney (note-taker), Victoria Roberts (Business Support Manager)

1 Welcome, introduction and apologies

Professor Fiona Devine welcomed the group to the meeting and thanked those colleagues who had served their time on the Committee: Richard Whalley, Mabel Sanchez Barrioluengo, Rachel Walton, Claire Goulsbra and Katie Jackson.

2 Minutes and actions of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and an update on actions from the last meeting was presented by Emma Rose.

3 Internationalisation update

Professor Angie Wilson gave a presentation to the group on what internationalisation means within Humanities and the wider institution. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session.

Key points from the presentation include:

* Introduction to the University’s core international team with Colette Fagan chairing International Sub-Committee and a range of colleagues from across the University involved.
* There are also regional strategy groups who whilst they don’t set policy, they are able to consult on particular regions.
* Suggested there is an opportunity for further investment in this area, particularly in seed funding.
* Confirmed that anyone travelling overseas should check in with colleagues in the first instance to understand whether any activity is already in place.
* Discussions are underway about the potential for having an office in India which would make space available for flexible/distance learning students, special lectures etc.
* Encourage colleagues travelling to utilise the spaces we have available through our regional network when overseas.

Gaining access to the regional offices had proved an issue recently, in particular the lack of response to the request to use space.

**HFC200525-03-01:** Fiona Smyth to ask colleagues involved to contact Angie Wilson/Beth Pedder directly to discuss.

Other key points included:

* Each strategic partner has KPIs which are reviewed every three to five years.
* Seed funding is not ring-fenced and 30% currently comes to Humanities.
* Global Hums alliance doesn’t have funding currently.
* We need to do more on international publications noting that this is advantageous for career development but also helps with REF, impact rankings, etc.
* Consul Generals for China and India have been hosted recently and there is a schedule event planned with Melbourne.

Some discussion arose within the group about recent news in Europe and it was confirmed that a strategy group had already been established to discuss the implications.

It was confirmed that if we build external relationships that involve teaching/students then a Memorandum of Understanding is required. If it is more about collaborative work then there may be opportunities within Schools or departments to fund i.e. Hallsworth conference funds event.

Highlighted that summer schools may present a good opportunity for PGT recruitment.

The question was raised on how strategic partnerships are agreed and Angie confirmed that these types of partnerships need to work across all three Faculties. There will of course be opportunities for Humanities to seek its own partnerships.

Partnerships have previously been based largely on research but as part of the Manchester 2035 process, this should be opened up to teaching profiles, social responsibility, etc. These discussions are currently underway and led by Colette Fagan and the International Sub-Committee. It should be noted that that the ISC cannot always select its partners on geopolitical grounds.

4 SR/EDI update

Professor Dimitris Papadimitriou presented an update on SR, EDI and Environmental Sustainability.

Key points to note from the presentation were:

* The University has now committed to inclusivity in its IT mission statement and are already working on digital inclusivity.
* Athena Swan accreditation at silver level for SEED and AMBS. SoSS will be applying this year for silver. They are currently at bronze level along with SALC and it is confirmed that we are on a positive trajectory.

**HFC200525-04-01:** The query was raised about inclusion of Faculty Office staff in Athena Swan accreditation. This will be picked up outside the meeting by Dimitris Papadimitriou and Emma Rose.

There was a discussion as to whether HUMS should follow practice in BMH and apply for accreditation as a Faculty rather than each individual school. This approach would require those with Silver accreditation to ‘wait for’ those still at Bronze. No decision as to whether the Faculty’s approach was arrived at.

* Roz Webster confirmed that Humanities are working to create a Faculty green space between Sam Alex and Ellen Wilkinson buildings.
* Colleagues should, where possible, encourage zoom and Teams meetings rather than physical travel to international meetings to lower the carbon footprint.

The team continue to review travel requirements especially as there are still contradictions of policy/guidance i.e. SR and International travel and more clarity is required. We need to recognise that the University operates within a wider commercia environment and as such, will need to be pragmatic and may have to make compromises. We need to continue to mitigate these circumstances and make the best possible use of travel time in terms of added value.

A query was raised about our commitment to EDI being downplayed because it has been brought together with SR and ES. It was confirmed that there is no attempt to dilute or hide this element especially within the context of the current global climate.

The University has made it very clear that it will adhere to its principles on EDI. It has not been downgraded nor have resources been removed. Operational activity is supported by Vice-Deans and it has its own Directorate. Specifically in Humanities, allocations and work has increased.

For the following items numbered 5, 6 and 7, questions were submitted in advance and included in the paper circulation. Questions and context have been included under each heading with responds beneath each.

5 Teaching Sustainability Project in MLC and SALC: budget and WP impact

Representatives who attended the meeting reported that there was a lot of disquiet around the Teaching Sustainability Project within SALC and the biggest impact had been felt by Modern Languages.

Fiona Devine advised the Committee of the various meetings she had called and attended relating to the TS project but asked the group if there was anything more she could do to assist with the communication of the project itself.

**HFC200525-05-01:** Committee members to advise Fiona Devine directly of any other fora she could/should attend to talk about the project.

**Questions:** *An interim report of the collaborative Languages Marketing Insight project led by Marketing and Admissions was shared on 8 January 2025. The report highlighted that Manchester uses a model of small and numerous joint honours programmes in common with most Russell Group providers.*

*Regrettably, the report was commissioned after the closure of 33 MLC UG programmes, which suggests that the blanket policy adopted by the SLT to MLC does not seem to acknowledge the ecology of MFL provision across UK HEIs. As noted by the British Academy, amongst others, Manchester and the North-West is an outlier in its success with this model, seeing a marked increase in market share and applications relative to the rest of the UK.*

*In this context, we wonder how and on what basis TSP decisions of cutting recruiting programmes in MLC were taken. In the current 2025 Admissions cycle we have had, to date, over 140 applications and made 100 offers to MLC programmes which are being cut in e2026. These are clearly not redundant courses, but vital and financially beneficial to our UG offer at UoM. With the relevant strategic will, Manchester is ideally placed to remain, and enhance, our status as a major teaching and research hub for Languages in the North of England (‘Multilingual Manchester’).*

*In addition, MLC continues to be the largest contributor to SALC’s overall WP profile, contributing 70 of the 294 WP entrants e2024 (24%), up from 61 candidates in 2023 and ahead of History on 58. The recent launch at Westminster of UUK’s Access to Success Action Plan stresses the vital importance of using contextual data in admissions processes to provide equality of opportunity and access to HEIs for the disadvantaged and first-time UGs and to prevent cold spots in subject provision.*

***Please can Faculty share the Financial Impact Assessment report which models the budgetary consequences of closing recruitment programmes in MLC for e2026?***

It was confirmed that finance has not been a driver for the Teaching Sustainability Project. The project has focused on demand for programmes and those closed in MLC each have very small numbers, with no more than 3 new students registered on any of the programmes in each of the last 7 years.

For 2024/25, 1st December data reported:

* 19 new students were registered – tuition fee income £192K
* 68 students (62 fpe) across all years – tuition fee income £579K

***Connected to the above question, please can Faculty share the Widening Participation Impact assessment report undertaken prior to the decision to close recruiting programmes in MLC for e2026?***

A Widening Participation (WP) Impact assessment report was not required to be carried out. The Languages Sub-Group did discuss the impact on WP recruitment at its meeting on 9th October 2024 during which it was affirmed that the WP targets are managed across the School.

In the context of the University’s Access and Participation Plan, access targets focus on POLAR4 Quintile1\* category of students and are set at school level, rather than at individual programme or department level. 3 students starting on these 41 programmes in 2024/25, meet the criteria for POLAR4 Quintile1

MLC and SALC continue to be supported by Faculty and University teams in their outreach work to inspire learners to apply to university and to apply to Manchester. Offer strategies and our confirmation and clearing strategy all prioritise students who fit our broader widening participation definitions. One of the drivers of the Teaching Sustainability Project is to attract and retain a diverse cohort of high-quality students through responding to market and student demand.

*\*POLAR4 Q1 pinpoints young people who live in postcodes with the very lowest rates of university entry, whereas WP+ is a wider flag that includes those POLAR4 Q1 students but also sweeps in other markers of disadvantage such as low‑income neighbourhoods on the IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation), students who received free school meals, are first in their family to go to university, have been in care, or have certain disabilities. So while every POLAR4 Q1 student will normally count as WP+, not every WP+ student comes from a POLAR4 Q1 area, making WP+ broader rather than a straight or direct proxy.*

6 Teaching Sustainability Project in MLC: Revision of cuts and financial sustainability

***When one of the primary objectives of SALC is the maximisation of UG recruitment, why cut recruiting programmes in MLC that benefit the financial economy of the Department and School?***

The strategy in SALC (as elsewhere in the Faculty and university) cannot be recruiting at any expense or effort, but to find the right balance between a deliverable and efficient portfolio and high recruitment.

That to run these programmes requires no staff and admin cost is incorrect. Each programme/plan code requires Professional Services time to market, manage admissions processes and administer, and that time can be directed to support other programmes and activities.

Additionally, having a leaner portfolio enables us to market provision in a more targeted and efficient fashion, hence the proposed introduction of the “umbrella degree” model.

The School is on track to meet its undergraduate recruitment targets.  The numbers required to be recruited through clearing, and the confirmation and clearing strategy for SALC is no different to previous years (in fact applications and accepts are up by 2% and 4% respectively from 2024).

7 Shape and Size & Teaching Sustainability Projects: review and evaluation processes

***What procedures are in place to consult users, assess the progress and success of the Shape and Size and Teaching Sustainability projects in SALC, and report to colleagues?***

*As noted by the SALC Assistant Director of T&L in September 2024, the Teaching and Sustainability project is the flip side of the Shape and Size Project in seeking to strategically manage the supply of UG programmes and the demand of prospective students. Given the projected shortfall in UG recruitment in SALC anticipated this summer and the increasing reliance on Clearing as a means of ensuring numbers and the financial sustainability of SALC against ever lower grade requirements, questions necessarily arise concerning the combined success of both strategies.*

There is no increased reliance on clearing. Accepts are currently up by 4% from 2024 and as a School we anticipate a slightly reduced reliance on Clearing in 2025 which is in part, a consequence of the success of Size and Shape programmes.   However, it is the case that some programmes in SALC have seen a drop in applications, offers and acceptances this cycle compared to last year.

The confirmation and clearing strategy is the same as it has been for many years and the BBB bottom line continues to apply (except for WP).

Size and Shape in SALC has been a real success story. The 4 new PGT degrees (Digital Media, CCI, Music Performance, Library and Archive Studies) and the Digital Media UG degree are on track to meet, and in some cases considerably exceed target in 2025 (and with a higher than planned proportion of overseas students).  Only the UG CCI degree is slightly below target. Without these S&S programmes SALC would be in a much deeper financial predicament than it is.   
   
The progress of the Teaching Sustainability Project is regularly reported to School Board and the School Leadership group.

8 Any other business

In terms of the recent Supreme Court ruling on the definition of sex and the University position, the University is awaiting recommendations from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and their practical advice. The report is scheduled for release in July 2025. UoM will not develop position yet. If specific questions come in, the advice is to direct them to Sarah Fox, Director of EDI. It is acknowledged that we are currently in a state of limbo but we do want to respond fully and properly in due course.

The White Paper on immigration with implications on work/study visas may affect us in the next academic year (2026/27). There will be an impact on and challenges across the sector as a whole.

We may have opportunities to take advantage of the current US political situation in terms of academics and students who would normally study/work in the US.

9 Closing remarks

The Chair thanked members for attending and thanks again to Mabel, Richard, Rachel, Claire and Katie who have come to the end of their tenure on the Committee