

Minutes of the AHSS PGT College Forum Held on: Tuesday the 9th of March at 2pm

Attendees Present:

Staff

Jane Chukwu (JC) - VP Postgraduate

Hannah Fatkin (HF) – Student Voice Coordinator

Rob Gossedge - Dean of Postgraduate Studies (AHSS)

Martha Ashford - Library Team Leader for AHSS

Paul Jones – IT Service Manager

Jane Harding – Student Advice Team

Students

- Lucy Davies (ENCAP)
- Gareth Y Jones (CARBS)
- Sahil Rais (CARBS)
- Precious Ebere (SOCSI)
- Jess Davies (LAWPL)
- Will Swithers (CARBS)
- Bethan Burnett (LAWPL)
- Andy Yeandle (CARBS)
- Sri Ganesh Kumar (GEOPL)
- Laura Steffes (LAWPL)
- Janees Rafiq (GEOPOL)

Apologies:

- Anahita Syed (LAWPL)
- Cole Cornford (GEOPL)
- Rhian Vernall (CARBS)
- Michelle Lesch (CARBS)
- Sarah Allbeson (Careers and Employability)
- Annabel Hurst (Estates)

JC thanked everyone for coming before commencing the session.

JC: Any issues that anyone wants to mention to start us off?

PE: I do not have much feedback from students.

JC: No worries it is okay if you haven't got any specific issues just being here and listening and being aware is good. This is an avenue to just be active and aware and it is a best practice exchange too learning what other schools are doing. Thank you for coming regardless.

SR: One issues many business school students have brought up to me regards an upcoming exam we have. Many students are confused on how the exam set-up will work especially as it is online. The email also said who we can contact but the contact hasn't been very clear.

RG: Can you forward me this email from the school about the exam and who to contact and I will contact the school for you. When is the exam by the way?

SR: The exam is on the 16th

RG: Okay perfect thank you. I will contact them.

WS: We do not have many issues. We meet our course director one every couple of weeks. We had a conversation with him about assignment feedback being poor and they are looking into that and are addressing it, so everything is smooth at the moment.

JC: Awesome glad to hear it.

BB: We also do not have very much feedback, so it is going well.

AY: Yes, I am on the same course as Will and as he said all issues that we had are being delt, so communication is good, and we are happy.

JC: Anyone else?

GYJ: We have a very similar thing to Will; we also had an issue with feedback on assignment, not being released through turn it in and the standard of feedback as well. Also, we had some issues with a lack of Networking opportunities which is obviously partially due to the Pandemic, but those opportunities are essential for us, it was a selling point of the MBA, so we do want to work on having that.

RG: Yes, thank you. I know this is an issue you brought up before, right?

GYJ: Yes, I have not heard back from the school really.

JH: Yes, the University has released a covid complaints procedure related to these issues. If you are not aware, I will send a link with more information in the chat. We are independent from the university so this may be something you can come to us about and we can discuss it.

RG: I will also contact them to see how It is going and if things can be done. You mentioned not getting feedback through Turn it in but something else can you elaborate? How is the feedback provided if not through turn it in?

GYJ: Yes, so it was only one instance I know about, but it was a huge issue that was very confusing, and our scores did not come through, it was through email, but it was also very slow to get it. They have said that they are working on it. I brought it up and all the professors present confirmed they will be using turn it in going forward.

RG: Well, well done there. I will make sure it is implemented across the school before they did confirm it would be used across all levels so I will chase that up.

GYJ: Yes, and the good thing is now some lecturers will go through and mark up points on your actual essay like comments on specific paragraph which is great.

RG: Awesome thank you for the feedback that is very useful.

SR: Just wanted to add that we also had an issue with turn-it in. We had a class where grades were leaked early before the grades were supposed to be out and they were incorrect, so it was very confusing and stressful.

RG: Paul do you know how this would happen?

PJ: No, it would only have happened if the module tutor scheduled the release incorrectly, but it would not have been turn it in. This sounds like it would be an issue that was driven by the instructor/users who may have miss-used the system.

SR: I mean the module-convenor fixed it very quickly she reached out to IT and all is good. She also reached out to us quickly and let us know what was going on and it was then corrected.

GYJ: This might be a lecturer training issue, because some of our classes we can only access our grades through sims and not turn it in.

RG: I think there might be a lag in carbs lecturers wanting to use Turn-it in instead of SIMS as Turn-it in inputs directly into SIMs so it is seamless. But some lecturers do not want to embrace Learning Central. But yes, this sounds like human error.

PJ: I am happy to look into it but I do not believe it is a tech issue.

JC: Any other feedback?

LD: I am from ENCAP and one issue we have is that from the reading list some texts are not available only or are not easily accessible from Amazon/Blackwells. This meant we can't do the readings ect in time and some of the lecturers simply say we have to do the readings. So this had only recently been an issue.

RG: Are we talking about primary or secondary texts?

LD: Well, both but Primary texts I guess? Like texts on the core reading lists.

RG: I mean this is not good at all. This should not be happening. I mean primary texts are obviously not going to be able to get easily and if students cannot access them then they will need to be dropped. Can you drop me an email which modules are having this issue as if texts are not available, they should not be a text then? Even if you annotate module guides like which texts were not available like one or two concrete examples so I can go to the school and get this fixed. Thank you.

LD: Yes, I will get that for you, thank you!

MA: Can you let me know the module numbers too so I can make sure the reading list and texts might get priority in the library.

JC: Awesome thank you for raising this issue. Any staff updates?

PJ: Update on IT issue that happened in Mid February. We had a power outage in one of our data centers. One of the energy suppliers had to replace a sub station so for over a week we ran at a period of risk we wouldn't normally be running at but it meant there was a disruption to our services. Everything is fixed but apologies for any inconveniences it might cause.

MA: We have a new subscription to Pro-quest theses and dissertations so you can take a look at that. Bute library has now also opened for the booking of study spaces for short studies of 30minutes to an hour.

JC: Do you need me to push this information out a little more?

MA: I mean it only just happened so the information is getting out but feel free to spread the information more.

JH: Question do you think the power outage could have had an impact on the ability of students to submit course work?

PJ: Maybe, there was 2 hours in total over two days that students could not log into learning central. Around the 12th of February. Some schools contacted us and then extended their deadlines by a few hours. But yes, schools would have been aware. Contact me for more specific details of times.

JH: That is awesome just want the info, so students don't slip through the web. A lot of submissions on extenuation circumstances. We have a significant number of academic misconduct cases which is normal this time of year matching with deadlines. We have been giving some funding to support student wellbeing and we have been doing trainings on mental health support to all our wellbeing officers to and staff. There are also issues on covid-19 disruptions which is expected. Please encourage students to get in touch if they are struggling we are impartial and do try to direct them to find the best possible solution. Please let me know if there are any questions also.

LD: I have questions about the academic misconduct. Should we be directing students somewhere?

JH: We get issues with academic misconduct in coursework, it is mainly plagiarism and is normally undergraduate. I think very few students actually intend to copy but the main issue is students rush their work and they are not able to concentrate on their work and then mis-reference and miscite. So often it is often that they just mess up. The result is that they then get a mark of 0. Meaning students will have to re-do the course or work and can delay graduation. We want to really encourage then that students ask for an extension instead of rushing as it is much better for everyone. I cannot say often enough just get an extension and not rush the work.

GYJ: Questions on extenuating circumstances it used to be up to 4 weeks but now it is 2 weeks, right?

JH: It depends on the work being done. So, for a master's dissertation it is 4 weeks but for other pieces of course work it is 2 weeks. Students can also ask for a deferment which means it would be taken during the re-sit period.

GYJ: A few students are struggling and if they need to differ that would delay their ability to start their dissertation right?

JH: I mean Rob would know as much as I do but basically what happens is that you cannot progress to the dissertation stage until you pass the taught stage. If you need more time you would start your dissertation later and have a later deadline. Some schools exercise discretion

and allow students to start their dissertation if they have only a small piece of coursework left but it does depend.

RG: Rule 8213 of academic regulations hahah. But yes so some programs are very difficult this is like the biggest issue. So, you cannot formally progress if you are not finished the tort stage. If you only have a very small amount owing, some schools will allow a student to commence work on the dissertation and have the timing as normal. Schools that do not allow it to feel that by allowing them to progress without being done their course work they are setting up a student to fail. It is all for the program to determine in their handbook so check their first.

JC: Laura any issues?

LS: We had no issues at all thank you though.

JC: In the absence of any other issues. I will say you know thank you for participating because we need your help in talking to your cohort and getting feedback and participation ect. We always need more data to understand these issues as students really are the backbone. Also, we have a post graduate student association, both taught and a research one that is creating. There is no one managing it at the moment, but we are getting on top of it so when it goes live please mention it to your fellow students. Last comment is the graduate route which is for international students who want to remain in the UK after their studies, applications have been shifted later so just to update any international students you know of these developments.

I think that that is all for the day. Thank you for coming and thank you for your feedback and representation.