

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Teaching Sustainability Project Taskforce**  
**Thursday 29 January 2026**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Attendees:** Fiona Devine (Chair), Fiona Smyth, Hannah Cousins, George Moulton, Camden Reeves, Emma Wilson, Julia Dobson, Mario Pezzino, Alec Severs, Anna Goatman, Ben Cawley, David Boyd and Lexy Cummins (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Emma Rose, Rory Stanton, Craig Best, David Spendlove, Scott Heath and Hannah Jordan.

**2. Minutes from the last meeting: for confirmation**

The [minutes](#) of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2025 were presented for confirmation. No amendments were raised, and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**3. Outstanding actions**

Verbal updates were given on the following outstanding actions:

- **TSTF015** – It was agreed that Humanities would trial placing AMBS within a contribution model. David Boyd has met with development teams in FSE to explore how their model could be used to support this, and will meet with Anna Goatman to discuss further (Action TSTF121). The Dean noted that moving to a different model is not a priority for Humanities at this stage, given current workload pressures and financial resilience challenges, which must take precedence. The priority for next year is to begin to implement a single WAM across the Faculty, with a view to rolling out AMBS' current model.
- **TSTF111** – The Dean is in receipt of a paper on the HCRI portfolio.
- **TSTF128** - A Slate demo was delivered to the TLSE (PS) Operations team in January and feedback was discussed at the Faculty Course Unit Framework Steering Group. Overall, it was viewed positively, however, some concerns were raised, particularly that two systems would still need to be operated, as Slate does not integrate with Campus Solutions. Despite this, the general consensus was that Slate could serve as a good interim solution until the University implements a course content management (CCM) system, which may take two to three years. George Moulton also explained that The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health have toyed with the idea of using Slate. Jenn Hallam has indicated that introducing a CCM is a University priority. **Action: Fiona Smyth to contact Rebecca Hodgson to seek further information on timelines and the relative priority of the CCM, given the importance.**

**4. RAID**

Risk owners were reminded to review the RAID and flag any new items or updates for inclusion.

**5. Chair's update**

- Due to ongoing work on the normative criteria, it has been agreed that the SoSS and SEED PGT programme withdrawals originally due to come forward for ratification at the 11 February Senate meeting have been deferred to the 22 April meeting.
- A number of SALC part-time PGT programmes are also expected to come forward for ratification at the 22 April meeting.
- The withdrawal of eight UG MLC programmes was agreed at the November 2025 Languages Subgroup meeting. There is a preference to confirm withdrawal of these programmes as soon as possible, but this is dependent on discussions at the 11 February Senate meeting and assessment against the normative criteria (once approved).
- A wide consultation on the normative criteria has taken place and was discussed at AQSC yesterday.
- The framework will go to Senate for approval on 11 February.
- To note, the normative criteria is a central process owned by Teaching and Learning Delivery.

Fiona Smyth, a member of AQSC and Senate, attended yesterday's meeting and provided the following update.

**Context:** The normative criteria originated from discussion at the 4 June 2025 Senate meeting, where a colleague from SoSS expressed the view that greater emphasis should be placed on academic quality.

- The item was discussed at length (over an hour).
- A key theme was that there is currently too much ambiguity, and further clarification is needed in several areas. This included a discussion about what “consultation” means in practice – e.g. how consultation should operate where programmes with zero students on them are being closed.
- A conversation took place regarding governance and the role of Senate. Specifically, how far Senate should be involved in the day-to-day operational matters of faculties and schools.
- It was noted that Senate will expect to see that the normative criteria is fully implemented through the supporting paperwork. Concerns were raised that there may be too much focus on process and documentation, but equally that Senate is likely to want to see more details, e.g. what concerns were raised and how they were addressed.
- There was significant discussion about agility, particularly in relation to where budget responsibility sits. It was noted that, if change at the pace envisaged under Manchester 2035 is required, current processes will make this difficult to deliver.
- The discussion also covered how staff and student groups are impacted.
- A member of AQSC noted that the normative criteria are “a step in the right direction” but require significantly more development.

The Dean emphasised that governance processes and the role of Senate have a significant practical impact. For example, under current arrangements, programmes cannot be withdrawn - and therefore removed from the website and other marketing materials - until this has been ratified by Senate. Whereas previously, following completion of rigorous school and faculty internal quality assurance processes, withdrawal could proceed, there is now an expectation to wait for Senate ratification.

## **6. Course Unit Framework: update**

- The Practical Guide to the Course Unit Framework will be finalised and launched in February. It is currently with key stakeholders for comment.
- Once the initial phase of the guide is complete, the next stage will focus on the practical steps involved in designing and structuring joint honours ensuring they work as fully integrated programmes, rather than two separate halves. There may be cases where this does not apply – e.g. it is more relevant to combinations such as a language and social science (e.g. French and Politics) than to two-language combinations (e.g. French and Spanish). Julia Dobson noted that this guidance would have the greatest impact on MLC, where around 75% of students are on joint honours programmes.
- There was discussion about how the information should be cascaded. Some participants favoured sharing it with all colleagues, while others suggested a more targeted approach. Concerns were raised about circulating to all academic staff, as schools may interpret and implement the information in different ways.
- A distribution list has been drafted. Alec Severs to be added, and framework to be circulated amongst student representatives when launched.
- It was suggested that a short video explaining the framework and its associated benefits could be helpful.

## **7. School updates**

### **7.1 AMBS**

- The AMBS Taskforce have met several times.
- While the compliance aspect is key, this is also a valuable opportunity to ensure programmes are genuinely fit for purpose, with stronger links to employability and industry input.

- Discussions to date have been constructive, including consideration of how to expand study abroad opportunities beyond the single programme where this is currently embedded.
- There is positive engagement and strong buy-in from Programme Directors, with a clear forward plan in place.
- UG and PGT Programme Directors are fully supportive, though there is recognition that implementation will be challenging at times.

## **7.2 SALC**

### ***Umbrella model:***

- The umbrella model paperwork was approved by Faculty QSDE today (Thursday 29 January 2026).
- The entry 2027 timeline was challenging, particularly in developing the risk register and mitigations within a short timeframe.
- A significant cross-team effort went into getting this over the line. Amber Beswick and Helen Davenport provided outstanding project management, alongside Julia Dobson, Dr Gregory Scott and Emma Wilson's team. Elizabeth McCullough gave invaluable support in handling time-sensitive marketing queries. Overall, there was excellent collaboration across SALC and MLC.
- A lessons-learned exercise will be carried out by PS teams, which may help inform the implementation of the Course Unit Framework. Emma Wilson will bring a summary to a future Faculty Course Unit Framework Steering Group meeting.
- The next step is consideration at Senate on 11 February.
- The Dean thanked all those involved for their work.

### ***Course Unit Framework:***

- Work will begin with the remodelling of PGT programmes in SALC, using this as a test case to develop and refine the process before undergraduate implementation.
- Heads of Department have been informed, and departments will lead on programme design.

## **7.3 SoSS**

### ***Politics (Phase 2)***

- Three programmes (Human Rights, Human Rights with Law and Peace and Conflict) will be combined into a single programme.
- Good progress is being made.

### ***Law***

- Strong interest in developing the LLB, with further discussions planned in March.
- Work is underway to implement the framework principles (e.g. moving from year-long modules to semesterised delivery).
- PGT provision has been flagged for review, but UG remains the priority.

### ***BASS***

- Recruitment is strong, though a number of small pathways remain.
- Planned changes include making Year 1 compulsory and replacing the dissertation with a capstone project.
- Some pathways may need to be retained to avoid destabilising the overall offer.
- Focus groups with students and alumni are informing developments.

### ***Economics***

- Keen to move to a 20-credit model in Year 3.
- Further work is needed with Anna Goatman, particularly in relation to BA Economics.

## **7.4 SEED**

No updates reported.

## **8. Communications**

- Messaging on the umbrella model is being developed with Elizabeth McCullough, including how to make current students aware of the changes, even where their award title will not change at graduation.
- Some student representatives have spoken to Alec Severs about how the changes affect them directly. There is a need to provide reassurance, though overall sentiment about the changes is positive. **Action: Fiona Smyth and Alec Severs will meet with school representatives to talk through the changes in more detail.**
- It was noted that we need to remain mindful of the wider national context, including subject entry trends and differences in attainment patterns between disciplines.
- New items have been added to the StaffNet page.
- **An update will be circulated to the Taskforce following the 11 February Senate. Action: Ben Cawley**

## **9. AOB**

The next Teaching Sustainability Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday 12 March.

## **10. Summary of actions**

- Fiona Smyth to contact Rebecca Hodgson to seek further information on timelines and the relative priority of the CCM, given the importance.
- Fiona Smyth and Alec Severs to meet with school representatives to talk through the changes in more detail.
- Ben Cawley to circulate an update to the Taskforce following the 11 February Senate meeting.