

SEED Student Voice Committee (SVC) - Undergraduate

Date: Wednesday 19th November 2025

Time: 12:00-13:30pm

Location: Ellen Wilkinson C3.19/3.20 - [Microsoft Teams](#)

Minutes

Attendees:

Kathryn Telling (KT) (Chair; Associate Director of Student Support & Wellbeing), Bo Murphy (BM) (Co-Chair SEED School Representative), Rory Stanton (RS) (Director of Student Support & Wellbeing) Maria Baltazar Viegas (MBV) (Student Communications Coordinator), Rachel Challinor (RC) (Student Support and Development Manager), Amy Matthews (AM) (Secretary; IAG TLS Administrator).

21 Reps in attendance:

In person attendees

Dionne Boyall – BSc (Hons) Geography
Eibhlin Mackie – BSc (Hons) Geography
Emma Kimusa Young– BSc (Hons) Geography
Bella Agostini – BSc (Hons) Geography
Jessica Ellis – BSc (Hons) Geography
Imogen Hoch – BSc (Hons) Geography
Fred Patts = BA (Hons) Geography
Tara Riley- Smith – BA Geography
Ilia Tatiana Filippopoulou – BSc (Hons) Education
Hugo Roberts – BSc (Hons) Geography
Tanya Wu – BA (Hons) Education, Leadership and Culture
Yeung Tze Yau (Renee) – BSc (Hons) Educational Psychology
Aidan Harris – BSc (Hons) Global Development
Tilly Twigg – BA (Hons) Geography
Connie Foy – BSc (Hons) Geography
Yangyi Zhou – BA (Hons) Education, Leadership and Culture
Stanley Hopgood – BA (Hons) Geography

Online Attendees

Zhuo Yap – BSc (Hons) Education

Xiaoyu Zhang – BSc (Hons) Educational Psychology

Fanging Yu – BSc (Hons) Education

Lilia Hakem – BSc (Hons) Geography

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from -

KT introduced themselves as the Associate Director for Academic Advising and Student Wellbeing. They explained that the purpose of this meeting is to provide oversight of matters that extend beyond individual programmes and to consider issues at a whole-school level. KT also welcomed those joining online via Teams.

BM, the School Representative, introduced themselves and thanked everyone for attending. RS introduced himself, and AM confirmed that they would be taking the minutes. AM noted that the minutes will be reviewed before being circulated to students as an official record of discussions and actions.

KT emphasised the importance of the actions captured and confirmed that updates on action points will be provided in Semester 2.

2. Minutes/Actions of the last meeting

Not recorded.

3. Rep Consultation

Rep recruitment and training

- KT invited BM to summarise student representative feedback collected via the Padlet.
- BM reported that students had provided positive feedback through the Padlet.
- A representative noted that some students were unable to access the Padlet due to issues with Cloudflare.
- Another representative commented that they found the flexibility of the training very beneficial, describing it as a fantastic and useful resource.
- KT highlighted the positive feedback received, aligning with similar comments from PGT students. KT noted that, unlike previous years where programme leads oversaw this process, it is now centralised via the Students' Union.
- LH (via Teams) added that lecturer introductions would be especially helpful for first- and second-year students. For third- and fourth-year Geography students, email introductions may be more suitable due to the lack of mandatory whole-cohort sessions.
- BM observed that lecture shout-outs help with visibility, enabling students to recognise their reps and feel more confident raising concerns. They added that informal reminders such as "Have you spoken to your rep?" can encourage engagement.
- Rep FP suggested that group surveys could enhance communication among peers and provide a channel for students who may be uncomfortable raising concerns in person.

- A rep noted that lecturers and staff have been supportive in distributing messages and surveys.
- Some students reportedly find it difficult to know how to contact their reps or identify who is in their cohort. A brief opportunity for reps to introduce themselves in class was suggested as a helpful solution.
- KT thanked the reps for their constructive feedback.
- A representative suggested including a slide with rep contact details in teaching sessions.
- KT agreed that regular contact between reps and students—supported by PDs and lecturers—would be valuable. KT confirmed they would reach out to staff, including all PDs, to encourage this support, noting that some academics already accommodate this informally.
- Another rep commented that simply speaking to students directly can be effective. While not all students respond, those who do often provide more detailed feedback that can inform course-level decision-making. They noted that this is easier within smaller programmes.
- RS shared a comment from ZK (via the online chat) asking about contacting SEED to circulate an email to the cohort. They reported that earlier emails went unanswered and asked whether follow-up emails should be sent.
- LK suggested the idea of a permanent survey link on Canvas (if not already available) to allow students to share feedback throughout the semester.
- MBV clarified that SEED Hub can approve and coordinate this, and reps should contact them directly.
- It was noted that a permanent link could also help address issues such as student shyness or QR codes failing to load at the end of lectures.
- KT agreed that a consistent, accessible space on Canvas could be helpful and reps expressed support for this idea.
- Rep – FP proposed that a dashboard would be an effective and visible place to host this information.

Action 1: KT to investigate options for creating a universal Canvas slide or resource containing rep information for students.

- BM reminded attendees about the SEED Students Community page, which includes a section on Student Voice and Representation. Reps attending in person were not familiar with this resource.
- BM noted that this information had been discussed at the School Board and can be shared with students.

Rep Visibility

- KT opened the discussion by asking reps what actions they currently take to ensure their peers know who they are.
- KT also referred to the comments left on the Padlet, noting that informal chats and conversations are common ways students identify their reps. It was suggested that introductory emails, newsletters summarising key updates, email badges, and email signatures could further help students recognise their reps.

- KT invited reps in the room to share what visibility methods had been working well for them.
- The Undergraduate Geography rep reported that both the society Instagram account and a year-group Instagram account have been used for rep visibility, though noted that not all students are aware of who the reps are.
- Rep – FP shared that he and SH introduced themselves during a lecture by giving a short speech explaining their role, encouraging both positive and negative feedback. He also noted that information could be shared through a rep-approved email.
- KT asked MBV to clarify how email communication could be supported. MBV explained that if reps email SEED Hub or herself (maria.baltazarviegas@manchester.ac.uk), they can help distribute messages. MBV also manages the School's social media and can produce graphics for rep visibility. However, email distribution lists cannot be shared directly with reps.
- An online rep noted that shout-outs during lectures would also be helpful for increasing visibility.

Welcome Week

- KT noted that there had been extensive work on delivering an extended Welcome Programme this year. KT summarised the Padlet feedback.
- BO summarised the Padlet comments, highlighting positive feedback regarding the Welcome March and negative feedback about some lectures being inconveniently timed.
- A rep commented that they found the lectures helpful.
- Several reps felt that some Welcome Week content was repetitive, and that some questions—particularly around assessments for UG Geography students—were not answered.
- There was feedback about receiving a high volume of emails, which resulted in some students missing key messages. Students reported finding the communication confusing and overwhelming.
- A rep who is DASS registered noted that starting university involved many complex steps, including settling into a course and new accommodation while navigating DASS processes. They highlighted that DASS information and support would be more useful if released before arrival at university, as there are allotted timelines for setting up DSA and study support. They reported difficulties contacting DSA providers, accessing study tech, and managing quota issues alongside academic adjustments. They suggested improvements would benefit SEED students more widely.
- Pre-registration was suggested as a helpful step to ease the transition. RS noted this feedback and stated that offering early one-to-one meetings could also support students.
- MBV and AM added that the SEED Hub and the SSW team can assist with DASS-related concerns. AM confirmed the SSW team for SEED has a dedicated DASS adviser, Liam, who students can contact for support.
- ZY commented that Welcome Week included many evening events.
- Fred shared that they enjoyed the Welcome Week events.
- Another rep noted that social media advertising was strong, helpful, and contributed to high attendance at events.
- RS asked whether the Welcome Week schedule felt too full, and whether some activities could be moved to later in the term.

- A rep responded that the volume of communication—particularly from the Students’ Union—felt overwhelming and “spam-like.” They suggested that spacing events out more would be beneficial. They emphasised that the overload came mainly from the SU rather than from the University.

Course Unit Selection

- Students reported difficulties with the module selection process, particularly around accessing information on how and where to select modules. One student highlighted spending a significant amount of time trying to understand how to apply for a language module and ultimately had to email for guidance before receiving a response.
- A representative noted experiencing issues with a LEAP unit, including being advertised from SEED that they were unable to take the unit and eventually deciding not to proceed with it.
- Another representative also raised concerns regarding LEAP module eligibility and communication and that this should be clearer to students.
- BM confirmed that support for module selection has been discussed and noted that the Head of Humanities is reviewing the current module selection system with the aim of streamlining and modernising the outdated process.
- BM advised that if these challenges continue, students should raise the issue with their Programme Committee.

Canvas Implementation

- KT summarised student feedback collected via Padlet.
- Students generally felt Canvas is an improvement over Blackboard, but several issues were raised:

Consistency & Navigation

- Lack of consistency across courses; materials do not always appear where students expect.
- Some lecturers engage well with Canvas features (e.g., readings function), while others use it minimally. Reps suggested training for staff to improve consistency and awareness of Canvas tools.
- A rep noted that lecturers cannot easily see the student view, which makes it harder for them to understand how students experience the platform.

Submissions & Assessment

- Students dislike the single submission limit on Canvas, noting Blackboard allowed multiple submissions.
- Some submissions appear distorted when uploaded, which did not happen on Blackboard.
- Students reported no receipt or confirmation of submission.
- Several issues were raised with SpeedGrader; KT and RS will investigate.

Action = KT and RS to investigate issues with SpeedGrader.

- A Geography rep noted a case where the submission deadline displayed incorrectly (Canvas showed 5pm; students believed it was 2pm), causing confusion and stress.

- When students contacted SEED for clarification, staff were unsure of the situation and resubmission was not allowed.

Features & Integration

- Students would like better integration with other services.
- Reps appreciated that Canvas has an app, and that the calendar feature is helpful.
- Rep FP mentioned that an essay deadline had been added to the calendar and said that fully utilising this feature—ideally including timetables—would be “amazing”.
- Issues were raised with reading lists, including materials being inaccessible or behind paywalls. Students would find it useful to see what resources the University subscribes to.
- A rep highlighted that the UoM library site does show access information, and adding a direct Canvas link to library resources would help. KT agreed this would be valuable, noting that reading tools and library systems may not currently sync.

Access to Materials

- Students reported inconsistent access to lecture slides, with slides sometimes unavailable when expected.
- KT noted that this is the first year using Canvas, so some issues are expected.
- RS added they were responsible for coordinating the move from Blackboard to Canvas, acknowledging that some staff are less tech-confident. They emphasised that feedback is essential for improving the system and that the IT teams are very supportive.

Pre-reading and Lecture Materials

- A representative noted that some lecturers provide pre-reading and lecture slides in advance, which students find helpful.
- However, this is not consistent across courses, and many students would like access to materials beforehand to prepare and engage more effectively during lectures.

Postgraduate Applications and Careers Support

- XZ asked via chat about support for postgraduate applications, specifically the Fast Track Master’s scheme, and noted that additional guidance would be appreciated.
- A final-year rep shared that they had circulated a survey and received several comments requesting more support with postgraduate options and career pathways.
- KT and RS asked whether students would find a workshop on these topics useful. Reps, including Fred, confirmed that this would be appreciated.
- Representatives also requested more information about funding, postgraduate schemes, and general application guidance.

Action 2: KT to Follow up with Bertie Dockerill to produce a careers support session/workshop.

Support Outside of Studies – Academic Advising

- BM summarised the Padlet feedback.

- Many students reported finding their Academic Advisors (AAs) very helpful, and several comments highlighted the Careers Service as particularly useful.
- A Geography second-year representative raised concerns about difficulty contacting their AA:
 - Their AA had promised to arrange a meeting but did not follow up. The student had no communication with them at all and other peers had also experienced this.
 - Another representative reported that they did not find out who their new AA was for two months, as their previous advisor had left. They wanted to discuss module selection during this period and felt ignored. Despite these challenges, they noted that once contact was established, their AA was supportive—though the meeting felt rushed at the end.
- KT noted that, based on Board of Studies feedback, there is significant variability in advising experiences. Students were encouraged to raise issues with staff if communication problems occur.

Action 3: KT and RS to review and update AA guidance.

- KT to contact all PDs in August and ask them to prioritise allocating AAs where it is practicable to do so.
- Rep - FP provided positive feedback regarding their experience as a of first-year Geography student so far, noting that their Academic Advisor and the Wellbeing team have been helpful.

4. Any other business

Student Support (Dissertations)

- Final-year Geography rep raised concerns about dissertation supervisors not being aligned with students' topics and lacking regular availability for meetings.
- KT asked whether the issue is programme specific. The responses from reps suggested that it might be.
- Education Rep noted they meet with their own dissertation supervisor once per month.

Lecture Disruptions

- Rep – FP highlighted ongoing disruptions in first year geography lectures affecting a group of students.
- AM advised that RC can help facilitate support.
- RC explained that the *Report and Support* system can be used to escalate issues to A&R, but students must provide their name for follow-up.
- Staff attempts to manage disruptions can also be noted and escalated through this route.

Action 4: AM to provide *Report and Support* information to students for escalation of lecture disruptions.

BM thanks all attendees. KT thanks all attendees in person and online and confirmed that minutes with actions would be circulated in due course.

5. Date of next meeting

TBC. KT noted it would take place in Semester 2.

6. Comments added to Padlet after meeting

N/A.

Summary of Actions List

Action Number	Agenda Item	Action	Lead	Deadline	Status/Notes
1	3	Action 1: Investigate options for creating a universal Canvas slide or resource containing rep information for students.	KT	December 2025	
2	3	Action 2: KT to Follow up with Bertie Dockerill to produce a careers support session/workshop.	KT	December 2025	
3	3	Action 3: KT and RS to review and update AA guidance.	KT / RS	December 2025	
4	4	Action 4: AM to provide Report and Support information to students for escalation of lecture disruptions.	AM	November 2025	AM emailed FP with the link to the Report and Support form on the 21/11/25.