



The University of Manchester

## **HUMANITIES FACULTY EXECUTIVE FACULTY EXECUTIVE**

**Minutes dated: 8 September 2026**

**Members Present:** Alvin Birdi (AB), Claire Alexander (CA Chair), Dimitris Papadimitriou (DP), Emma Rose (ER), Fiona Lynch (FL), James Evans (JE), Kathryn Howard (KH), Kenneth McPhail (KP), Khalid Nadvi (KN), Suzanne Cotterill (SC), Vicky Skinner (VS)

**Apologies:** Fiona Devine (FD), Fiona Smyth (FS), Maggie Gale (MG)

**In attendance for all items:** Steph Beck (SB - Secretary)

**In attendance for:** Item 4 NSS Action Plan Progress Review Christopher Godden (CG) and Item 5 Confirmation and Clearing Update Amanda Grimshaw (AG)

| Item | Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| 1.   | <b>Welcome and apologies and review of Terms of Reference</b><br><b>Noted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) apologies from Fiona Devine, Fiona Smyth and Maggie Gale;</li><li>b) Alvin Birdi and James Evans were welcomed as new members of Faculty Executive;</li><li>c) the revised Terms of Reference and meeting arrangements for 2026/27; and</li><li>d) the proposed approach to publishing concise Faculty Executive minutes to support transparency and communication.</li></ul><br><b>Agreed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) to approve the revised Terms of Reference for 2026/27; and</li><li>b) to adopt the proposed approach to publication of Faculty Executive minutes.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2.   | <b>Strategic Options for the Faculty Response to YVM 2026</b><br><b>Received:</b> a paper setting out proposed strategic options for the Faculty response to the 2026 Your Voice Matters (YVM) survey.<br><br><b>Noted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the key themes emerging from the 2026 YVM results and the relationship between Faculty-level and local School/Faculty Office action planning;</li><li>b) the opportunity for a Faculty-level approach to address common themes while complementing activity already underway locally;</li><li>c) the importance of clear communication and engagement with colleagues as actions were developed and implemented; and</li><li>d) the need for clear ownership, measures of success and appropriate reporting arrangements for Faculty-level activity.</li></ul><br><b>Agreed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) to trial a Faculty-level YVM Action Plan for 2026/27;</li><li>b) that the Faculty-wide priorities would be Managing and Leading through Change (Kenneth McPhail) and Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination/Culture (Dimitris Papadimitriou)</li><li>c) that Career Development and Progression would be included as an additional Professional Services priority; and</li><li>d) that delivery plans would be developed for the agreed priorities, with appropriate sponsorship, leadership, milestones and measures of success.</li></ul> |

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| 3. | <b>Minute redacted due to commercial confidentiality.</b> |
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Minute redacted due to commercial confidentiality.

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| 4. | <b>NSS Action Plan Progress Review</b> |
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**Received:** an update on the 2026 National Student Survey (NSS) results and the proposed approach to Faculty improvement activity.

**Noted:**

- a) the overall Humanities position and improvements achieved across the Faculty;
- b) that the proposed Faculty approach would focus on a small number of core areas where meaningful and measurable improvement could be achieved;
- c) the importance of appropriate benchmarking in assessing performance and identifying opportunities for improvement;
- d) that existing expectations relating to assessment, feedback and the provision of information to students would continue to be supported and monitored through established School and Faculty arrangements; and
- e) that longer-term improvement would be aligned, where possible, with existing curriculum, programme and student experience activity.

**Agreed:**

- a) to support the proposed focused approach to NSS improvement activity, centred on three priority areas:
  - 1. Assessment and Feedback – strengthening communication around assessment expectations, skills and employability, and appropriate AI guidance;
  - 2. Student Voice – continuing opportunities for students to provide feedback during units and strengthening engagement between students and School leadership; and
  - 3. Joint Programmes – improving student communications, clarity of support and liaison arrangements, and opportunities for student voice and engagement.
- b) that activity should, where appropriate, be integrated with existing programme, curriculum and student experience work;
- c) that progress would continue to be monitored through the Faculty's Teaching, Learning and Student Experience governance arrangements and reported to Faculty Executive as appropriate; and
- d) that further benchmarking and sharing of effective practice would be undertaken to inform ongoing Faculty improvement activity.

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| 5. | <b>Confirmation and Clearing Update</b> |
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**Received:** an update on undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment, Confirmation and Clearing for the 2026/27 intake.

**Noted:**

- a) the latest undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment position across the Faculty;
- b) strong undergraduate recruitment and Clearing activity, alongside continuing challenges within the international postgraduate market;
- c) variation in recruitment performance across programmes and markets and the importance of taking account of programme capacity when planning future student numbers;
- d) the importance of market intelligence, programme positioning and conversion activity in supporting future recruitment;
- e) the need to increase the number of applications to high demand programmes with the aim of avoiding clearing in future years; and
- f) the need to consider longer-term recruitment trends as part of future portfolio and student number planning.

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**Agreed:**

- a) that future student number planning should take account of programme-level demand and capacity at an earlier stage;
- b) that recruitment assumptions and entry requirements should continue to be reviewed against relevant market and competitor information; and
- c) that longer-term recruitment and portfolio considerations would be taken forward through Faculty strategic planning.

**6. FE Ways of Working**

**Received:** the annual review of the Faculty Executive Ways of Working Charter.

**Noted:**

- a) the Charter provides an appropriate framework for the operation of Faculty Executive;
- b) the importance of maintaining constructive, inclusive and supportive ways of working;
- c) the value of ensuring that Faculty Executive agendas provided appropriate opportunity for strategic discussion and collective consideration of key issues; and
- d) Heads of School raised the potential for Directors of School Operations to be represented on Faculty Executive, recognising their role in supporting implementation and operational delivery.

**Agreed:**

- a) to reaffirm Faculty Executive's commitment to the principles within the Ways of Working Charter;
- b) that the principle of kindness should be more explicitly reflected within the Charter as part of the approach to constructive challenge, support and collective working; and
- c) to trial a periodic reflection on the effectiveness of Faculty Executive meetings and the operation of the Charter.

**7. Roundtable and AOB**

**Noted:**

- a) challenges with the qualification verification arrangements have resulted in losing applicants for the MBA and potentially other programmes. The Faculty has been assured that work is underway to improve the process for future admissions cycles;
- b) the listening forums for colleagues of Black heritage, including the arrangements for these to take place across Schools;
- c) the forthcoming communication of the University's strategic delivery plans; and
- d) the launch of the University's revised expenses policy and associated briefing arrangements.

**Agreed:** that Faculty Executive would receive feedback on the listening forums for colleagues of Black heritage once these had taken place.

**Next meeting:** 22 September 2026