APPROVED

HUMANITIES FACULTY EXECUTIVEFACULTY EXECUTIVE (FE)
Minutes dated: 6 October 2026

FE Present: Alvin Birdi (AB), Claire Alexander (CA), Clare Northen (CN), Dimitris Papadimitriou (DP), Emma Rose (ER), Fiona Devine (FD - Chair), Fiona Lynch (FL), Fiona Smyth (FS), James Evans (JE), Kathryn Howard (KH), Kenneth McPhail (KP), Khalid Nadvi (KN), Maggie Gale (MG), Suzanne Cotterill (SC)

Apologies: None

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

In attendance for: Item 3 M2035 Accountability & Performance Review Dashboard Alison Fairclough (AF) and Jodie Read (JR), Item 4 International Delivery Plan Angelia Wilson (AW), Bethany Pedder (BP), Panos Sousounis (PS), and Item 5 SMR 2026/27 Plans, Priorities & Key Activities and Internal Comms Review Orestes Kouzof (OK) and Susie Jones (SJ)

Item	Topic

1. Welcome and apologies

Noted:
- No apologies were received.

2. IT / Digital Update – Copilot Rollout for Students

Received: A written update on the planned Microsoft 365 Copilot rollout for students, followed by a Faculty-led discussion.

Noted:
- The wider licensed rollout is planned for the beginning of Semester Two, with Semester One being used to support readiness, communications and implementation of the University's AI in Teaching and Learning Policy.
- Students already have access to the University-protected version of Copilot Chat. The additional licence will provide greater integration with Microsoft 365 applications.
- FE discussed the implications of generative AI for teaching, learning and assessment, including academic integrity, assessment design and the importance of assuring student learning.
- Members noted that the development of assessment approaches would need to take account of pedagogic quality, deliverability, student experience and the skills students will require for future employment.
- FE noted the potential for appropriately governed use of AI to support formative learning and feedback.
- Members emphasised the importance of clear guidance and appropriate development opportunities to support staff and students in using AI effectively and responsibly.

Agreed:
- Existing work to develop Faculty approaches to assessment, assurance of learning and AI capability would continue through the appropriate teaching and learning structures.

Item	Topic

3. M2035 Accountability & Performance Review Dashboard

Received: A presentation from AF and JR on the proposed rollout of the Faculty Executive Dashboard and the support available from the BI and Faculty Planning teams.

Noted:

- The dashboard will provide a consistent, high-level view of performance against Manchester 2035 measures, with information available at Faculty and, where appropriate, School level.
- Core measures and reporting formats will be aligned across the University, while allowing relevant Faculty-specific information to be incorporated.
- The dashboard is intended to support strategic discussion, performance review and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Members welcomed the development and emphasised the importance of providing appropriate context and guidance to support interpretation of the information.
- Further development will include consideration of additional measures and more detailed views where appropriate and where the underlying information is available.
- Support will be available from the Faculty Planning and Management Information team to assist members in using and interpreting the dashboard.

Agreed:

- To approve the proposed approach to launching the Faculty Executive Dashboard.
- The dashboard link would be circulated to members, with any access issues addressed.
- Guidance and support would be developed to assist users in interpreting the information appropriately.
- Feedback from the Faculty and the wider University rollout would inform further development of the dashboard.

4. International Delivery Plan

Received: A presentation from AW, supported by PS and BP, on the Manchester 2035 International Delivery Plan and its implications for Humanities.

Noted:

a) The plan was developed collaboratively and sets out five priorities for the first phase of Manchester 2035 international activity.
b) The principal global initiatives include the next phase of the Manchester-Melbourne-Toronto alliance, activity relating to Africa, and wider alliance and reputation-building work.
c) International activity is being aligned more closely with research, teaching and learning, innovation, communications, recruitment and reputation priorities.
d) Members emphasised the importance of European research partnerships, Horizon Europe opportunities and the University's return to Erasmus+.
e) The Global Fund will coordinate international seed funding with clearer expectations regarding research quality, external funding, publications and demonstrable outcomes.
f) FE discussed the need to diversify international recruitment through an appropriate mix of partnerships, transnational education, flexible and online provision, summer schools and international-centre activity.
g) International centres can provide market intelligence and support, but programmes require a clear and evidence-based proposition.
h) Employability, enterprise education, careers messaging and authentic learning opportunities were identified as important elements of the international student proposition.
i) Internationally co-authored research and strong institutional partnerships were identified as contributors to impact, citations and reputation.

Item Topic

j) The Faculty has opportunities through the Global Humanities Alliance and other partnerships, subject to coordinated engagement, strong proposals and appropriate capacity.

Agreed:
a) To continue developing the Faculty contribution through the relevant Research, Teaching and Learning, Innovation and recruitment structures.
b) PS and BP to work with Schools and Faculty leads to identify and coordinate appropriate opportunities using data and market intelligence.
c) Schools to strengthen awareness of relevant international funding and partnership opportunities.

5. SMR 2026/27 Plans, Priorities & Key Activities and Internal Comms Review

Received: A presentation from KH, OK and SJ on Humanities Student Marketing and Recruitment priorities, the Areas of Work model and priority courses and markets.

Noted:
a) The SMR team continues to work through School-facing teams, supported by seven cross-Faculty Areas of Work.
b) The model is intended to improve use of collective capacity and expertise, consistency and resilience, and reduce duplication.
c) All programmes will receive core support; priority programmes will receive enhanced activity based on recruitment performance, risk, growth, market opportunity and strategic importance.
d) FE noted that the priority list remained extensive and discussed the need for a clearer Faculty-level lens.
e) Portfolio work provides an opportunity to articulate why students should study each programme at Manchester and the outcomes it offers.
f) Activity may sometimes be organised around broader themes, although some advertising and content will require programme-level focus.
g) Where priorities change, activity to be stopped or reduced should also be identified.
h) The international market framework seeks to protect established markets while supporting diversification.
i) FE welcomed work on an academic advocates network for open days, webinars and international recruitment.
j) Academic representatives should be supported to explain programme value, skills, employability and the distinctive benefits of Manchester.
k) Closer working with Careers and alumni teams would support stronger evidence and graduate stories.
l) The recent undergraduate open day was welcomed, alongside work on post-event communications and accessibility.
m) Departments and programmes should articulate distinctive strengths, including connections with Manchester and the Faculty's cultural and civic assets.

Agreed:
a) To continue refining Faculty priority programmes and themes through FE, student-number planning and portfolio discussions.
b) SMR and academic leads to develop clear programme propositions informed by market insight, skills, employability and the Manchester context.
c) To progress the academic advocates network.
d) To strengthen links with Careers and alumni colleagues.
e) Changes to in-year priorities should identify activity to be stopped or reduced.

Item	Topic
6.	**Roundtable and AOB**

Noted:

a) A concern was raised regarding postgraduate research completion and submission rates and preparedness for changes in the funding and training landscape.
b) Members noted the need for consistent information on expectations, cohort performance and emerging funding models.
c) An update was provided on University discussions about recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion activity.
d) Work is under way to improve communications and feedback arrangements associated with academic promotions.
e) Feedback will be sought on the People Partner model following its first year of operation.
` f) Members noted a forthcoming senior staffing change within communications and the interim arrangements.

Agreed:

g) FS to raise the postgraduate research concerns with the relevant Faculty and University leads and arrange an update to FE.
h) Relevant postgraduate research leads to review available completion information and clarify expectations and support.
i) SC to coordinate feedback on the People Partner model.
j) To continue work to improve promotions communications and clarify arrangements for applicant feedback.

Next meeting: 13th October 2026 Away Day | 3rd November 2026 Faculty Executive