

School of Environment, Education and Development

Faculty of Humanities

SEED Programme Committee: BSc Education

Date: Friday 7 November 2025

Time: 13:00-15:00

Location: [Meeting Link](#)

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

MINUTES

Staff Attendees:

Sophina Choudry (Programme Director, Chair) (SC)
Morag Guilfoyle (TLSE Administrator, Secretary) (MG)
Edda Sant (Unit Director) (ES)
Liz Gregory (Deputy Program Director) (LG)
Chae-Young Kim (Unit Director) (CK)
Paul Smith (Lecturer) (PS)
Andrew Gunn (Unit Director) (AG)
Mark Innes (Unit Director) (MI)
Lise Hopwood (Unit Director) (LH)
Kathryn Telling (Unit Director) (KT)
Richard Proctor (Unit Director) (RP)
Tahsina Akbar (Lecturer) (TA)
Sadia Habib (Lecturer) (SH)
Catherine Atkinson-Ross (Lecturer) (CAT)
Umit Yildiz (Lecturer) (UY)
Sara Jackson (Lecturer) (SJ)

Student Rep Attendees:

Grace Hollingsworth (Yr 3) (GH)
Zhuo Yap (Yr 1) (ZY)
Livia Bell (Yr 1) (LB)
Fangning Yu (Yr 2) (FY)
Xinxin Chen (Yr 3) (XC)
Qianyu Zhang (Yr 2) (QZ)
Ilia Tatiana Filippopoulou (Yr 3) (IF)

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first Programme Committee meeting of 25/26 and noted that the Agenda is shared in the Teams chat. The Chair also noted that if any attendee had any concerns, they are happy to discuss either during or after the meeting.

The Chair reminded all attendees that this is a discussion meeting.

Introductions

Introductions were made on the Teams channel

2. Minutes/Actions of the last meeting

The following actions from the previous minutes have now been completed:

Rep Consultation – Yr 1

Action: SC: will look at delivery and pacing of teaching in Year 1 - **Completed**

Rep Consultation – Yr 3

Action: SC: will revisit how the pathways operate to support assignment distribution in Year 3 - **Completed**

Action: SC: has been looking to bring this back, will explore education technology content further - **Completed**

Action: Rep (Grace) to email unit codes to SC to check whether deadline bunching on one day can be resolved - **Completed**

3. SEED TA Policy

SC noted that a new TA policy has been put in place by SEED. Reps may not have been aware of this change as it is to do with the TAs assigned to courses (PhD students) and what they can and can't do anymore.

TAs can no longer lead lectures or lead more than 15 minutes of activity in a lecture and any slides used must be compiled by the Course Lead. TAs must be actively mentored by the lead academic.

LH: Any queries about TAs, drop me a note.

SC: TA budgets are being cut so we need to be careful about accessing support. Now you are looking at 1 TA to 40 students. This is a change. You may end up with 40 students in a seminar. Students need to be aware of this possibility.

UY: How will this affect the students progress? How will it affect student satisfaction? This could be an engagement issue.

EG: It's a concern to me how big the year 1 seminars are - not ideal for supporting transitions to HE.

SC: If issues are found we can push for more support. If there are impacts on students learning, it would be helpful to hear from students about this.

It's important to hear from the students about this.

AG: Can't do anything for this year but we need to consider how small groups need to be for small group teaching. We can't, long-term, have seminars of 40 students.

KT: Agree – as I want to have small seminars I am going to have the number of classes I think are necessary and present the case. We need to make the case for support for small seminars and for lecture support.

SC: agree

LH: Bear in mind that a TA who is a first year, they can't lead a seminar alone so to deliver a seminar so you would need to request a more experienced TA and provide the documents and seminar plan. TAs are there to learn from colleagues so you need to be available for this two-way process.

SC: There is concern about small classes which is a part of our student satisfaction.

4. External Teaching budget changes

SC noted that there has been a change to the External Teaching budget and only two external guest lectures are allowed per course. Some courses are set up for more than two guest lectures and this is no longer possible.

Can all staff consider how many guest lectures you have for your courses and decide whether to remove external lecturers and use internal lecturers or revise your course.

5. Academic Advising – Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions

SC noted that there is a new process for mitigating circumstances. It is very important that all staff familiarise themselves with the changes in the way that mitigating circumstances applications are processed and how extensions are dealt with. Eg: No extensions will run into the next academic year. Extensions should be applied for 48 hours before the deadline.

Extension requests are reviewed every day and 6000 applications were received in one semester so there is a high load.

Final Year students need to be made aware that longer extensions during semester 2 will impact your graduation date. All students need to be aware that longer extensions may affect their progression decision. As Academic Advisor you need to be aware of students who have applied for mit circs and have a very long extended deadline as they may get a repeat without attendance.

The changes are happening because a new university system for mit circs is coming in next year and the university is trying to make individual school processes more consistent.

KT: Please pop info in the chat.

ACTION: Student Reps please disseminate the link below:

[Mitigating circumstances and Extensions](#)

6. Year 1 / 2 / 3 review

- a. NSS update: assessment and feedback (External Examiner feedback)**

SC noted congratulations for doing exceptionally well on the NSS in SEED. It involves all team members across academic and PS who make a huge effort to improve our school and processes. We were top in the Faculty of Humanities.

The NSS is completed in year 3 of UG degrees only. The University focus last year was Student Voice and this year is Assessment and Feedback. There is always room for improvement.

I wish to point out the EEs reports here. We have a year 1, year 2 and year 3 External Examiner and they assess the students, check samples and give feedback. In some places they have noted inconsistencies in marking and feedback provided. We will go back and look at those reports and consider practices related to becoming more consistent across the course marking team. I would note that these are a very small number of cases.

ES: Are EEs requesting consistency within courses or across the programme?

SC: Within courses. Any issues are with large mandatory courses and a lot of markers – all marking is good but the consistency needs to be reviewed. External Examiners did comment on generally how well we are doing with the marking. I would like the External Examiners to speak to students and if all agree I will organise a workshop with an External Examiner.

KT: Think that's a good idea. We don't have an agreed approach to mark review – CUD looks across a range of marks and makes adjustments. We wouldn't want to be prescriptive but maybe we can work on some guidance collaboratively.

SC: Yes, let's work with our examiners and also do a marking exercise.

ACTION: Workshop on marking within a course including External Examiners

ACTION: Find a leader for the marking workshop

COMPLETE: Andrew Gunn has volunteered to lead the workshop

ACTION: Workshop meeting of Students and External Examiners

b. Course Moderation

SC: I have been contacting staff about moderation and tracking. There is a moderation form that needs to be completed and I appreciate that it is very busy and the moderation is completed quite late.

The A&P Team have asked PDs to oversee moderation so I will be in touch to check on how you are getting on so don't be alarmed. This is new but is unlikely to change.

Does anyone have anything to note about the moderation process – what works and doesn't?

KT: AI appreciated the clearer structure with the moderation process with specific dates as I always struggle with the coordination.

SC: I have some moderation notes that were very useful to read and check that what we are doing matches the outline and the notes. That was very helpful.

For students – this is part of the quality standard enhancement committee and QAA regs to make sure we are compliant as a degree

c. Dissertations – marking deadlines, ethics etc

SC: Any concerns?

GH – This is included in the general report feedback but an early outline / idea of what the ERM includes would be useful. We found out 5 weeks into course but students would like to see it earlier.

SC – yes, can probably facilitate that

LH – It is on the students website, I could link it

MI – I am Assistant Director for research ethics. Happy to answer any queries from supervisors or coordinators and can do a presentation to students if that would help. Don't fear the process.

GH – a lot of students didn't know who were available as supervisors when completing the word form. Students didn't know who to ask.

SC: Thank you – we will try and time it better

XC: I want to add some feedback regarding the dissertation and ethics. Most of the year 3 students find their supervisors very responsible and supportive. One problem is last lesson we learned the ERM in the Wednesday dissertation workshop. But it was kind of not so successful (maybe because there were too many people logging in the system at the same time) and this got students confused about ethical approval. Maybe there can be another workshop?

d. Year 3 Reference Requests and other updates

SC noted that the Academic Advisor is responsible for providing references but generally students need two references. The current final year cohort is 67 students and growing (year 1 – 85). I appreciate this is difficult for students as they have issues getting a second reference and we need to distribute it equitably. We need a plan.

ES: Suggest dissertation supervisor does 2nd reference? Most of us are dissertation supervisors.

SC: I like that idea

PS: seems fair to me and I just spoke to a student where I suggested that

IF: We had a question from a student. They sent an email to their Academic Advisor and Supervisor when applying to PGT programs. They have not received an answer. Who can she contact? Why no response?

SC: Any student not getting a response from AA/Sup please contact me. If urgent I can facilitate.

SC: I also send the students a copy of the reference that I have written for them.

ES: if you can note which reference is a higher priority then staff will try and write the most urgent ones first. References have to be tailored to the course etc and aren't one size fits all

ACTION: Dissertation Supervisors are expected to provide a second reference for final year students

e. CANVAS – missing lecture recordings

CS noted that this item came from student reports. Previously we have the podcasts prepopulated. However this option is not on Canvas and we have to manually add it in from the UoM podcasts. This is urgent as they need to be available asap. If they aren't on Canvas the students can access all recordings through the UoM podcast system.

UY: Can IT / eLearning department get this set up for us?

SC: We will feed this forward to the MIE Education Director who is compiling Canvas feedback. The video portal link is in the chat.

Any other Canvas related issues? No

ACTION: Feed query to Education Director

f. Student representative feedback (Years 1, 2 and 3)

SC noted that we discuss any individual comments with relevant course directors in private and will come back with responses.

Year 1 Zhou Yap and Livia Bell

The majority of feedback was generally satisfied – all academic experience and support. Course well-rounded and lectures are helpful with providing support and resources to study. When feedback gathered via discussion boards, students liked to see other students interpretations and the teacher feedback there.

Teaching / Feedback assessment – clearer timeline for feedback needed. Explanation for outline is clear but there is no specific document about the specifics – eg: font size, what to include and not to include. This comes verbally but there is no place to check back.

Students who have very short breaks between lessons when praying could do with more time available.

SC: I will talk to course unit directors where there are prayer times in their lectures.

EG: Friday lectures 1 – 3 and 3 – 4 and we need to move rooms. Students have been proactive and tried to fix it with me but when rooms are booked sometimes and the last class won't leave. This needs to be considered on a wider level including available spaces for students to go to.

SC: To avoid this I requested seminars at least a day after the lecture to try and avoid this situation.

SC: Students – note this on feedback so the notes can be added to the timetable requests

Wifi issues especially with SEAtS – to be raised with IT

Students know we have support services but students still unsure of how and where to access the support

SC: Look at welcome on the Community Page and SEED support links in chat.

Year 2 Fangning Yu and Xinxin Chen

This is our first year as a rep. Conducted some surveys and informal chats. Curriculum and teaching quality 90% of students found curriculum engaging and useful. Liked PowerPoint slides and online resources and majority say that lectures have encouraged them to think more critically and inspired them. Readings are accessible and materials are easy to locate and understand. Transition to Canvas has been fine.

Improvements:

Students want access to assessments from previous years, assignment history etc.

Students want more clarity around assignment requirements and marking criteria to be more confident in their preparation and writing.

The pace of certain lecturers could be slowed down a bit. Students are having problems absorbing info in a very short time. Some lecturers could add activities or pictures etc to help understanding.

SC: Thank you for your feedback about classes being very content driven and how it could be broken up more. We will get back to you on comments on individual classes.

SC: Year 2s think the placement is very successful

Year 3 Grace Hollingsworth and Iliana Tatiana Filippopoulou

Generally positive feedback. Not an overwhelming response but those that do are generally satisfied. Things are working well in general, well supported and everyone is happy with Canvas as a whole. It is similar to Blackboard and the transition was manageable.

Canvas issues:

When submitting in Blackboard, you could preview and check for mistakes but in Canvas there are no changes that can be made. I think there are up to three attempts to submit. Pass grades and feedback from past assignments is no longer available to view and we assumed that they would move to legacy so students have lost a lot of work in Blackboard. Staff who want the students work from previous years can't access them either.

Opening readings in Canvas are an issue. And you can't go back, you have to close and re-open. Can it go to a pdf instead?

ES: I can't see the Tii submission and am not sure if it is available anymore.

GH: A staff member in a seminar had issues with returning formative feedback, grades and feedback were not released fully and the staff member was not aware until the seminar.

IF: With Blackboard we had a receipt of submission and Canvas doesn't provide that – this creates some anxiety.

SC: You now only have one attempt to upload

IF: There are three attempts for our one shared course.

SC: Anything submitted for a SEED course, there is one submission attempt only. Previously you could overwrite before deadline, not now.

SJ: We had a meeting today to look at Canvas for marking. I was not aware that we aren't using Tii anymore but are using an integrated marker called Speedgrader. It is quite different in terms of accessing your marking groups etc. I advise all staff to have a play – possibly in a group to see how the facility works. How you see Speedgrader depends on how you ask A&P to set up your assignments.

SC: if you have no course rubric or if you don't add your rubric it will upload a generic one

SC: Students - Take screenshots of your submissions to use as a receipt. Speedgrader also has similarity detection which we use.

UY: Students can see a receipt but the settings would need to be changed to allow it. Speedgrader is quite fiddly to use and we have raised an issue. You can access Tii via Speedgrader though.

GH: Can we change to multiple submissions?

SC: No, this is set by the school and can't be changed for a single programme

7. Staffing (buyouts, sabbaticals, ST) and TA allocations for Semester 2

SC asked staff to let them know if they know they will be away so the scheduling can be updated for next year. Staffing is prepared a year in advance so are looking at 26/27 at the moment. Any semester 2 25/26 issues please let me know as soon as possible.

8. Changes to your Course Outlines

SC noted that Course Outlines are adjusted at this time of year in line with Quality, Standard, Design and Enhancement Committee (QSDE) requirement. There are several deadlines in semester 1 and a lot of paperwork and requirements. Please let me know by 7 January 2026 if you wish to make changes to your units and send the changes via track changes at the same time. The last date to make changes for Sept 26 is the end of February 2026.

This happens once a year and I prefer to review all changes at the end of January meeting. I present this to the school committee and they decide whether it needs to go to Faculty and then the changes need to be mapped onto the programme specification. I will share the latest paperwork that needs to be used. Templates are regularly changed so you must use the newest template and copy paste the current content into the new forms and then use track changes to show the changes. You need to confirm why the change is to be made and that the changes are acceptable to students / requested by students. All core course and pathway course changes must go to Faculty. Paperwork to me by 7 January 2026.

9. A.O.B

SC announced that this is their final year as Program Director and they will be stepping down in August 2026. The school is currently recruiting the new Program Director. Anyone who is interested please come and have a chat with me or relevant colleagues.

UY: SC thank you for your hard work.

SC: All teamwork, thank you to the whole team.

No further business

10. Date of next meeting

TBC.

Summary of Actions List

Action Number	Agenda Item	Action
1	5	Student Reps to disseminate the link to the Mit Circs and Extensions forms and advice Mitigating circumstances and Extensions
2	6a	Andrew Gunn to lead a workshop on marking within a course with External Examiners included
3	6a	Meetings between students and External Examiners to be set up
4	6d	Dissertation Supervisors to act as second referees for final year students
5	6e	Query requesting a link in Canvas to the lecture recordings to be sent to the Education Director to feed back to the Canvas Team