

Meeting Minutes

Teaching Sustainability Languages Subgroup meeting

26th February 2026

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Fiona Devine (Chair), Lexy Cummins, Gemma Gaffney, Emma Wilson, Julia Dobson, Tom Woerner Powell, Huw Twiston-Davies, Thomas Schmidt, Jayne Hindle, Isobel Morgan, Elizabeth McCullough, Sandra Torres (until 2:40pm) and Hannah Jordan (Secretary)

Apologies: Fiona Smyth, Emma Rose and Christina Collier

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

Julia Dobson provided an update on her recent meeting with the Head of Languages for All. The meeting was described as very productive and positive, with no formal commitments made but strong confidence expressed in the model. The approach is supported by tried-and-tested partnerships, a stable structure, and evidence of effective collaboration elsewhere. Key points as follows:

- Explored the possibility of forming a Greater Manchester cohort by involving institutions across the region.
- Discussed that Manchester would need to design its own version of this model to reflect the regional mix of 11–16 schools and sixth-form colleges.
- Leonie Ratty from the Reach Foundation agreed to raise this proposal with headteachers and within existing regional collaborations during her upcoming meetings.
- Michael Slavinsky, Head of Languages for All will prepare and send a concept note outlining how such a model could work in Greater Manchester.
- Initial modelling work will identify suitable areas for an early pilot, with the potential to consider formal commitment for the 2027/28 academic year.
- Julia Dobson to provide another update at the next meeting.

[Action Log - Taskforce.xlsx](#)

4. Chair's update

- Senate endorsed the umbrella model for languages at the 11 February meeting.
- The Chair expressed thanks to all colleagues for the substantial effort and continued hard work involved in bringing the umbrella model fruition.
- Senate approved the proposed Normative Criteria Framework for programme development at the 11 February meeting.
- The next step is to determine how the framework is applied at Faculty level. FD, LC, FS and ER are meeting with Jenn Hallam and colleagues in the Governance Office w/c 2 March to discuss ahead of the 22 April Senate meeting.

5. Umbrella model: *update*

- Elizabeth McCullough is working on the marketing pages and has asked Programme Directors to review the subject-level information to ensure it aligns accurately with the detailed assessments.
- Preparations are underway for communications to students regarding the launch, alongside consideration of additional channels to share the information more broadly.

- The MLC Away Day, scheduled for early June, will include discussions on developing the umbrella model further and addressing related strategic priorities.
- The online prospectus is going live, and updated course profiles will support activity for National Careers Week next week and the Manchester UCAS Fair, aimed at engaging students at the early stages of their course exploration.
- A series of three student-focused videos, featuring current students discussing key aspects of core programmes, will be ready by mid-March and will serve as an effective means of conveying information. Elizabeth McCullough to share these with the group for information. **Action EM**
- Ben Cawley has been shaping messaging for current students. Work is continuing on how best to communicate with prospective 2026 entrants, but the central recruitment team have been briefed so they can confidently address questions and explain that these changes aim to simplify provision while maintaining the breadth of the offer.
- Julia Dobson queried whether current students on withdrawn programmes had been notified. Emma Wilson and Gemma Gaffney will review and confirm whether communications have previously been issued to students, however this is likely as it is part of the BAU process. **Action Emma Wilson/Gemma Gaffney**

6. ***LEAP: presentation and discussion***

- Director of LEAP, Dr Sandra Torres presented to the Subgroup: [LEAP_presentation_TS Group.pptx](#)
- LEAP is an integral part of MLC, with tutors frequently teaching across both LEAP and degree programmes.
- The team continues to manage significant operational challenges, including handling more than 2,000 applications each year.
- Some automated systems have been introduced to support this workload, however, LEAP currently lacks dedicated IT support and relies on internal skills that fall outside existing job descriptions.
- The automated system in use depends on programmes not supported by IT Services, and it was noted that LEAP would benefit from having a stable, dedicated team to support enrolment and system maintenance.
- The group discussed the external visibility of LEAP and the potential value of creating a separate public-facing landing page, which targets primarily students and internal users. It was agreed that even a small investment could significantly enhance accessibility and reach.
- LEAP is the only area where admissions and enrolments are handled outside the central Admissions team, and the reason for this is unclear. The arrangement places considerable pressure on colleagues Jayne Hindle noted she will take this away and discuss with the admissions team and Hannah Cousins. **Action JH**
- There is no dedicated LEAP administrative team, and the single colleague who works on LEAP is on a fixed-term contract, presenting a high-risk staffing issue. Jayne Hindle will bring proposal to VMG to address this. **Action JH**
- The Chair advised Thomas Schmidt to contact with Caroline Hargreaves and PJ Hemmingway to explore how LEAP could integrate with existing University systems. Although Power Automate is used in Teaching & Learning, including LEAP, it is not supported by the University. Concerns were also raised about potential security risks due to the lack of IT support. Thomas Schmidt will escalate these matters and discuss them with Caroline and PJ. **Action TS**
- It was discussed that further work on search engine optimisation would be valuable. Other institutions have greater visibility, and improved keyword and traffic analysis could strengthen LEAP's online presence. The group discussed how web copy could be crafted to optimise visibility in AI-generated search summaries going forward. Elizabeth McCullough to look into this. **Action EM**
- Income generated from LEAP is reinvested into the school. LEAP teaching and staffing are now aligned, but there is a need for enhanced data analysis, including: the proportion of external vs. internal learners, income breakdown, programme popularity, growth areas, competitive positioning locally, regionally and nationally.
- It was noted that LEAP is the only provider offering in-person German classes in the Northwest. Current estimates suggest 30–35% of participants are members of the public.
- Opportunities exist to expand online LEAP offerings, including interest from HCRI. The group emphasised the importance of addressing challenges while also planning to maximise future

opportunities. LC suggested that potential partnerships with external companies (e.g., Siemens) could be explored to support new learning opportunities.

- A dedicated webpage with a bespoke email address for enquiries could improve visibility and create a more attractive “front door” for prospective learners. It was, however, acknowledged that webpages alone are insufficient and proactive outreach is also needed.

7. **Admissions**

- Huw-Twiston Davies presented an update on admissions, using data from the admissions report: [MLC Admissions Report.docx](#)
- It was noted that the data included in the submitted report was accurate at the time of writing but may no longer be fully up to date, as figures are changing rapidly at this stage in the cycle.
- Last year was a strong year for PGT across SALC, leading to larger apparent decreases this year. Current figures for PGT in MLC are broadly similar to the cycle before last, with 38 students against a target of 97 at this early point.
- The sector is experiencing turbulence in PGT recruitment, which is also affecting MLC.
- The Masters Expo on campus is scheduled for 25 March. Promotion is underway, and the event is expected to be a valuable opportunity to encourage applications in what is a relatively small home market.
- UG applications are up this year, with 1,577 applications above last year’s figures. Offer numbers have also increased. However, this increase has not yet translated into a higher number of acceptances. Acceptances appear to be happening later in the cycle this year, which may partially explain the pattern.
- All programmes have received applications.
- Variations remain across individual programmes, but growth is broadly distributed across the portfolio.
- The school continues to see year-on-year increases in the size of the overall UG cohort.
- Smaller degree programmes show lower numbers of applications and offers at this stage, which is typical for smaller-scale provision.
- Mid- to late-March is expected to bring a significant number of acceptances or declines with “Decline by default” decisions happening by May. A further report will be provided at the next meeting.
- A discussion took place about market share and whether the school is maintaining its position. MLC advised to contact Market Insights team to provide relevant data.
- For languages, Manchester was ranked second behind Edinburgh.
- We will continue to monitor students recruitment closely going forward. Huw will bring a further update to the next meeting. **Action HTD**

8. **RAID**

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

9. **Communications**

- The new Humanities Course Unit Framework and accompanying guide are due to be launched imminently on the Teaching Academy SharePoint site.
- Work is ongoing with Lexy Cummins and other colleagues on a message from Fiona Smyth to be issued to academics and relevant leaders across the schools to support the launch.
- Colleagues will be asked to familiarise themselves with the documentation as part of the initial communication. Implementation will take place over a five-year period and led by Directors of Teaching and Learning. **Action all**
- Fiona Smyth is scheduled to present the Framework at Faculty Leadership Forum on 4 March.
- The immediate priority is the launch communications and further resources will follow.
- Ben Cawley to that Schools can use consistently when communicating about the framework. **Action: BC**

Summary of actions and decisions

| ACTION/DECISION | DESCRIPTION | OWNER | DEADLINE |
|------------------------|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Action 260226-114 | Julia Dobson to provide a further update on Languages for all at the next meeting | JD | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-115 | Elizabeth McCullough to share student focused-videos featuring current students discussing key aspects of core programmes with the group for information. | EM | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-116 | W and GG to review that students have been informed throughout regarding potential changes and withdrawals. | EW/GG | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-117 | Jayne Hindle to discuss admissions process for LEAP with admissions team and Hannah Cousins. | JH | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-118 | Jayne Hindle will bring proposal to VMG to address the staffing risk with Fixed term contract in LEAP administrative team. | JH | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-119 | Thomas Schmidt will escalate concerns on LEAP's lack of IT support and security risk Caroline and PJ. | TS | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-120 | Elizabeth McCullough to pick up work on search engine optimisation and visibility for LEAP's online presence. | EM | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-121 | Huw Twiston-Davies will bring a further admissions update to the next meeting. | HTD | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-122 | Colleagues are required to familiarise themselves with the documentation for Course Unit Framework | All | Next meeting |
| Action 260226-123 | BC to draft an agreed wording that schools can use when discussed the framework. | BC | Next meeting |