

**School of Environment, Education and
Development**

Faculty of Humanities

SEED Programme Committee: Human and Digital Development cluster

Date: Wednesday 03 December 2025

Time: 14:00 – 17:00

Location: James Chadwick 3.010

Please send any queries to seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk

MINUTES

Staff Attendees: Richard Duncombe (Senior lecturer), Jaco Renken, Mapenzie Tauzie, Shirley Jenner, Richard Heeks.

5 Reps in attendance:

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies – Kelechi, Natalie

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the March 2025 were circulated prior to the meeting. No matters arose related to this meeting. Minutes were accepted as correct.

3. Outstanding actions & matters arising from the previous meeting

Any outstanding actions will be notified at a later time.

4. Student Reports and Reviews

4.1 MSc Human Resource Development (International Development) (HRD)

Pre-arrival programme went well. Email and other communication was good. One student experienced difficulties completing the finance process. Welcome week went well, a wide range of events were held, students have received opportunities to learn more about GDI.

Too many separate links were provided for information (timetables, course selection etc). This caused confusion for some students.

Only about 12 students attended the programme-level induction.

Course unit schedules were well organised, lectures were well planned, guidance was helpful. Students appreciated study support sessions.

Some students don't check in on SEAtS on time because the code was closed at the end of the class.

Canvas – the platform is well organised, with condensed structure and easy navigation. The introductory sessions were useful. The timetable is not linked to Canvas and requires a separate website.

Response to reps survey is relatively low, but that suggests there are no serious problems.

Staff responses to feedback:

Finance process – this student had difficulty completing the last part of finance. Not sure why. William promised to feed this back.

Timetables – there was a pilot in GDI to integrate welcome timetables better. Should be getting a report on this in future. Shirley forwarded on email from Rachel about this pilot.

Separate links – asked for more information: having to click on these every time, and bookmarks don't work properly.

Low induction attendance – there was a 'latecomers' session 2 weeks later. (Reps noted that this was cancelled without replacement). We can't control how many students turn up but this has been an ongoing problem with students arriving late. The university is trying to encourage students to engage with induction week. Richard promised a follow up on remedies. Asked what they felt you missed out on when they didn't attend. Mostly this was not knowing the rest of the cohort.

Attendance timing – this should really be earlier in the session, rather than at the end. If this is happening then please talk to the lecturer and ask them to put it up earlier in the session. There have been discrepancies between students in the room and the total attendance. Proper attendance monitoring is required by the UKVI. The university has asked us to use live check-in in future with a short life-span on the code. There may be some people using this system and causing people to 'miss' the code if they are not in the room. Another rep stated that the dynamic code was a good thing, as it reduces pressure to share the code with absentees which some are unhappy about. Some students find that the QR code is the easiest way to check in as it automatically opens the SEAtS app.

4.2 MSc Digital Development (DD)

In general the students haven't brought up any admin or technical issues. Most are related to dynamics within class or the course units. Students are happy and satisfied with the practical aspects of the programmes, and the availability of services.

Some students noted that the links for the academic writing sessions are not shared collectively to all students.

Canvas – everyone is quite happy with the ease of communication it provides. Calendar function quite useful for reminders of assignments.

Induction – low numbers again. Not much solidarity as a result. Have already discussed this and organised a get-together next week.

Usage of AI during group discussions. Some team members are much more free in using AI during discussions and even on the assignment. Many feel this will impact the quality of discussions. It feels like the discussions are not as rich. There is concern around English speaking and writing skills. Some seem concerned about their skills and are using AI to cover this. This raises the importance of sharing the links for the Academic English writing and skills programmes as not all students have initiative to search for them. Also because some students are much freer with AI during the assignments this might penalise those who also have lower English skills and might be penalised for relative performance. It has also been hard to reach out to other students, and people are reluctant to reach out to lecturers to ask them to facilitate that. Some feel they are contributing more than others, but then those others are benefiting from a team score.

Staff responses to feedback:

Writing skills messages – this may be down to some students having signed up to receive additional messages directly from the organisers. It would be useful if students could be encouraged to share emails that others feel they have missed so they can also sign up.

Canvas – is everyone getting Canvas messages as far as you can tell? Not everyone is aware they have to reply back.

AI in discussions – This can be hard to regulate. Perhaps we could be more overt about saying people should not be doing this in discussions. Would hope students would also encourage good behaviour in each other.

AI in assessments – This is not a unique concern – there is always worry about group marks. Lecturers should have ways of balancing this. We have seen a previous positive correlation between AI use and performance change to there not being a strong relationship or an impact for the worse. Shirley has an updated presentation on how to write, which includes sections on AI which she will distribute for use in Welcome Week next year. The subject area librarian also gave a presentation on this, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the different systems which really helped the students. We can't make people contribute, but we can be more explicit about the expectations. AI itself doesn't seem to be the main concern, but potential loss of marks because of peers using it.

4.3 MSc Management & Information Systems (Change and Development) (M&IS)

Really appreciated the overall organisation, and the quality of the seminars especially. Easier to concentrate in seminars, including group discussions.

Course structure – many students want more practical and hands-on sessions, more computer-based classes or practice with tools will really help them. Would be useful to see how it works in the real world.

Would appreciate earlier and clearer information about our dissertation – how supervisors will be allocated, what kind of support we can expect. Many not sure how and when to begin preparing. Several students want more career guidance specifically for their own programme, rather than just the general support for the university. Many not sure which career suits us best.

Canvas and email notifications don't always match – eg got an email saying allocated to group 2, but Canvas says group 1.

Dissertation – better to get information early on about structure.

Would like info about usage of information systems in marking. Most importantly want practical sessions. Next semester may have some, but it would be good to get some now.

Some positive things – even though there are demands for practical experiences, some of the students are quite active in societies (eg SEED change-maker). The group chat has created a network to help students be more engaged in university programmes. A lot of the students in DD are more orientated towards management and business, but have a shared group chat now with MIS. Though not all students are active on WhatsApp so they have to back up with emails.

Staff responses to feedback:

Course structure/ practical classes – there is more in the second semester, database management, systems etc. There will be more computer classes in comparison. What specific software are you looking for (data analytics/ R). You will learn about S-data which is similar, but we can get some teaching on R. (Reps offered to create a poll for more specific practical teaching requests by January). Also requested SQL or Python.

Dissertations – research course unit provides some information. Can send an email to all MIS students explaining supervision, allocation, what they can do with topics etc. Much of your dissertation work will be in the second semester - around late Feb you'll be asked to submit your initial topic, late March or early April you will receive your allocation. (Students have not received the dissertation handbook yet). Can also discuss topics with Academic Advisors before supervisors are allocated. There will be a meeting during the Cape Town

trip. There is a list of topics which will be provided to give an idea of the width. Cape Town can be inspiring for topics but that's not compulsory.

Careers guidance – last year we organised an event with some alumni which presented their experiences and advice. Can do same again this year if students want. Can do a joint one between programmes. Employability lead can help organise a careers event. Fieldwork will also provide a good exposure to a range of careers.

Canvas – this is a technical thing, when students are allocated to groups Canvas generates a notification immediately and this doesn't always reflect the final group. Not sure this can be fixed.

5. Any other business

Requested feedback on fieldwork arrangements, and classes, and practical ways we can increase engagement in discussions.

6. Future meetings

Semester 2 2025-26

Next meeting will be during second semester, around end of March, beginning of April. Exact date to be circulated in due course.

Summary of Actions List

Action Number	Agenda Item	Action	Lead	Deadline	Status/Notes
1	4.1	Feed back that a student had problems completing the finance process	WS	ASAP	
2	4.2	Develop remedies for low attendance at induction events and feed this back to reps	RD		
3	4.3	Create a poll asking students for specific requests for practical information systems teaching	MIS reps		