

*APPROVED*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

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

**11 MARCH 2026**

**Present:** Professor Jenn Hallam (Chair), Professor Rob Appleby, Professor Andrew Brass, Professor Naomi Chambers, Amrit Dhillon, Professor Sarah Dyer (to minute 9), Professor Scott Heath, Professor Rebecca Hodgson, Dr Jen McBride, Professor Andrew Mawdsley, Dr Simon Merrywest (from minute 6), Dr Katie Moore, Professor George Moulton, Rhianna Patel, Professor David Schultz (to minute 9), Alec Severs, and Professor Fiona Smyth.

**Apologies:** Professor Hannah Cobb.

**In Attendance for all items:** Paul Brierley (Head of Scheduling), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), Sarah Williams (Teaching and Learning Manager), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

**1 Welcome**

**Noted:** the Chair welcomed the following new members:

Professor Rob Appleby (Associate Vice-President for Students), Professor Sarah Dyer (Associate Vice-President for Teaching Excellence and Innovation), Professor Scott Heath (Faculty Vice-Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Faculty of Science and Engineering)), and Professor Rebecca Hodgson (Associate Vice-President for Curriculum and Quality).

**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 28 January 2026.

**4 Matters Arising**

**Noted:**

- a) the matters arising update;
- b) further to the actions arising from the 28 January and 25 June meetings, relating to the exam past papers website, all issues were being addressed. The SU Faculty Officers confirmed that the exam past papers website would be useful. Further work would be undertaken on the website and an update would be provided to Committee members. **Action: Associate Vice-President (Curriculum and Quality)/Head of Scheduling**
- c) the SU Faculty Officer (FSE) had observed an anti-racist teaching session and would share reflections with the Committee. **Action: SU Faculty Officer (FSE)**

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

**Noted:**

- a) the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students) Forward Agenda;
- b) members were invited to provide items for the Forward Agenda to the Governance Manager.  
**Action: Committee Members**

**6 University of Manchester Students' Union Report**

**Received:** the University of Manchester Students' Union Report: An Introduction to EducateMCR 2026 data.

**Noted:**

- a) an introduction to the initial data from the EducateMCR Survey was provided. The survey ran on an annual basis and focused on the academic experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- b) it was recognised that assessment and feedback results were continuing to improve;
- c) a demographic breakdown would be available at a later date, and would include a breakdown by fee level, home and commuter students, international students, and gender;
- d) the Research and Insight Team were updating the Power BI dashboard. The data would be shared when finalised, with a summary report and findings by School; **Action: SU Faculty Officers**
- e) the trends over the last three years of the survey would be considered. The survey results for 2024 and 2025 would be circulated, followed by 2026 when available. **Action: SU Faculty Officers**
- f) concern was raised that the survey had received responses from only 7% of the student population. Members discussed how promotion activities for EducateMCR could be targeted and supported for 2027. It was noted that the survey ran concurrently with the NSS survey;
- g) the Teaching, Learning and Students Committee (TLSC) and Communications Team were working on a sequence of communications to students to provide maximum engagement via a range of media. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee as part of the commitment to engage the student voice. **Action: Vice-President for TLS/Chair of TLSC** The item would be added to the Committee's Forward Agenda. **Action: Governance Manager**
- h) the Committee would welcome a further discussion on student outcome data. The Head of Access, Student Employability, Success and Development would be invited to provide an update to a future meeting; **Action: Governance Manager**
- i) curriculum design was a key focus, particularly personalisation and inclusive by design with targeted DASS resources;
- j) an understanding of the complementarity in data gained from the EducateMCR and the NSS surveys would be useful;
- k) 30% of the students undertaking the survey had provided comments on assessment design, clarity and feedback which had resulted in 82% satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of assessment methods on their course. The balance of the variety of assessment methods was noted;
- l) the SU Faculty Officer (FHums) raised the need for support in relation to student living conditions, linked with Professional Services support in Teaching and Learning. A separate discussion would be held on Assessment and Feedback which should be fully integrated. **Action: Vice-President TLS/Executive Director for the Student Experience**

**7 Normative Criteria Framework for Programme Development Update**

**Received:** an update on the proposed normative criteria framework for programme development.

**Noted:**

- a) the 11 February Senate had approved the proposed Normative Criteria Framework for programme development, subject to a review after 12 months. The establishment of the Framework represented a new way of working, in an open and transparent manner that recorded the work and dialogue as part of current programme development processes. It was agreed that Senate would be provided (via AQSC TLS) with: 1) guidelines and worked examples to demonstrate how the framework should be followed and the template completed, and 2) further commentary on governance aspects of programme development and the suggestion made at Senate of a "Senate Brake" being established.
- b) the Committee focussed on the requirement to provide assurance to Senate that the processes were transparent and robust, while maintaining agility in line with the M2035 Strategy. The following key points were noted in discussion:

- i) Senate would need to receive clear evidence that the processes had been followed and consultation undertaken. Disagreements, particularly in contentious cases, would need to be recorded and handled transparently;
- ii) the main areas of focus would include programme withdrawals and significant amendments to programmes. Senate would not review minor amendments or operational detail;
- iii) enhanced narrative would be provided to Senate for the small proportion of contentious cases. A high-level overview would be presented where no concerns existed;
- iv) the current documentation required revision to ensure it captured details of disagreements and counter-proposals, and how the issues had been resolved;  
**Action: Teaching and Learning Manager**
- v) worked examples would be developed to illustrate the information Senate could expect to review, including the consultation undertaken, the nature of recorded disagreements and counter-arguments, and final resolution and rationale. The examples would be hypothetical or illustrative initially with a longer-term aim to provide real examples to Senate; **Action: Teaching and Learning Manager**
- vi) the programme approval and amendment documentation would be updated to clarify the information required and make expectations explicit for those completing the forms. The core forms would remain the same with additional information to be captured; **Action: Teaching and Learning Manager**
- vii) the purpose of the documentation was to provide Senate with confidence that robust processes had been followed, and due diligence had been properly documented;
- viii) there was currently no consistent approach to recording disagreement, although particular attention was given to disagreements arising from withdrawals and major amendments. The word 'contentious' was perceived differently across the Faculties;
- ix) the guidance would be updated to clarify the information that would be required, and what Senate could expect to review;
- x) the Senate Brake proposal would be an exceptional mechanism allowing Senate to pause programme development delivery if significant concern arose. The purpose would be to consider whether due process had been followed and to provide assurance;
- xi) the Brake could be triggered by a member of Senate raising significant concern, with supporting evidence. The escalation route would be to the Vice-President for TLS, via the Governance Office;
- xii) concern was raised about constrained timelines, as delays could disrupt advertising and CMA compliance, and there could be a risk of delaying programmes that had been advertised;
- xiii) the wording required strengthening to clarify 1) the purpose, 2) threshold for use, and 3) timescale for resolution; **Action: Teaching and Learning Manager**
- xiv) the programme tracker was currently released to Senate two weeks in advance of the meetings. Consideration would be given to determining whether earlier visibility would help to manage concerns. There was a need to ensure alignment between the tracker, advertising, consultation and reporting to Senate.

## 8 Policy Review

**Received:** the Teaching and Learning Delivery Policy Review Cycle 2025-26.

### **Noted:**

- a) the Policy Review Cycle and progress on several ongoing policy projects for the 2025-26 academic year;
- b) minor amendments were proposed to the 2026 Degree Regulations;
- c) it was acknowledged that a number of policies were complicated and would benefit from being simplified. The Committee would need to consider how to approach this. A review of sector practice would need to be undertaken;

**Agreed:** to approve the minor amendment to:

- a) Section B of the 2026 Taught Degree Regulations to resolve the incompatibility of existing Faculty of Humanities provision;
- b) G33 (Undergraduate Regulations and I33 (Postgraduate Taught Regulations) to ensure deferral and referral students are treated equitably.

## 9 AI Policy

**Received:** AI in Teaching and Learning Policy.

### **Noted:**

- a) an overview of the creation of a new AI in Teaching and Learning Policy, which had been developed by a newly established working group, chaired by the Associate Vice-President for Teaching Excellence and Innovation;
- b) clear communication to students would be necessary, explaining why the restrictions were in place, particularly concerning the use of AI in assessment;
- c) the level of AI use would need to be clarified, i.e. 1) when AI could not be used, 2) when AI could be used minimally (e.g. spell-checking, grammar), and 3) when AI use could be more substantial;
- d) the Policy needed to be visible on a webpage that was accessible to students; **Action: Associate Vice-President for Teaching Excellence and Innovation**
- e) the SU Faculty Officer (FHums) raised the use of AI in group work and the additional responsibility and time pressure this could incur for students. There was also a need for clarity to enable students to make an informed choice during module selection if the use of AI was mandatory;
- f) peer conversations would be key to the ethical use of AI, including peer challenge within work groups and with staff. There would be additional work for the Faculties and Schools in maintaining a risk register of ethical issues raised in relation to AI;
- g) there would be a need for clarity around potential disciplinary action;
- h) staff and students would need to be prepared to use AI in the workplace. The SU Faculty Officer (FSE) raised concerns around the lack of optionality for students around choice of using AI;
- i) further consideration would be given to the timeline for planned engagement with students; **Action: Associate Vice-President for Teaching Excellence and Innovation**
- j) it was acknowledged that the new Policy was a starting point and revisions would be made in advance of its presentation to Senate. The Committee members would have the opportunity to provide further comment and another iteration of the Policy would be developed.

**Agreed:** that members would have the opportunity to provide further comment on the new AI Policy in advance of its presentation to Senate.

## 10 Any other business

**Noted:** A verbal update on a new Postgraduate Award in AMBS. The Award would be a 30 credit external award and would be in place by April 2026. The programme would be presented to Senate for approval and would align with the M2035 Strategy. Committee members were asked to share examples of similar awards to create a profile for the award which could be used as a generic example in future.