

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Teaching Sustainability Project Taskforce meeting**

**21 October 2025**

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

**Attendees:** Fiona Devine (Chair); Alec Severs (Hums SU rep); Emma Rose; Fiona Smyth; Emma Wilson; Mario Pezzino; Ben Cawley; David Spendlove; Camden Reeves; Anna Goatman; Hannah Cousins; David Boyd; Admos Chimwohu (until 3:45pm); Peter Green (from 4pm); Lexy Cummins; Hannah Jordan; Helen Dunning (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Rory Stanton, Craig Best, Julia Dobson

- Hannah Jordan has returned from maternity leave and will resume her role as Secretary to the Taskforce and Languages Subgroup from the next meeting.
- Thomas Schmidt will no longer be part on the Taskforce, as SALC is already represented. He will concentrate his efforts on the Languages Subgroup.

#### **2. Minutes from the last meeting: for confirmation**

The [minutes](#) of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2025 were presented for confirmation. No amendments were raised, and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

#### **3. Outstanding actions**

LC shared progress on the Teaching Assistant principals, noting that FS had presented recent developments and that there is positive momentum. A small working group has reviewed the document, and revised guidance will be recirculated to DoTLs for further feedback. A final version will then be submitted to the TLSE Leadership Team for approval.

[Action Log - Taskforce.xlsx](#)

#### **4. RAID**

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

A risk register for the course unit framework is being developed and will be recorded in a separate log, to be shared in due course.

#### **5. Communications: update**

- BC reported that updates are currently underway for the *Project Priorities* pages for the 2025/26 cycle.
- The British Academy Shape Mapping Report has been circulated, fulfilling a previous action from the Taskforce. Relevant updates have also been included in eNews, notably FS's September message regarding team teaching guidance.
- The importance of clear communication of decisions beyond the immediate group was emphasised. To support this, the following process will be implemented: BC will recap on the key comms actions, identify an owner and agree a timescale/channel.

#### **6. MRes: discussion**

- A review of MRes programmes is currently underway in response to the consistently low student intake and evolving requirements from research councils. Emma has drafted a paper outlining the rationale for the review, current recognition (e.g. ESRC), and proposed structural options for discussion. There

are presently 29 MRes programmes (including part time routes) specifically designed for ESRC funded students. The associated standard programme are designed to meet AHRC requirements.

- AC reported that funding bodies such as ESRC and AHRC have shifted their focus from specific qualifications to broader indicators of preparedness for postgraduate research (PGR).
- The review aims to determine which MRes programmes remain necessary and relevant, with a focus on identifying the most efficient and effective means of preparing students for PGR. Four structural options have been proposed for consideration.
- SoSS noted that some departments remain committed to the MRes model despite low student numbers and expressed support for Option 1 and Option 2 from the paper:
- MP highlighted that the Politics department may prefer to retain the MRes structure and raised a query regarding the timing of accreditation, suggesting it should occur at the end of the recruitment process. It was confirmed that accreditation exercise is annual taking place in the summer.
- AG confirmed that only one MRes programmes exist within AMBS, and most PGT students do not pursue PGR. Research training is typically linked to individual projects. AG emphasised the importance of supporting students who wish to pursue PGR without isolating others.
- CR noted that MRes programmes have minimal impact on SALC. The Languages MA raised concerns due to its specific context, though it remains within scope. It was also noted that some pathways in History and Linguistics were not listed, however this is due to those programmes meeting ESRC requirements and not needing a specific funded pathway.
- A question was raised regarding whether dissertation units could meet ESRC requirements, but not all dissertations address UKRI competencies.
- There was broad recognition that preparedness for PGR is more critical than holding specific qualifications. Support was expressed for Option 2, with a willingness to explore its feasibility further Admos will confirm this direction of travel to PGR and PGT directors at a meeting on Thursday and continue discussions further on Research-focused Masters.
- Feedback on the four proposed options to be gathered to determine the preferred route forward.

## **7. TNE and distance learning programmes**

It was noted that several programmes within the transnational and distance learning portfolio fall below the minimum thresholds (25 for UG and 15 for PGT). The Taskforce discussed these programmes and was asked to consider whether those RAG-rated amber or red, with low demand, should continue.

### **SEED:**

- School managed online programme numbers remain very low.
- Education for a Sustainable Environment: many international students still opting to travel for an on-campus programme rather than take the dual online track. Dual delivery model (on-campus and online) shows limited appeal to home students (only 5 applications). Viability of the dual element is currently under review.
- Despite strong pedagogy and technology, demand is lacking, indicating the competitive nature of online education.
- ELiP: centre-based delivery faces fee-related challenges for teachers, though the programme is considered strong. However, this is one of the more successful centre-based programmes. Continuation of Educational Leadership programmes that are RAG-rated amber or red is to be considered.

### **SoSS:**

- HCEL: Meeting School targets, with programmes designed to be stackable across levels. PGCert programmes are 'entry' points for some students stacking to Masters. Overall the suite is meeting expectations. On campus programmes have been proposed for closure with a view to focusing resources on the online market.
- It was noted that the LLM International, Commercial and Technology Law (Online Learning) is a new programme. Will be considering whether elements of the programme can be delivered as CPD.

### **AMBS:**

- Financial Management numbers on the paper were not complete. These should be updated for record. **Action: LC.** The programme has been reviewed. Shanghai and Hong Kong are now one course; Singapore and Malaysia are also combined. Moved to a 'carousel' recruitment model so will need to assess intake annually. March intake numbers will not be known until March 2026.
- Global MBA numbers to be reviewed post-March intake to assess competitiveness

#### **SALC:**

- HCRI Global Health: Thomas Schmidt is sending a paper to FD regarding SALC's preference to maintain the recently introduced pathways.
- MSc Humanitarian Practice (DL) has only 1 student, but the course may have contractual obligations that needs to be checked. **Action: CR**
- CR confirmed that the International Disaster Management course will be closed and will report this formally in his School update.

FD asked DoTLs to take this information back to colleagues within their Schools for further discussion. **Action: DoTLs**

### **8. Course unit framework**

- Meetings have been held with School teams and individuals over the summer, including Sociology and the timetabling team to discuss the use of timetabling data to inform course unit uptake.
- Feedback has been raised for the need for real-time checks rather than waiting 3 years for data. Monitoring to include:
  - Applications and conversion rates
  - NSS performance
  - Ongoing student engagement
- Guidance and operational plan to be presented at next FE meeting on 4 November.
- Quality Assurance and Approval Processes: Work is progressing with central teams to distinguish essential requirements from desirable features, alongside efforts to pre-populate forms and streamline associated processes
- TLSE Away day (September) focused on supporting teams to deliver the framework.
- AMBS already has a team in place to undertake this work, and other Schools were encouraged to adopt similar structures while retaining local ownership.
- Frameworks are in place, but major amendments still need to be aligned with QSDE processes.
- FS to follow up with Jenn Hallam to clarify wider institutional thinking around 20 credit units. **Action: FS**
- Ongoing discussions with James Evans and Maggie Gale on defining research-led teaching
- FS is drafting guidance to go alongside the framework.
- Once guidance is approved by FE, a communication plan is needed:
  - Decision on whether messaging comes from T&L or Faculty.
  - Ensure PS groups are informed.
  - HC to support delivery.
  - Guidance to be hosted on TSP and Teaching Academy websites.

### **9. School updates**

#### **SALC:**

- Languages: A major structural change is planned for the 2027 entry under the umbrella model, which involves restructuring 81 programmes by December. CR highlighted that this is a large piece of work but is doable. A risk register is currently in development and will be reviewed by the TS Languages Subgroup at the next meeting, following ongoing discussions with the Languages team.
- Languages: 17 programmes are currently being reviewed for closure and will be discussed at the sub-group.
- Concerns have been raised by Programme Directors in MLC regarding the lack of involvement in closure decisions, resulting in a Senate motion. While the motion contains factual inaccuracies, it reflects low morale, which have been noted in the RAID log. A suggestion was made to invite

Programme Directors to nominate a representative to join the Languages Subgroup; FD confirmed this is already under discussion.

- Part-time PGT provision: 25 programmes are scheduled for closure this year, aligned with the 2027 planning timeline.
- To date, 298 programmes have been closed over two years, with a total of 319 closures proposed. That is 113 programmes without flexible honours. There has been positive growth in Size & Shape programmes, with a new programme currently in development.

#### **AMBS:**

- Working group has been set up, with improvements being made and work taking place around the issue of 30 credit units on business accounting to accommodate the placement structures.
- AG confirmed that the MLBM “and” and “with” issue has been resolved.

#### **SoSS:**

- 13 part-time and four full-time programmes have been closed. Of the full-time closures, one (LLM) is straightforward, while another Sociology-based programme requires further review.
- The on-campus Healthcare Ethics and Law programme has also been closed. Heads of Department remain supportive and actively engaged in sprint planning and online delivery.
- The Politics department is retaining some part-time programmes, with a second phase of the portfolio review underway. The future of the combined Peace & Conflict and Human Rights programmes will depend on recruitment numbers.
- Digital Trust and Society programme to be suspended due to no registrations.
- Positive progress was noted on the BASS redesign.

#### **SEED:**

- Portfolio review discussions are ongoing, particularly around the course unit framework. FS may meet with the Heads of Department to continue work in this area.

### **10. AOB**

#### **Peter Green:**

Peter gave a short update as an FSE representative:

- FSE are completing a Programmes, Options & Assessment Review. All disciplines have submitted proposals to reduce assessment load by 7 – 10% by September 2026.
- A review of optionality is underway, with four disciplines identified as having excessive options, which has led to timetabling challenges. Two disciplines are planning to increase optionality. The programme structure within FSE differs from that of Humanities, requiring less work on programme design and more focus on assessment.
- FS noted that CADMUS benchmarking indicates that Humanities does not currently over-assess.
- FSE is also collaborating with other Russell Group universities to conduct further benchmarking.

#### **Alec Severs:**

- AS reported a new initiative is currently underway within the Students' Union (SU), though it remains in the early stages of development. The focus of the initiative is to address the disconnect between academic staff and students regarding student life and curriculum expectations.
- Rather than serving as a pedagogical toolkit, the initiative aims to offer a holistic exploration of curriculum shapes and structures, centred on understanding what students need from a curriculum that works for them. The work is intended to inform strategic thinking around future curriculum design.
- It was suggested that this initiative would be best situated within the Teaching & Learning (T&L) space to enable deeper engagement but that it would be useful for AS to report progress and updates back to the Taskforce.

## 1. Summary of actions and decisions

<b>ACTION/DECISION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Action	LC to complete TNE/distance learning Financial Management course numbers as these were not updated.	LC	Next meeting
Action	CR to check whether there are contractual obligations around retaining MSc Humanitarian Practice (DL).	CR	Next meeting
Action	FD asked DoTLs to take TNE and DL data set back to colleagues within their Schools for further discussion.	DoTLs	Next meeting
Action	FS to follow up with Jenn Hallam to clarify wider institutional thinking around 20 credit units.	FS	Next meeting