

School of Environment, Education and Development

Faculty of Humanities

DRAFT MINUTES

SEED Programme Committee: DEPP Cluster Global Development Institute

Date: 25th March, 2026

Time: 16:00 – 17:00

Location: Online Zoom Meeting

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

MINUTES

Staff Attendees:

Yinfang Zhang (Co-Director MSc International Development: Public Policy & Management)

David Fielding (Programme Director MSc International Development: Public Policy and Management)

Sophie Van Huellen

Cristobal Ruiz- Tagle

Isha Shetty (IAG, taking minutes)

Reps in attendance:

Yueyang Ding (MSc Development Finance)

Medhawi Rajgaria (MSc Development Economics and Policy)

Weronika Sural (MSc International Development: Public Policy and Management)

Gagan Maileshwar (MSc Development Economics and Policy)

1. Introductions

Introductions around the room.

2. Rep Consultation

- **Dissertation research methods:** Students on the Public Policy & Management programme noted that, while a workshop had been provided on quantitative research methods, some students would also benefit from a workshop on qualitative research methods for dissertation preparation. Academics noted that

this may also be relevant to students on Development Finance, and that student demand should be established before exploring whether a workshop could be arranged.

- **Group projects:** Students raised concerns about uneven participation in group work assignments. It was suggested that Programme Directors be consulted on whether differential marking within group assessments may be possible. It was also agreed that further information should be gathered from students to identify which assessments are most problematic and what specific issues are arising in group work.
- **AI and practical skills:** Students requested more practical skills development, particularly around AI, and asked for more opportunities to engage with AI in both academic work and future professional practice. Academics noted that new assessment formats are being considered in which the use of AI would be actively encouraged in specific sections.
- **Examinations and dissertation preparation:** Development Economics & Policy students reported that Semester 1 examinations were generally satisfactory, with clear expectations and no clashes in exam scheduling. However, some students continued to feel uncertain and underprepared regarding the dissertation, even after the dissertation workshop. Academics noted that this is a common concern at this stage and that support from supervisors usually helps once dissertation work begins.
- **Careers and guest speakers:** Students expressed interest in more skills-based workshops and career guidance. Guest lectures and alumni sessions in Semester 1 were seen as valuable, but students noted that these had significantly reduced in Semester 2. Students also commented that the recent SEED Careers Fair did not include a sufficiently diverse range of panels and did not feel closely aligned to their sectors of interest.
- **Development Finance:** No major concerns or new feedback were reported by Development Finance students. However, it was noted that these students should also be consulted on likely demand for qualitative research support for dissertations.

Summary of Action Lists

Action Number	Action	Lead	Deadline	Status/Notes
1	Establish demand for a qualitative research workshop among PPM and DF students undertaking qualitative dissertations.	YZ / DF Programme Team	ASAP	Email to be sent to students to confirm likely uptake.
2	Explore whether a qualitative research workshop can be arranged, including contacting David Lawson and considering support from another cluster or outside the University.	YZ	ASAP	Feasibility to be checked, noting that workshop scheduling may already be advanced.
3	Consult Programme Directors on whether differential marking within group assessments.	YZ	ASAP	Follow-up also needed to identify which assessments

				and issues are causing concern.
4	Gather further student feedback on problematic group assessments and the nature of non-participation in group work.	TBC	ASAP	To inform any future response on assessment design and marking.
5	Survey lecturers regarding the use of guest lectures/alumni sessions and any associated payment issues.	TBC	ASAP	To better understand the reduction in guest input in Semester 2.
6	Email David Lawson regarding ODI events.	TBC	ASAP	Follow-up requested in response to student interest in careers and external engagement.