

## **School of Environment, Education and Development**

**Faculty of Humanities**

**SEED Programme Committee:** HDD cluster Global Development Institute

**Date:** Wednesday 25 March 2026

**Time:** 13:00 – 14:00

**Location:** William 2.79 [Hybrid with [Teams](#)]

Please send any queries to [seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:seed.hub@manchester.ac.uk)

### **AGENDA**

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Staff present: Richard Duncombe (Chair, Cluster Lead), William Start (minutes), Richard Heeks (MSc Management and Information Systems: Change and Development (Distance Learning) and MSc Digital Development Programme Director), Jaco Renken ((MSc Management and Information Systems: Change and Development (Distance Learning) Programme Director), Shirley Jenner (Reader in International Management and Development), Natalie Cunningham (Senior Lecturer in Leadership For Development), Kelechi Ekuma (MSc Human Resource Development (International Development) Programme Director), Jonathan Lillie (Senior Technical Operations Manager), Mapenzie Tausie (Lecturer in Human Resources Development)

Reps present: Cok Marlene Purtri (MSc Digital Development rep), Habeebah Farouq (MSc Management and Information Systems: Change & Development rep)

Apologies for absence: Zixi Xue (MSc Management and Information Systems: Change & Development rep), Rory Stanton (Senior Lecturer), Negar Monazam Tabrizi (Senior Lecturer)

#### 2. Introductions

#### 3. Minutes/Actions of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. Feedback from the last meeting was responded to in that meeting. No actions arose.

#### 4. Rep feedback

## MSc Human Resources Development:

What's working well – timetabling has been well organised and easy to follow. The teaching materials are well integrated in the lectures. Students appreciate the support from the dissertation hotline and handbook.

Matters for consideration – it would be beneficial to incorporate more practical skills eg CIPD accreditation (these are present in AMBS). It would be helpful if the programme could share extracts from academic papers that could help students to understand academic writing standards. To showcase exemplary dissertations from past students to help students understand what good writing is.

Staff response (Kelechi) – practical skills – we've done quite a lot this semester. We are trying to embed employability into the curriculum, but this takes time. We have organised two events but there was not significant engagement from HRD students. There was also a practical skills workshop organised with the careers workshop, and a careers fair. That was well attended. We will continue to work with relevant parts of the university to embed employability.

(Shirley) – Natalie has encouraged work on practical skills. There are some workshops upcoming on mentoring skills and interpersonal skills.

(Kelechi) – sharing previous assessments. We reviewed a lot of assessments in previous years, which means that the assessments we have now are more practice driven so there would not be much value in sharing previous essays as they would not match the current assessments. We do share some extracts which should illustrate good dissertation practice on Canvas. However this would be down to course unit convenors.

(Richard H) we do provide some essays for digital governance but in the past weaker students have relied on those a bit too heavily. This year for the first time none of them did, but this may be due partly to the advent of AI.

(Kelechi) – CIPD integration – the programme is not accredited by the CIPD. It's a development programme, not a management programme. The business school has this because it's relevant to what they teach. To get this we would have to introduce a lot of modules which would not be relevant to the programme. We do encourage students to attend CIPD activities and their annual conference. On a personal level you could reach out to them to see what help you can get towards their qualifications, but we are not able to do this as a programme.

(Richard D) – on the subject of example papers this will be down to individual course convenors to decide whether this is appropriate. You should approach them directly.

## MSc Digital Development:

Benefits - Students appreciated that the courses offered have a balance between theoretical and practical knowledge. They think it's quite useful for future employment skills. They are happy with the assessment feedback.

Concerns – regarding dissertation preparation, a lot of them feel they have a hard time preparing for the outline submission deadline. They feel they have to prepare it well, but they have a hard time applying what's been taught to the outline. Perhaps we could have a consistent discussion with their supervisors on topic selection and narrowing down whether their data is available or not. A 'milestone' doesn't need to start from the beginning but maybe after the field trip in South Africa. Group work evaluation – some people are concerned still that there is not a peer evaluation. With regards to AI some people prefer to have basic tutorials on how to use it in assignments, but others are quite open to have AI course modules eg AI in development, as well as career-based skills.

Staff response (Richard H) – dissertation supervision allocations should happen next week so there will be an opportunity to meet with supervisors prior to the RSD assignment. I do agree it would be a good idea to build in an advisory appointment somewhere around the end of February/ beginning of March. (Reps indicated that students began to think about this in the middle of February. Others were getting busy with this in March). We could offer this but not require it. This is the first year I can remember when all supervisions will be undertaken by university-based HDD members of staff.

MSc Management and Information Systems: Change & Development: students like ITC in practice as it's more practical. Students involved with product management held a meeting and seemed to like this. Some students had concerns around the dissertation process, they don't like that the supervisors are not allocated yet.. They are unsure whether their proposed topics are too broad or not suitable.

Staff response – (Richard D) – there seems to be an ongoing issue where students like a balance between theoretical and practical skills. I've spoken to a number of my academic advisees about their dissertation topics, and that option is always there. Please do let students know about this. The topic that you submit is often quite general, which you can refine when you meet with your supervisor. It's not set in stone, though we would encourage students to stick to a similar topic.

(Jaco) – asked students if they received a briefing about developing their research proposal during the research methods unit. That should help to reduce anxiety around topic selection. How effective was that? Previously dissertation briefings were made during the fieldwork, but we made the decision to delay and do it during classes. (Students were able to discuss topics during their research methods course. But when they start working on it they realise they need to narrow down further. Students would like guidance on this). Jaco had previously created a video specifically on narrowing down your topic, but students had not received this. He offered to share that with students.

(Shirley) – perhaps the timeline for assigning supervisors and submitting topics needs bringing forward a little. (Students believed this was supposed to be earlier but it was extended. They appreciate not having the deadline early)

(Richard D) – do you remember when you first got access to the dissertation handbook (it was after January).

#### 5. Any other business

Shirley – passed across infographic showing ‘your journey through the year’. We wondering where you are with why you joined us, and where you’re going with employment. I have got some time dedicated during the summer to go over your responses to our survey and we’ve only had 5 respondents. This is so we can better understand your lives on campus, improving employability etc, we need to know what you think and feel so that what we do can really meet your needs. As reps can you please pass on the survey (emailed this morning) to your peers. Any help you can give to get this out to your peers would be appreciated. We are happy to share the results once they are available. There will be a draw for ‘love2shop’ vouchers, as well as a paid focus group.

#### 6. Date of next meeting

TBC

#### 7. Actions

Richard Heeks – arrange an advisory meeting in future years for Digital Development in February/ March to give students a chance to begin discussion their dissertation topics.

Jaco Renken – to share video on narrowing dissertation topics with students.

Reps – to share Shirley’s survey with their peers.