

*APPROVED*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

**SENATE: ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENTS**

**13 OCTOBER 2025**

**Present:** Professor Jenn Hallam (Chair), Professor Andrew Brass, Professor Naomi Chambers, Professor Hannah Cobb, Amrit Dhillon, Professor Danielle George, Professor Peter Green (from minute 6), Dr Jen McBride, Professor Andrew Mawdsley, Dr Katie Moore, Rhianna Patel (to minute 8), Alec Severs, and Professor Fiona Smyth.

**Apologies:** Dr Simon Merrywest, Professor George Moulton, and Professor David Schultz.

**In Attendance for minute 9:** Kelly-Ann Mallon (Head of Access, Student Employability, Success and Development)

**In Attendance for minute 11:** Professor Jane Mooney (Chair in Educational Development & Digital Capability)

**In Attendance for all items:** Craig Best (Director of Student and Academic Services), Janine Holdway (Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

**1 Welcome**

**Noted:**

- a) the Chair welcomed members to the first Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) meeting of the academic year 2025-26;
- b) introductions were provided. The following new members were welcomed to their first meeting:

University of Manchester Students' Union

- i. Amrit Dhillon, Faculty Officer (FSE)
- ii. Rhianna Patel, Faculty Officer (FBMH)
- iii. Alec Severs, Faculty Officer (FHums)

Elected members of Senate (FHums)

- iv. Naomi Chambers, Elected member of Senate
- v. Professor Hannah Cobb, Elected member of Senate

**2 Declarations of Interest**

**Noted:** that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Noted:** That a minor amendment would be made to minute 11 Past Papers Website c) to read 'the Faculty Vice-Dean for TLS (BMH) had held discussions with the Executive Director for the Student Experience and the Chief information Officer around the need for current and accessible student-facing information.'

**Agreed:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2025, subject to minor amendment.

#### **4 Matters Arising**

**Noted:** The matters arising update.

#### **5 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2024-25**

**Noted:** the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) Forward Agenda.

#### **6 Chair's Update**

**Noted:**

- a) the future of Academic Assurance and the purpose of the Committee was reaffirmed. Members were invited to contribute to the Committee's Forward Agenda, including items from the student perspective and from the school boards. Contributions could be sent to the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students, the Executive Director for the Student Experience, or the Governance Manager. **Action: Committee Members**
- b) the Teaching and Learning Strategy Day was scheduled for 6 November and would include opportunities for sharing good practice and providing feedback;
- c) the M2035 Strategy would launch on 15 October. There would be opportunities for contribution. The Strategy would be shaped by colleagues and a regular update would be added to the Forward Agenda; **Action: Governance Manager**
- d) future meetings of the Committee would include an update from TLS functional areas, including employability, and would link to the Strategy.

#### **7 University of Manchester Students' Union Report**

**Received:** The University of Manchester Students' Union Report: Students' Living and Learning Conditions.

**Noted:**

- a) there was discussion about students' living and learning conditions, including concerns raised around student inclusion and engagement. Additional challenges existed as a result of the rising rent costs, which were adversely impacting students' ability to engage in university life. A significant number of students were working alongside their studies, and this was affecting their academic and social experience;
- b) it was acknowledged that blended learning had led to reduced campus presence and weakened community ties. Students valued the flexibility of learning, which needed to be balanced with structured timetables to support planning and employment;
- c) the additional difficulties faced by international students were recognised. Welcome Week had been well attended and could be extended to provide better support for those international students arriving later in the term. Commuter students also faced unique challenges. The Students' Union emphasised the need for tailored support and dedicated spaces;
- d) it was acknowledged that the student journey should be supported from initial interest through induction and beyond. The Students' Union had developed an international student guidebook to improve onboarding, which could be shared more widely with members and other colleagues.

#### **8 Annual Academic Assurance Review Report**

**Received:** The Annual Academic Assurance Review Report for Teaching, Learning and Students providing assurance that the academic standards and quality assurance of programmes meet and adhere to the internal procedures set out in the University Quality Framework and Regulations and consequently comply with external regulatory requirements. The report provided an overview of performance and an assessment of trends, good practice, and risks mapped to appropriate internal and external benchmarks, utilising a single data source in the areas of Student Experience, Student

Outcomes, Access and Participation, and linking to relevant measures from the Board's balanced scorecard.

**Noted:**

- a) concern was raised regarding the robustness and transparency of current assurance processes. The views expressed by some members at previous Senate meetings regarding programme withdrawals in Humanities via the Teaching Sustainability Project were discussed. Senate had agreed that a proposal for establishing a set of normative criteria for programme withdrawal would be established to enhance assurance to Senate. The points raised in discussion would help to inform development of this proposal and the Committee would be involved in this work to ensure future reports included clear rationale and transparency;
- b) it was recognised that continuous monitoring and clearer data presentation would be required. Areas for audit review included Dentistry, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, due to missed issues in earlier assurance layers. There was a recommendation to include programme size and risk scores to assess impact and student numbers;
- c) NSS actions and reporting would be refined and the timing of the report would be reviewed. The language around access and participation would be reconsidered, in order to improve the terminology for students;
- d) a separate summary detailing the discussion at the meeting would be produced. The document would be appended to the Annual Academic Assurance Review Report for inclusion in the presentation to Senate on 22 October. **Action: Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students/Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery**

**Agreed:** to recommend the Annual Academic Assurance Review Report to Senate, with minor updates to be included in a separate document providing a detailed summary of discussion.

**9 Graduate Outcomes and Student Employability**

**Received:** Graduate Outcomes and Student Employability Report providing an update on graduate outcomes and employability, including progression metrics from the 2022-23 sector data release and ongoing work to address response rates to the Graduate Outcomes Survey. The report also outlined the new Student Employability (Careers Service) strategic priorities.

**Noted:**

- a) discussion about the increasing trend for international students requiring short-term experiential placements, currently only provided as an opportunity for students as part of an integrated programme;
- b) that a plan was being developed to consider all industry partnerships in order to identify gaps and to avoid overlap of contact. This would be supported centrally;
- c) the Committee recognised that embedding employability was a strategic priority which would be developed over the full 10 years of the Manchester 2035 Strategy.

**10 Policy Review: Amendments to Degree Regulations**

**Received:** Proposed amendments to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations.

**Noted:**

- a) the report outlined the proposed substantial changes to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations, which had been circulated for consultation during the 2024-25 policy cycle. Consultation had been extensive and had included the Students' Union and the wider University;
- b) members discussed the detail of the changes and agreed that additional updates would be made to the document prior to submission to Senate for approval.

**Agreed:** to recommend the substantial changes to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations to Senate for approval, subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.

**11 Awarding official Digital Badges at the University of Manchester**

**Received:** A position paper on Awarding Official Digital Badges at the University of Manchester.

**Noted:**

- a) that a number of institutions were currently using official digital badges;
- b) the badges would be available through Canvas. However, other providers would be considered as part of the process;
- c) it was confirmed that the badges would be portable;
- d) the UoM Digital Badge Subcommittee would require broad representation.

**12 Civil Engineering Discipline Review – Periodic Review**

**Received:** Civil Engineering Discipline Review – Periodic Review Report.

**Noted:**

- a) that concerns had been raised about workload and how staff should manage the volume of recommendations and responsibilities.
- b) a number of the recommendations would be addressed through the NSS 2.0 framework.

**13 Governance-related matters: review of the Committee's ToRs and Membership**

**Noted:** The terms of reference and membership of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) were reviewed. A minor amendment would be made to update the name of the University Strategy.