

Faculty of Humanities

Teaching Sustainability Project 2025/26

Remit and Scope of the Review

The Faculty of Humanities' teaching portfolio offers 566 active undergraduate programmes and 484 active taught postgraduate programmes¹ all delivered through 5,446 current active course units. Our taught programmes portfolio is what makes Humanities a target destination for around 124,000 applications each year and for the approximate 22,000 taught students currently registered to our programmes. This is a huge strength of the Faculty. However, our portfolio also presents challenges, and as we grow our student numbers through new Size and Shape programmes and respond to changing demand, the Faculty must be cognisant of the impact that the current and increasing complexity of our portfolio has on staff and student experience.

Terms of Reference

The aim of this review is to consider the underpinning model and guiding principles for the sustainable undergraduate (UGT) and taught postgraduate (PGT) teaching portfolio that address the high workloads which impact on our staff, and an improved student experience that allows genuine choice.

The Faculty recognises four key drivers for this review:

- 1) Persistent feedback about high workloads for academic and professional services staff.
- 2) Ensuring that Humanities' programmes deliver a consistent, high-quality student experience.
- 3) Ensuring that our teaching portfolio is an enabler to our wider Faculty strategy.
- 4) Compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on our UGT and PGT offering.

The intention is to develop a set of recommendations for implementation across the Faculty relating to the sustainable size and shape of our teaching portfolio that will deliver benefits for both staff and students. The review group will produce a project plan and identify resources to deliver the recommendations.

Scope and deliverables

The review will be to make recommendations on:

- The minimum, and potentially the maximum, cohort size for programmes, pathways, and course units.
- The optimal size for small group teaching in the different subject areas.
- The optimal mix of core, compulsory and optional course units in each year of study.
- Best practice models for team teaching.
- Principles guiding the use of Teaching Assistants across UGT programmes.
- The expected financial contribution of programmes and course units.
- Embedding the implementation of recommendations into business-as-usual activities.

¹ Number of programmes does not include programme codes for Erasmus, Visiting or Exchange students, summer schools, non-degree study, CPD or units not leading to an award. The number includes active programmes and plans used to manage the student experience such as exit awards and specialist pathways.

Process

The Group will approach the review through phases, each focusing on different aspects of the standard programme portfolio to make recommendations across the scope of this review. The phasing will be agreed by the group. Recommendations made by the Group at each phase of the review will be considered by the Faculty Leadership Executive.

Scoping and data gathering activities to include:

- Data gathering and audit on current programmes, pathways and course units across the Faculty;
- Gathering best practice from across the Schools and Faculties;
- Research from the HE sector, including competitor practice and student insight;
- Consultation with key stakeholders and expertise from across the University, including but not limited to:
 - Heads of School
 - Schools' Directors of Teaching and Learning
 - Heads of Department and Divisions
 - Departmental Heads of Teaching and Learning
 - Faculty Scheduling and Projects Officer
 - Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
 - Head of Student and Academic Services

Membership

Chair: Vice-President and Dean of Humanities	Fiona Devine
Vice Dean Teaching, Learning and Students	Fiona Smyth
Deputy Executive Director of Faculty Operations	Emma Rose
Head of School (SALC)	Thomas Schmidt
Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning and Students (Portfolio)	David Spendlove
Deputy Head of School (SoSS)	Mario Pezzino
Director of Teaching and Learning (SALC)	Camden Reeves
Director of Teaching and Learning (SEED)	Rory Stanton
Head of Modern Languages and Cultures (SALC)	Julia Dobson
Director of Teaching and Learning (AMBS)	Anna Goatman
Representative from the Faculty of Science and Engineering	Peter R Green
Representative from the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health	TBC
Representative from Student and Academic Services	Craig Best
Faculty Head of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience	Hannah Cousins
Finance Lead	David Boyd
Humanities Education Officer (UMSU)	Alec Severs
Communications Lead	Ben Cawley
Project and Business Change Manager	Lexy Cummins
Secretary	Helen Dunning/Hannah Jordan

Timescales and reporting

It is expected that the project will run for at least three years, starting in 2023/24. Meetings will be held approximately every six weeks with updates provided to Faculty Executive and other key stakeholder groups throughout the year.

Definitions

- **Programme:** an award of The University of Manchester. Externally, programmes can also be referred to as courses.
- **Pathway:** identified routes through a programme that results in a specified award of the University of Manchester.
- **Course unit:** a component part of a programme or pathway, sometimes referred to as a module or course.
- **Programme/Plan codes:** coding used within the student record system. A programme can be linked to a single plan code or to multiple plan codes. In the latter case this is usually used for a programme that has multiple named pathways.
- **Student pathway:** a term used within Scheduling and Timetabling to refer to the specific set of units each student chooses through their programme.

Lexy Cummins

Project and Business Change Manager

Updated September 2025