

School of Environment, Education and Development

Faculty of Humanities

SEED Student Voice Committee PGT

Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026

Time: 1:00PM-2:30PM

Location: Humanities Bridgeford Street Building, 1.69/1.70 hybrid on Teams

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

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Kathryn Telling (Co-Chair), Bo Murphy (Co-Chair), Rory Stanton (Director of Student Support & Wellbeing), Rachel Challinor, William Start, Laura Goodfellow (SEED EDI), Bo Murphy (School rep)

Medhawi Ragaria (MSc Development Economics & Policy), Gagan Ramesh Maileshwar (MSc Development Economics & Policy), Jiayi Yan (MSc Urban Regeneration & Development), Tanya Lewis (MA Education for Sustainable Environment), Jahnvi Patel Kanchukatla (MSc Urban Development & International Planning), Alvin Adhitya (MSc Management & Information Systems), Janmesh Hemant Bhoir (MSc Transport & Urban Planning), Natalie Jones (MSc Environmental Impact Assessment & Management), Jasmayne Saunders (MSc Global Development: Public Policy & Management), Weronika Sural (MSc International Development: Public Policy and Management), Sanjukta Menon (MSc Human Resource Management (International Development)), Christopher Brown (MSc Global Development: Migration), Yiqi Yang (MSc Organisational Change & Development), Daphney Gomez (MSc Global Development (Globalisation, Trade & Industry)), Jonathan Whelan (MSc Global Development (Globalisation, Trade & Industry)), Zeynep Baydar (MSc Global Development), Mathew Kiluma (MSc Geographical Information Science), Samarth Kavoori (MSc Global Development (Development Management)), Cok Marlene Putri (MSc Digital Development), Muhammad Wahyudi (MSc Human Resource Development (International Development))

2. Introductions

Katherine introduced the meeting and the themes from the padlet. Staff and students introduced themselves around the room.

Laura Goodfellow – SEED Equality and Diversity Committee member for UG and PGT students

Laura has been trying to gather some student views but without much success. Trying to understand how best to get the views of students. What can SEED do better to improve EDI? Will share link to survey so reps can complete it, and can share it with their cohorts. (Survey link) This will not have an end-date, it will continue all year. This will cover everything that comes under EDI, not just teaching-related matters.

3. Any relevant actions of the last meeting

KT describe actions that were taken as a result of comments in the previous meeting:

- Feedback provided to the students union regarding the positive reception of rep training
- Students' suggestions fed back to comms team
- Canvas submission and auditing issues raised with e-learning team.

4. Rep Consultation

There was a lot of programme-specific feedback provided. This will be sent directly to Programme Directors to prevent reps from having to repeat themselves when they come to their Programme Committees.

Groupwork

Auditing and 'optionality'

Students don't have access to all possible courses because they are limited to those options they've 'chosen' in the system and don't see other classes' timetables and Canvas sites. This has been raised in Programme Committee but hasn't been actioned yet.

Staff response - Rachel – it's not possible to put the whole timetable in one place due to clashes. Rory – we could look at doing this for the first two weeks. Rachel – we do a drop-in for the first two weeks of each semester where Programmes colleagues can provide information about timetables. Rory – there can also be issues with producing a PDF or other resource if changes are made to timetabling eg due to popularity and the requirement for larger rooms. This can mean information isn't up to date. We are not deliberately withholding this information, it's just not easily possible to publish it.

Positive feedback to SEED Hub as they are generally good.

Could the first lecture be recorded for each unit to allow students to check it out in their own time?

Staff response – it's possible this could be published but isn't automatically available, and it's not an automatic possibility.

Timetabling and cancelled classes

Within GDI there have been a few classes that have been cancelled and this isn't reflected in SEaTS, including ones where the lecturer did not turn up but it's still shown as absent for students.

Staff response - academics should make these changes when a class is cancelled, but students can also request corrections.

Some students also requested for all recordings for all options to be available so students don't feel like they have to miss out based on their choices. Or for students to be added on Canvas so they can see the course materials before choosing their options. Another rep suggested using programme community sites to add videos and materials for options.

Staff response - it's not currently possible to add 'auditing' students on Canvas, though e-learning may be able to provide this in future.

Assessment feedback

There is a general university-wide 'rubric' but some lecturers say that would not use this. But school or programmes should have their own rubric that the lecturers are prepared to use. If points per category are not being shown it can make the grades feel arbitrary. Most students are only seeing comments, not rubrics.

Staff response - there is a lot of discussion about this, but marking is generally a more 'holistic' process, rather than adding up category scores. There's resistance among markers to using that kind of strict system adding up parts of a rubric. However they should be making clear to students how they arrive at the mark. The school is working on more specific rubrics. There has been a learning curve for colleagues with the roll-out of Canvas, including in the use of rubrics. This is an issue which can be raised at individual Programme Committees. There should be a strong 'developmental' focus in comments to allow students to know how to improve their work in future.

Where feedback is lacking one rep had advised peers to go directly to the lecturer and most have found that conversation more useful than additional written feedback would have been.

Is there auditing of feedback at exam boards?

Staff response - Rory – yes, moderators are engaged for all assessments, in addition to an External Examiner. They will look at range of marks in addition to quality of feedback.

Some students have contrasted semester 1 with semester 2 in GDI. The first semester was more 'streamlined' – which classes to go to, which tasks to complete, now in week 3 of semester 2 things seem more 'haywire' and 'all over the place' than semester 1. Some classes are not held by the same lecturer which can make it confusing to identify which module is which.

There is also a delay in marks for some assessments from January. This can be worrying for students. This is across a variety of different assessments.

Staff response - the policy for marking is 15 working days for written assignments. Have you raised this with unit convenors?

Some lecturers have blamed moderators about this.

Specific delays:

- MGDI60601 (submitted 30th Jan)
- MGDI60411 (submitted 15th Jan)

Would like at least for lecturers to share a timeline of when marks will be released. Students use earlier grades and feedback to improve their writing and research skills for later assessments.

For one unit take-home exam dates were released very late in semester 1 and this caused problems for people wanting to travel for Christmas. Can we please get these released earlier. These only came out just before students finished. This also makes planning study for other assessments more difficult. There was also miscommunication around assessments – changing from 1 essay to 2 essays with no deadlines given. We had to wait until questions were released to know where they were released and how much time would be allowed. MGDI60601 again.

Staff response - Rory – the late release can be down to the volume of assessments. This is done centrally.

Marks for many optional modules assessments have not been released yet. Have been told 'take home exams' can take longer to mark. Exams were 15th- 30th Jan but do not have marks for all of them yet.

Group assessments

One module where there are no students from GDI. The lecturer asked students to make their own groups, but the rep didn't know anyone from unit as no-one was there from his programme. He had trouble forming a group and felt this affected his grading. This

particular lecturer was not very reachable either, stated he should email “if it’s something important”.

Staff response - If this is a specific unit it might be something to take to the Programme Director. Or if there are problems with responses from a course unit director then students should go to the Programme Director.

There have been some groups where work was so bad with others that students chose their later units to avoid group work. Because there is not a standardised way to address issues with group engagement many have given up and decided not to choose those units. Has heard in other programmes there is a standardised form for reporting these issues.

Staff response - this does come down to individual unit leaders’ preferences. But it is something to go to Programme Directors with if there are problems. We could look at developing standard practices to offer to unit leaders.

What is the time-frame for responses from the support hub? Some have been asked to send an email then had to wait a long time for responses.

Staff response - this can depend on the issue as sometimes we have to go to colleagues to resolve the issue. We do try to answer within 5 working days.

AI

False positives - this is a huge concern especially with academic writing as AI tends to judge it as being more likely to be written by AI.

Students find it very helpful when it’s explicitly addressed instead of sweeping it away knowing people will use it but not giving guidelines. It can be a really useful tool, which some people do not understand the benefits of.

One student had been using Grammarly to check his writing, but is now worried that this will be restricted as AI use. This is recommended in some places, but not sure if it’s restricted.

Staff response - Rory – Grammarly is *not* restricted. It’s other misuses that are of concern. Something that works as a proofreader is fine. As long as it’s not *generating* text it is fine.

Bo – copilot will be rolled out soon and a comprehensive AI policy is being developed in consultation with the Student Union. This should hopefully be integrated into assessments.

Staff response - Rory asked how many have used AI in their assessments. Most students raised their hands. With the roll-out of CoPilot then staff use will likely increase. We will try to support those less technically inclined colleagues. You may find there is disparity at the moment among teaching staff to their positivity and use towards AI. If you’re concerned about your specific uses then please ask.

Support generally

Support with dissertations – we have a class which talks about how to prepare for dissertations. But the timeline isn't clear for us. We don't have targeted support or guidance on milestones before dissertation supervisors are assigned. Would like for Academic Advisors to also focus on dissertation milestones in their support.

Staff response – we could be more clear on why students would engage with Academic Advisors. We do have a section on Academic Advising in the module that all new teaching staff have to take so their should be a consistent response.

SEED support hub – some classmates tried to contact them by phone and it's never answered. Calling the switchboard they don't connect correctly to the right schools' hubs.

Staff response -we try to answer within 5 rings, but sometimes colleagues are dealing with students face-to-face. You may have to try a couple of times. It's always best to come in person if you can so you get a quicker answer. We can't control the switchboard but you probably have to be specific about which Hub you want to contact.

Dissertations – a lot of students are concerned about who they're getting as their supervisor. To the point where they're tailoring their question to either aim for or avoid a specific supervisor. Is there a way that students can get more agency in their choice?

Staff response - that will depend on your programme. This may not always be possible. But please raise it with PDs so they can accommodate if possible.

Visa check-ins – some students want to write their dissertations at home. They are concerned about July check-ins affecting this.

Staff response - this is a government requirement. You have to be in the country for the whole of the programme. So you have to check-in once during July as there is no teaching at that time. If you submit early you're considered 'finished' and your visa will be revoked. If you wish to travel or go home you have to make that check-in. This can affect post-study work visas. If students have specific concerns or questions they should go to the visa drop-ins – Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00 – 13:00 in the Main Library.

5. Any other business

No other business was raised.

6. Date of next meeting

TBC

7. Actions

Action	Responsible Person / Team
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Create a focus group of students to support the Programme Handbooks project (email to be sent out).	Mo Guilfoyle
Send programme-specific feedback directly to Programme Directors to avoid repetition at committees	IAG/KT
Explore providing full timetables of all optional units for the first two weeks of semester	Rachel Challinor & Rory Stanton
Continue timetable drop-in sessions for the first two weeks of each semester	Programmes Team / Rachel Challinor
Consider publishing first-lecture recordings for each unit	RS to discuss with academic colleagues
Clarify to academic staff they can update SEATs when classes are cancelled; students may request corrections directly	Janice Dodds, Rory Stan
Explore future ability for e-learning to enable Canvas 'auditing' access for students	RS to discuss with e-Learning
Discuss development of more specific and consistent assessment rubrics, as raised by students	Rory Stanton to raise with academic programme teams
Ensure clear communication to students explaining how marks are determined	Rory Stanton & Student Comms
Raise late-marking issues with Unit Convenors	Students to raise; Unit Convenors to act
Staff to communicate with students when marks release will be late	A&P and academic colleagues
Address late release of take-home exam dates at central level	Rory Stanton
Encourage students to attend SEED Hub in person where phone lines are busy	Student Comms with IAG
Provide QR code for the EDI survey.	Laura Goodfellow