

APPROVED

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

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

28 JANUARY 2026

Present: Professor Jenn Hallam (Chair), Professor Andrew Brass, Professor Naomi Chambers (to minute 7), Professor Hannah Cobb, Amrit Dhillon, Dr Jen McBride, Dr Simon Merrywest, Dr Katie Moore, Rhianna Patel, Alec Severs, Professor David Schultz (to minute 7), and Professor Fiona Smyth.

(Secretary's note: Professors Chambers and Schultz' participation was adversely affected by IT issues.)

Apologies: Professor Scott Heath, Professor Andrew Mawdsley, and Professor George Moulton.

In Attendance for minute 7: Professor Stephen Mossman and Sarah Williams.

In Attendance for all items: Paul Brierley (Head of Scheduling), Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer) (observing), Janine Holdway (Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

1 Welcome

Noted: the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer was observing the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

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

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Agreed: to approve the minutes of 13 October 2025, subject to amendments to the attendance and minute 8 Noted c) (to make clear that the timing of NSS actions would be reviewed).

4 Matters Arising

Noted:

- a) the matters arising update;
- b) further to the Committee's June 2025 discussion of the Examinations Past Paper Website, points raised by members regarding the logistics and extent of paper availability would be reviewed and discussed with Schools. **Action: Head of Scheduling**

5 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2025-26

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

6 University of Manchester Students' Union Report

Received: the University of Manchester Students' Union Report: 'A Curriculum and Student Experience fit for the 21st Century'.

Noted:

- a) the report recognised the importance of the TLS system for the student experience, and argued that while the University celebrated the diversity of its student body, the systems and structures that formed students' experiences did not necessarily reflect this. The report put forward a call to action for potential steps to establish a TLS system which was anti-racist by design and not just 'not racist';
- b) the Committee concluded that the report was an insightful and thoughtful consideration of a key issue, and merited further discussion, particularly in terms of establishing a commitment with UMSU to further support institutional anti-racist work at the University, together with associated staff training and curriculum design;
- c) discussion of potential next steps including scope for synergies with Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan activity, and also with work being undertaken on Access and Participation. Linkages were also suggested with the EDI Directorate and the People Directorate, and – at a regional level – ongoing work with partners in the healthcare system.

7 Normative Criteria Framework for Programme Development

Received: the proposed normative criteria framework for programme development.

Noted:

- a) the Committee discussed the proposed normative criteria framework for programme approvals, amendments, and associated consultation processes. The following key points were noted in discussion:
 - i) members highlighted the importance of removing ambiguity within the criteria and guidance documentation;
 - ii) members also recognised that enhanced clarity of information would help to provide assurance to Senate regarding programme development decision-making processes at Faculty and School level. Under the proposals, Senate would receive a more detailed regular update on programme development activity;
 - iii) the absence of a University-wide standard definition of consultation, and the potential adverse effect of this in terms of restricting consistency of approach.
 - iv) it was suggested that the programme approval and amendment processes should not disproportionately disadvantage particular student or staff groups. This would be reflected in the programme documentation and criteria;
 - v) there was an appetite to streamline the programme amendment multi-step approach, particularly for minor changes. Agile processes would ensure that staff were not overburdened, while continuing to provide Senate with due diligence and assurance;
 - vi) members considered the scope for aligning communications, and the alignment of the proposed framework to existing guidance. Enhanced transparency would facilitate a shift in culture, enabling earlier conversations and decision-making, and strategic oversight of programme development, including links to the M2035 Strategy;
 - vii) the use of technology and innovation was discussed and would be considered further, including the use of AI for deep dives. This would be explored at a future meeting of the Committee and would be added to the Committee's Forward Agenda. **Action:**
Governance Manager

Agreed: to recommend the normative criteria framework for programme development to Senate for approval, subject to minor amendments.

8 Annual Report Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Cases

Received: the Annual Report Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Cases 2024-25.

Noted:

- a) it was noted that complaints had decreased overall in recent years, reflecting the significant work undertaken to mitigate underlying issues;
- b) the data indicated that the proportion of faculty and academic appeals upheld was 35% for Chinese students and 22% for white students, and the approach to these appeals would be

considered in terms of appropriateness and equitability. The 2023-24 data would be examined to determine whether any year-on-year patterns were emerging. **Action:**

Executive Director for the Student Experience In terms of education and training, there was a high volume of appeals submitted by Chinese students, indicating a need for further analysis. It was also observed that the current data may be underreported in some areas;

- c) a minor amendment would be made to Section 6. Fitness to Practise, reference to “human” will be corrected to “neuroscience”, and the reported figure of 19 UG fitness to practice cases heard at school level would be verified; **Action: Executive Director for the Student Experience**
- d) UMSU representatives raised concerns regarding the volume of accommodation related complaints, particularly in relation to maintenance issues, questioning why such a high number originated from a single site. However, overall complaint levels had decreased and this may relate to the potential impact of recent demolition activity-related complaints, particularly in relation to maintenance issues.

9 **University Regulations and Associated Policy for Dual and Joint Awards and recognition of Associated Awards**

Received: the University Regulations and Associated Policy for Dual and Joint Awards and recognition of Associated Awards.

Noted:

- a) sector practice had been reviewed prior to the consultation process for the proposed new regulations and policy;
- b) dual degrees constituted a distinct category of award. A single overarching dual degree framework would be embedded within the University’s degree regulations as the University did not currently have the regulatory mechanisms to award a Dual Degree;
- c) any changes made by a partner institution should be formally communicated to the University. This requirement would be written into agreements, with clear communication channels defined. The University would maintain complete records of all partnership arrangements. In principle, partner institutions must accept the University’s academic offer rather than seek to alter it, particularly for the development of new Dual Degrees. A review of existing Dual Degree programmes would be undertaken to assess alignment with the new framework;
- d) the Committee discussed the distinctions between dual awards and joint awards. The framework would be amended to help to define the distinction. **Action: Head of Teaching and Learning Delivery** Ethical considerations were raised around how partnerships were governed, in pharmacy and international collaborations, especially in geo-politically sensitive locations.

Agreed: to recommend the University Regulations and Associated Policy for Dual and Joint Awards to Senate for approval, subject to minor amendments.

10 **Consideration for rescission of a degree**

Received: a verbal update on a case for considering the rescission of a degree award.

Noted:

- a) the Chair provided an overview of a process being undertaken to rescind a degree. A panel had been formed, including a small number of members of AQSC (TLS), and had convened to consider the reasonableness of the Independent Review Committee’s recommendation to rescind the degree. The panel had considered whether the recommendation was proportionate to the concerns raised, and had found that the graduate had a requirement to update the University regarding their practise, along with significant concerns around being unlicensed to practise with their medical degree. The panel supported the recommendation to rescind the degree and replace it with an non-practising award of BMedSci;

- b) the University had an appropriate duty of care to the graduate. Welfare checks had been made;
- c) since the graduate had not attended the panel hearing, they had been given an opportunity to provide any short-written submissions they wished the sub-group to consider before communicating its outcome.

Agreed: to recommend the rescission of the degree to Senate, for recommending to the Board for approval.

11 NSS Action Plan

Received: verbal updates on the NSS Action Plan by the Faculty Vice-Deans for Teaching, Learning and Students.

Noted: That progress was being made by each Faculty against the NSS Action Plan.