

1) WEB DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Web Development Project was initiated in June (2005) in order to address the problems being experienced in relation to the University's web presence, particularly connected with the Content Management System (CMS) being used to populate pages on www.manchester.ac.uk. The overarching goals of the project are to develop the University's website into a site which is exemplary and is worthy of one of the world's top University's, has content and operation driven by the needs of users and business processes and is living, evolving and future proof.

The Project is being overseen by a Project Board, chaired by Professor Alan North, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences. Rachel Brealey has been seconded to work full time as Project Manager with around 20 staff being assigned from different parts of the University to form the Web Project Implementation Team.

The Project Board has agreed that the project should proceed on the basis of two parallel strands. The immediate focus is on the core site, with six work-strands being established to optimise : the leader pages (including a core intranet for the University); undergraduate applications; postgraduate taught applications; postgraduate research applications; our research presence; and information for external business users. An ambitious timescale of three months has been established in relation to solid progress being made on these six major areas of work.

At the same time, longer-term consideration is being given to matters of policy, to technical issues such as whether CMS represent the best approach to web page development and to the interfaces between core and devolved sites. Any staff with questions about the Project should contact Rachel in the first instance (rachel.brealey@manchester.ac.uk, ext: 63769).

2) HR ISSUES

Details of the HR website which will contain regular updates on progress with new pay/grading structures/scales, harmonisation of terms and conditions and other "live" HR issues will be circulated before the end of July.

3) SECURITY

Although it may seem unnecessary to say so, one important reminder from the terrible events in London on 7 July is that all staff should be vigilant at all times about suspicious packages or suspicious behaviour. Any member of staff who comes across either of these circumstances should immediately contact Security on extensions 52728 or 69966. Off the University campuses dial 999.

4) DEGREE CEREMONIES

On a happier note, colleagues might like to note that the 35 degree ceremonies held in the first fortnight in July saw no fewer than 6,406 students graduate (is this a U.K. record?) and 16,225 guests attend the ceremonies. A great deal of hard work went into ensuring that the ceremonies proceeded smoothly and that the graduates (and guests) could witness good teamwork in action. Special thanks are due to House Services to Student Support Services staff and to colleagues from all parts of the University who lent a hand. While special thanks are due to Mike Mercer, everyone involved truly did the University proud.

5) GUIDE TO THE ADMINISTRATION

A new guide to the Administration has been prepared giving details of who does what, where they do it and how to contact them. It should be published by the end of July.

6) HOLIDAYS

Finally, I hope that those staff who have a summer holiday over the next six weeks or so have a restful and enjoyable break from the University. The last few months have not been easy for staff as this was always going to be the period when operational shortcomings and issues post-merger were going to come to the fore. Happily, a good deal of progress has been made in resolving these issues and, although it would be foolish to pretend that the future will not continue to be challenging, meeting such challenges and managing them will not be without its rewards.