

MDCSG 22 Oct 2025

11:00 - 13:00

Roscoe 3.1 / Teams

Notes

In attendance: Elizabeth Cartwright, Helen Baker, James Lalic, Anne-Marie Walsh, Admos Chimhowu, Ruth Whelan, Jon Pittman, Tasleem Hanif, Alex Hinchliffe, Georgina Dalton, Rachel Miller, Richard Cotton.

Apologies: David Bechtold, Amy Smith.

1. MDCSG

i. Notes from the previous meetings

Noted: that Jon Pitmann was incorrectly noted to be lead on the EPSRC Focal Awards (**ACTION – AH to update notes**).

2. Matters Arising

i. EDI Questions on Application Form

Noted:

- a. Product Management hasn't reported back on the prioritisation exercise, originally due end of July, now extended to August.
- b. Catherine Schofield from Student & Academic Services is involved and could provide more details; HB has contacted her and is awaiting a response.

ii. Relaunch of PGRA

- a. The pilot phase has proceeded satisfactorily, with feedback being largely positive.
- b. The full rollout was scheduled for October; however, there has been a lack of recent updates.
- c. HB has reached out to Catherine Schofield and Fiona Eccles to inquire about the current status and any planned training, communications, or guidance, but has not yet received a response.

iii. PhD by Enterprise

- a. The PhD by Enterprise programme and associated budget have received approval from the University Executive (UE).
- b. The Senate Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) for research has expressed support for the PhD by Enterprise programme, though some queries regarding the examination process for the enterprise component of the thesis were raised. It was clarified that further details would be discussed at the upcoming PhD by Enterprise Task and Finish Group meeting.
- c. The following was proposed at the Task & Finish Group held on 20/10/25:
 - a. The examination panel will consist of an internal examiner from the University of Manchester, along with two external examiners—one focusing on the academic aspects and another with both enterprise experience and a PhD.
- d. AH is currently reviewing all relevant guidance documents, including those related to examinations, progress monitoring and review, and thesis presentation. Recommended updates will be presented to MDCSG, with an anticipated completion date of December.
- e. General paperwork concerning the PhD by Enterprise will be submitted to the main Senate meeting scheduled for 29/10/25

iv. PDS Refocus

- a. RC has approved proceeding with the PDS re-focus and is satisfied with initiating this in FBMH and HUMS for the 26/27 intake, with FSE scheduled to participate in

the 27/28 intake.

- b. Due to time constraints and the nature of the soft launch, a full steering group will not be in place for the first cohort. However, a meeting is scheduled for 3rd November with MW and ADs to discuss and establish interdisciplinary priorities.

3. Recruitment and Admissions

No items

4. Planning and Quality Assurance

i. Annual Monitoring Actions Review

Noted: actions and notes agreed; next progress update for MDCSG in February.

ii. Tsinghua Dual Award

Noted:

- a. The University of Manchester China Regional Strategy focuses on developing partnerships with selected institutions, including Peking, Tsinghua, and Shanghai Jiao Tong.
- b. A dual award programme with Tsinghua has been active since 2019 in FSE, and approval for a similar programme with Peking was granted in FSE in 2025.
- c. Approval is being sought to:
 - Extend the dual award programmes with Tsinghua and Peking to HUMS and FBMH.
 - Establish a new dual award with Shanghai Jiao Tong across all three faculties.

Agreed:

- a. MDCSG approved moving forward with expanding the Peking and Tsinghua proposals to include HUMS and BMH; paperwork can be finalised/approved by the MDCSG Chair unless further issues arise, in which case it will return to MDCSG for discussion.
- b. MDCSG will keep discussions open with Shanghai Jiao Tong, acknowledging UoM may not have candidates every cycle; future paperwork will match Peking and Tsinghua proposals and come back to MDCSG.
- c. MDCSG approved removing the clause in the Tsinghua agreement allowing a single award if a PGR meets only one institution's requirements; however, UoM will still issue a single award if the PGR has met UoM award requirements.
- d. Richard Cotton suggested Professor Meng Qingjun as the academic lead for FBMH (**ACTION – RC to confirm**).

5. Funding

i. Bid Updates

- a. The **Leverhulme** call has been distributed to all three Faculties, with submissions due to RDRD by 21 November. A central panel is scheduled to convene on 28 November.
- b. Manchester will submit a Nuclear Skills bid next week, aiming to lead one project and partner on up to six others (FSE).

6. Progression and Assessment

No items.

7. Researcher development, experience and wellbeing

i. PGR Voice Survey Results

Noted:

- a. PGR Voice Survey results, including the PowerBI report and raw data (on

request), were shared with all faculties over the summer. Free-text responses were provided with personal identifiers removed. Low engagement may limit the findings' representativeness and affect action planning (perhaps due to technical error when survey was launched or survey fatigue).

- b. The University of Sheffield is returning to the PRES survey, citing concerns over the PGR Voice Survey's lack of sector benchmarking and alignment with the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Sheffield's move highlights the importance of comparative data for reporting and improvement.
- c. Cathal's feedback indicated PRES is beneficial for REF due to national benchmarking. While strong survey outcomes support external reporting, progress on identified issues remains vital. The absence of benchmarking partners if other institutions change surveys is a concern.

Agreed:

- a. RDRD will undertake a comparison of PRES questions with those in the PGR Voice survey to determine whether any PGR Voice items are sufficiently similar to enable benchmarking, ensuring continuity and relevance in evaluation processes (**ACTION – HB**).
- b. Faculties would bring their actions plans to MDCSG meeting in December (**ACTION – Faculty DAs / AH**).

8. Careers and employability

No Items.

9. Activity Reports

i. RDRD Activity Report

Noted: no comments on the report.

10. Any Other Business

i. Metrics

Noted:

- a. That following the launch of the new University strategy, a list has been developed outlining how Manchester will assess progress towards its 2035 goals. MDCSG has been asked to think about relevant and measurable metrics for PGR that align with these objectives.
- b. We are required to present two or three measurable metrics (with targets) and explain their significance, as well as identify additional metrics we would like to measure but for which data is currently unavailable.

Agreed:

- a. **ACTION - HB** to circulate a paper that documents the discussed metrics with suggested targets based on current numbers:
 - Withdrawal rates within first 12 months / KPI for continuation at the end of year 1
 - Completion within 5 years, excluding interruptions but not extensions.
 - Submission during programme or funded period, excluding interruptions but not extensions or submission pending.
 - UKRI funding market share.
 - PGR satisfaction (from PGR Voice).
 - PGR Outputs (need to define the timescale - 2 years post programme end was suggested)

ii. James Lalic

- a. Thanks to James Lalic for his contributions to PGR and MDCSG over the past 3 years. Best wishes in your new position.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Wed 26th November 2025, 11:00 – 13:00, Roscoe 4.9

