

Teaching Sustainability Project Taskforce

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday 11 September 2025

Location: C1.18 Ellen Wilkinson Building

Attendees:

Fiona Devine (Chair); Alec Severs (Hums SU rep); Emma Rose; Fiona Smyth; Emma Wilson; Mario Pezzino; Julia Dobson; Ben Cawley; David Spendlove; Camden Reeves; Anna Goatman; Thomas Schmidt; Lexy Cummins; Victoria Roberts (Secretary)

Apologies:

Hannah Cousins; Rory Stanton; Helen Dunning; Robert Appleby; David Boyd; Craig Best; Peter Green

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Minutes from the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2025 were presented for confirmation. No amendments were raised, and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Terms of Reference

The updated Terms of Reference for the Taskforce were reviewed. Members were reminded of the scope and objectives of the group, and no objections or amendments were raised.

4. Outstanding Actions

LC provided an update on the action log. Progress on previously agreed actions was noted, and outstanding items were reviewed. KH and RS will be asked to update on their actions at the next meeting.

5. RAID Log

LC discussed the current RAID log. Members were asked to flag any new items or updates for inclusion.

6. Priorities for 2025/26

FD outlined the key priorities for the academic year, noting that we are now in the third and final year of the project:

- Implementation of outcomes from the portfolio plan and vision proposals.

- Completion of work evaluating the optimal mix of core and optional course units based on the number of students within departments/subject areas.
- Support for the development of the 'umbrella model' in MLC.
- Development of a costing model for course units.
- Establishment of guiding principles for team teaching and the use of Teaching Assistants across UG programmes.
- Embedding implementation of recommendations into BAU activities.
- Realisation of benefits from the above initiatives.

Action:

- LC and ER are meeting with DB next week to further discuss the costing model. They will feedback to the Taskforce at the next meeting.

7. Portfolio Review Process for 2025/26 and BAU

FD presented the review process and timeline:

- In October 2025, the Faculty will identify programmes not meeting minimum thresholds over the past three years.
- DoTLs will collaborate with Schools to develop action plans, which will be shared with the project team and reported to FLT.

Key dates include:

- October–December 2025: Local discussions
- 10 December 2025: Taskforce meeting to share action plans
- January–February 2026: School and Faculty QSDE
- March 2026: UG CMA deadline
- 22 April 2026: Senate ratification of withdrawals
- July 2026: PGT CMA deadline

To note that exact QSDE and CMA deadlines for 2025/26 are TBC.

Actions:

- LC to add Senate dates to project calendar and deadlines for TLD.

Reviewing the portfolio in BAU:

The BAU process mirrors the above structure, with action plans reviewed by a subset of the TLSE Leadership Team, rather than the TS Project team.

Actions:

- BC to consider messaging about the BAU approach and how this might land in Schools. An update could be included in enews.
- FD to socialise the BAU approach during School and Department visits over the coming year.

8. Registration Update

ER presented data on UG and PGT Unconditional Firm (UF) offers as of 4 September 2025, which included both home and international applicants. School reps also provided local feedback on expected registration numbers and areas of growth/ decline.

Undergraduate:

- Data reflects early-cycle indicators; firmer numbers expected in October.
- AMBS exceeded targets, though one pathway remains below threshold. The School is pleased with overall numbers but there remain some challenges to manage, particularly with regard to international recruitment.
- SALC saw increases in Digital Media and MLC; declines in History and HCRI. The School is happy with the current position but grade drops and Clearing needed to be utilised. SALC will eventually reach a limit in a declining market. MLC is very pleasing. Removing an interview which was previously challenging for students has helped.
- It was noted that £114 million investment in Greater Manchester recently from Japan and this needs to be conveyed to prospective students? We need to build into our promotions ie. UG student prizes, internships etc.
- HCRI needs review as the market may be too similar to GDI. Conversations with FBMH are taking place about links with medicine and health. It may be that it is too niche for UG, and would be better at PG level. UCL has a global business school for health alone with >900 students. AMBS have had conversations with BMH about an online Global Health Management course. We need to consider whether all these similar programmes should be pulled into one portfolio.
- SEED faced underperformance, with grade flexing used to meet targets.
- SOSS achieved targets, with notable increases in Economics, BASS, Law, and Politics.

Postgraduate:

- AMBS showed mixed trends; new programmes performed well, while others declined.
- SALC saw strong growth in Digital Media and Classics; HCRI declined significantly.
- New Size and Shape programmes were noted as a 'saving grace' with more than half of international students registering onto these programmes.
- Degree titles were discussed, as some are possibly not understood by applicants eg. Arts, Culture and the Environment.
- SEED was impacted by reduced demand from China-domiciled applicants.
- mShare is a Chinese platform that supports student career development, including placements in China. FSE are piloting working with them through the careers service and there may be opportunities for HUMS here.
- SOSS experienced overall decline, particularly in international-heavy programmes. Distance learning/ TNE has not gone as well as hoped.

British Academy Report

The Taskforce were recommended to read [a report from the British Academy](#). This report includes insights into the Academy's strategic priorities, funding allocations, and policy engagement across the humanities and social sciences. It also touches on broader sectoral challenges, including pressures on arts and humanities disciplines, and outlines the Academy's response through initiatives like the SHAPE programme and the Early Career Researcher Network.

A discussion took place about the importance of employability as part of the narrative when promoting humanities degrees. Using A Level trends, talking with confidence about transferable skills, talking to employers and DDAR, and promoting alumni careers were also discussed as important components of future promotional activity.

Actions:

- ER to update SALC slide before further circulation.
- ER to flag Computer Science with Admissions.
- SALC to review HCRI
- BC to share British Academy report and add to the TS Project webpage
- ER to pick up Hums promotional activity with KH

9. Course Unit Framework Update

FS provided a verbal update on work that has taken place with DoTLs. Work is ongoing to refine the framework, and a taskforce meeting took place today to look at what can be done and adjusting the model as needed. Schools will be asked about the order that they would work through course units over the next five years. This will then be RAG-rated. Checking for future unintended consequences is crucial. Checkpoints are to be built in to monitor applications, conversions, NSS etc are not impacted by the changes.

The plan is to take the guidance to FLT in mid-October.

The feedback from TS members was that support will be needed for schools, as units will need to be redesigned if we also want team teaching. Service Learning, AI and future resilience will also need to be built into programmes. Both strategic and tactical plans will be needed. Continuous improvement was discussed and the need to connect to university level plans eg. Partner-enabled learning.

Actions:

- FS to take Course Unit Framework Guidance to FLT in October
- FS to connect with Jenn Hallam to ensure university level plans are incorporated

10. Team Teaching Discussion

The [draft principles for team teaching](#), following Sarah Dyer's July 2024 presentation, were discussed. Members were invited to provide feedback or suggest additions to LC. The principles aim to support effective collaboration and clarity in team-taught modules.

It was agreed that course unit review may encourage more team teaching, and more examples of good team teaching were requested. The comms around distribution were also discussed, with agreement that clarity over research-led teaching and research-informed teaching is needed. It was a criticism in TEF that this was not well articulated.

Actions:

- FS/SD to add more examples of good team teaching to the document, and when might be appropriate to use it. The document will then be shared with DoTLs, alongside part-time programmes and other guidance
- BC to consider the comms around the team teaching guidance, clarifying that cost-saving is not a driver and that it can be a very positive experience for staff
- MP to check that double teaching is no longer taking place in Economics and confirm to FD

11. Any Other Business

BC commented that he will update some of the information on the TS Project Staffnet page, setting out the priorities for the year, and drip-feed the team teaching information.

Next Meeting:

21st October 2025.