

# University Teaching Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March 2023, 9.30-12.30, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.**

## Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students); Chair  
Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Students)  
Claire Hughes, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Sciences)  
Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences)  
Tom Cantrell, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)  
Patrick Gallimore, Chair of Standing Committee on Assessment  
Wayne Campbell, Academic Registrar  
Debayan Dey, YUSU Academic Officer  
Teng Zhang, Vice-President (Academic), GSA  
Tom Banham, Director of SAAA;  
Jen Wotherspoon, Acting Chair of Special Cases Committee  
Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships  
Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning;  
Hannah Smith, Director of Student Careers and Systems (for M22-23/53-57 only)  
Petros Kafalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, CITY College  
Claire Ball-Smith (representing Social Sciences)  
Jen Gibbons (representing Social Sciences)  
Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)  
Michael Bate (representing Sciences)  
Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)  
Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)  
Matthew Perry, Director of the International Pathway College

In attendance:

Jane Warne, Head of Academic Quality (Secretary)  
David Gent, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)  
Craig Adams and Katie Burns, VLE Transformation Project Team (for M.22-23/58-61 only)  
Hannah Nimmo, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer, (for M.22-23/66-71 only)  
Stephen Gow, Academic Quality (for M.22-23/66-71 only)

Apologies:

Lisa O'Malley; Richard McClary; Kirtsy Lingstadt, Head of Library and Learning Services.

## Section 1: Standing Items

### Welcome

22-23/39 The Chair expressed thanks to Debayan Dey and Jen Gibbons, who were leaving the Committee.

### **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda [oral report]**

22-23/40 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

### **Updated Terms of Reference [UTC.22-23/38, Open]**

22-23/41 The Committee **received** its terms of reference, which had been updated to add approval of taught programmes deemed high risk by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students to the Committee's remit.

### **Unreserved minutes of the last meeting held on 24 November 2022 [UTC.22-23/39]**

22-23/42 The Committee **confirmed** the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 as an accurate record, subject to correcting that Michael Bate had not sent apologies for the meeting. [*Secretary's Note: this was corrected in the publicly available minutes*]

### **Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda [UTC.22-23/40, Open]**

22-23/43 The Committee **received** a log of progress in relation to actions arising from the minutes.

1. M.22-23/34 [Academic Supervision]: It was **reported** that the Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences) would be taking forward the implementation of work arising from the Academic Supervision Working Group. Relevant staff from Student and Academic Services would be invited to contribute to implementation. It was **observed** that it would be important for departments to receive clarity around planning supervision meetings for 2023/24.

### **Report of Chair's action [UTC.22-23/41, Open]**

22-23/44 The Committee **received** a report detailing decisions taken by the Chair on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting. It was **reported** that the Chair had taken the following decisions on papers circulated in lieu of the cancelled January meeting.

1. The Chair had **endorsed** the recommendations in the annual report from YUSU on course representatives [UTC.22-23/36], to offer more autonomy and flexibility to departments around the election of representatives.
2. The Chair had taken the following action against recommendations in the paper on the VLE Site Design Principles [UTC.22-23/37]:
  - a. **Approval** of the proposals that oversight of the VLE Site Design Principles should rest with UTC and should be reviewed after one year.
  - b. **Approval** of the Site Design principles for all taught provision except professional programmes, degree apprenticeships and CPD provision, and subject to minor amendments listed in the paper.
    - i. It was further **reported** that good progress was being made in understanding how the VLE Site Design principles could be applied to professional programmes. Thanks were expressed to Programme Design and Learning Technology for work on this issue. Proposals would be considered by the VLE Transformation Project Board and then submitted to UTC for approval.

**Action: Craig Adams**

### **Chair's report [oral report]**

22-23/45 The Chair **reported** the following:

1. The Chair encouraged members to comment on papers that were submitted to the Committee by circulation, even if they were content with proposals.
2. An implementation plan for the education aspects of the University Strategy was being developed.
3. Good progress had been made with respect to the implementation of the modularisation and semesterisation project. Thanks were expressed to all involved.
4. The Office for Students had announced revisions to regulation in relation to Access and Participation Plans. The University had decided not to take part in the first wave of the new approach to regulation in 2023, and would be expected to submit a revised Access and Participation Plan in Spring 2024.
5. Dedicated teaching and learning webpages for the University were being developed, linked to the University Strategy, to better showcase the University's work in this area in a more holistic and coordinated way.
6. As part of the Senate effectiveness review, it would be proposed that Special Cases Committee be disbanded, with its remit distributed to UTC and Student Life Committee.
7. Work was ongoing in relation to the Progression and Award rules considered by UTC in November 2022. A meeting had been held with Tribal, which had raised issues in relation to the University's ability to implement the proposed rules in SITS. This would require minor adjustments to the rules. Proposals would be circulated to members for comment.
  - a. Members **observed** that it was not ideal that systems capabilities were driving what was possible in teaching, learning and assessment. Systems issues were a barrier in a number of items on the agenda. In the case of SITS, it was reported that implementing desired changes was often possible, but would require further investment and / or lead-in time for University strategic initiatives.

### **Student Representatives' reports [oral reports]**

22-23/46 Teng Zhang, the GSA Vice-President (Academic), **reported** the following:

1. GSA and YUSU had held a successful 'Middle Ground' event focusing on the experience of international students. GSA was collecting further data on this issue and would organise an event to encourage international students' sense of belonging within the University.
2. The advice team in GSA had seen a significant number of cases, primarily relating to wellbeing and academic issues.
3. GSA elections were planned. GSA was conducting a campaign to raise awareness of its representative positions, especially among international students.

22-23/47 Debayan Dey, the YUSU Academic Officer, **reported** the following:

1. The Academic Officer had held successful College drop-ins for students to discuss issues and challenges, and had also held a successful 'Academic' event.
2. Issues raised by academic representatives in relation to industrial action had been discussed with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students.

3. By-elections would be held in Summer Term 2023 for the Academic Officer position, and for vacant Faculty representative and part-time officer positions, with the new Academic Officer to take up the role from July 2023. In the interim, the other sabbatical officers within YUSU would pick up the functions of the Academic Officer and their place on committees.

## **Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight– items for consideration and/or decision**

### **Strategic Implications from the TEF Submission [UTC.22-23/42, Open]**

22-23/48 The Committee **considered** a paper on the Strategic Implications of the TEF Submission. The Chair **reported** that:

1. The TEF Submission had identified a number of the University's strengths and had been well received at Senate and Council. Thanks were expressed to staff involved in developing the submission.
2. The paper identified a need for the University to better publicise its strengths and good practice, both internally and externally. The Chair, along with the APVC and Associate Deans would be showcasing a number of areas with Heads of Departments and at other fora. The teaching and learning webpages referred to in the Chair's report would also help here. Consideration would be given to how to encourage staff in promoting their work externally, for example at conferences.
3. As shown in the NSS action plan (UTC.22-23/43), work to address weaknesses in assessment and feedback and student voice was already planned and ongoing.
4. There was a need to make better use of data relating to teaching and learning. Existing data was often hard to find and access. This would be addressed via work on a data-enabled strategy.

22-23/49 The Committee **observed** the following:

1. It would be beneficial for work on the next TEF to be on a longer-term and more strategic footing, under UTC's oversight and with greater involvement from academic departments / schools. An implementation plan for TEF should be created to this effect and factored into UTC's annual cycle of business, to report initially in the 2023/24 academic year.. The action plan should include the creation of impact case studies for key strategic initiatives.  
**Action: Tom Banham**
2. In relation to assessment and feedback, there was an opportunity to better signpost to students what constituted feedback. It was further thought that not all students had sufficient understanding of their assessment schedule and thus expected timelines for feedback. Standing Committee on Assessment had begun work on this issue prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and would return to it in 2023/24. The new assessment software (referred to under M22-.23-58-61 below) would also enable the University to examine feedback more holistically.
3. There was an opportunity to link key themes and requirements in TEF to the Learning and Teaching Conference.

### **Action Plan from NSS 2022 [UTC.22-23/43, Open]**

22-23/50 The Committee **considered** an action plan arising from the NSS results for 2022. The Chair **reported** that the plan focused particularly on encouraging and facilitating improvements in departments / schools, including through Faculties and via a revised annual review process [in development] and actions in relation to assessment and feedback and student voice.

22-23/51 The Committee **observed** that:

1. For NSS 2023, professional services would reflect on the NSS results and consider whether these identified necessary improvements. This should be incorporated into the committee's cycle of business. **Action: Secretary**
2. The plan contained an action to work with Internal Communications to improve the visibility of responses to student feedback. Members observed that communications around 'You Said, We Did' in departments were sometimes significantly out of date. Internal Communications should be invited to the Student Voice Group to consider how, when and where responses to feedback should be displayed; and thereafter should be asked to meet with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Associate Deans for Teaching, Learning and Students. **Action: Jan Ball-Smith**
3. As they had been developed in advance of the institutional action plan, the Faculty responses to NSS 2022 had different formats. A consistent format would be beneficial for NSS 2023. Claire Ball-Smith reported that the OFSTED template provided a possible model for this.
4. Members queried how the action plan would be monitored to ensure its success. The Chair **reported** that this would be considered as part of the 'review of reviews' work being led by the Associate PVC (Teaching, Learning and Students).

22-23/52 The Committee **endorsed** the action plan against the NSS 2022 results.

### **Careers and Placements Objectives and Key Results, 2022-25 [UTC.22-23/44, Open]**

22-23/53 The Committee **considered** Objectives and Key Results 2022-25 for Careers and Placements. Hannah Smith, Director of Student Careers and Systems, spoke to this item. It was **reported** that

1. The Objectives and Key Results had been developed by Careers and Placements, informed by discussion with Heads of Department and academic Careers Employability Coordinators in departments / schools; and by Faculty Plans.
2. Employability Strategy Group was working to strengthen external insights into employability work.

22-23/54 The Committee **observed** that the inclusion of objectives relating to international student employment and international markets was welcome, and would be important for international recruitment.

22-23/55 The Committee **endorsed** the Objectives and Key Results 2022-25 for Careers and Placements.

### **Update on York Strengths [UTC.22-23/46, Open]**

22-23/56 The Committee **considered** an update on the York Strengths initiative. Hannah Smith, Director of Student Careers and Systems, spoke to this item. It was **reported** that York Strengths was working well, with good engagement from academic departments / schools.

22-23/57 The Committee **endorsed** a continuation of the current approach to York Strengths, with a combination of central open sessions alongside integration of Strengths into the curriculum and teaching timetable where desired by a department / school.

### **Update on VLE Transformation Project [Oral Report]**

22-23/58 The Committee **received** a presentation on the VLE Transformation Project. Craig Adams and Katie Burn from the VLE Transformation Project Team attended for this item. It was **reported** that:

1. The project team had conducted a technical upgrade of the existing VLE earlier in the year. This had been positively received among first year students but less positively received from students who had used the previous system.

2. The University was moving to the Blackboard Learn Ultra system within the VLE for 2023/24. This should improve the useability and accessibility of the system.
3. 14 departments had approved templates within the new system, with a further 21 in final review. Adoption groups to support the new system had been established in every department. The new system would require staff training. Training plans had been agreed for 16 departments. Funding to support the rollover to the new system was in place in 12 departments.
4. The team felt that the project was on track for implementation of the new system in September 2023.

### **VLE Transformation Project and Anonymous Assessment [UTC.22-23/47, Open]**

22-23/59 The Committee **considered** a paper on the implications of the VLE Transformation Project for anonymous assessment. Craig Adams and Katie Burn from the VLE Transformation Project Team attended for this item. It was **reported** that:

1. The paper proposed the adoption of Turnitin Feedback Studio as the key online marking tool for the University. This had been informed by consultation with academic and administrative colleagues.
2. Anonymous marking was currently mandatory in University policy for all assessment contributing to final award, except where this was unfeasible. The University currently maintains workarounds (developed via third party building blocks) to allow anonymous assessment whilst also facilitating a number of desirable practices. These included automation of spelling and grammar stickers on assessed work; the ability to easily extract emails of students who had not submitted by the deadline; and easier follow-up of self-certification claims.
3. These building blocks would not be supported by the supplier in the new VLE system from 2023/24. Maintaining the practices referred to above would thus require a change in policy or working practice, which could have significant implications for staff workload. The paper raised the possibility of suspending anonymous assessment in the VLE.

22-23/60 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Turnitin Feedback Studio had a number of benefits and was widely used across the sector.
2. Whilst the paper discussed the possibility of adopting tools in BlackBoard Learn Ultra as an alternative to Turnitin Feedback Studio in future, these tools were not yet ready and there was no guarantee of timescales from the developer. Members felt that staff would not wish to switch systems again in a short timescale, and thus that Turnitin Feedback Studio should be used for a minimum of two years.
3. The adoption of Turnitin Feedback Studio as a consistent tool across the University raised the possibility of making revisions to University policy around marking online. Whilst a number of members expressed their support for changes in this area, it was felt that this would have significant implications for policy and practice that required further consideration. This issue should thus be investigated further and proposals submitted to the Committee.

**Action: Patrick Gallimore**

4. In relation to whether to temporarily suspend anonymous assessment in the VLE, members **observed** that:
  - a. It was thought that non-anonymous assessment would more easily allow the University to maintain its current practices around follow-up of non-submissions, self-certification and spelling and grammar stickers.

- b. Non-anonymous assessment could also have pedagogic benefits, such as personalisation of feedback, which could be of benefit in relation to recognising students' diverse learning experiences.
- c. Whilst other members of the Russell Group made widespread use of anonymous assessment, some other universities (such as Sheffield Hallam) had moved away from this position.
- d. Anonymous assessment was a means of protecting against bias (and the perception of bias) in marking. Current policy embedded anonymous marking as an important part of the University's quality assurance processes. It was however **noted** that a number of programmes in the University did not mark anonymously, without fundamental problems around standards or a higher level of complaints.
- e. There were concerns that a move to non-anonymous marking might create increased appeals and complaints. This risk would need to be mitigated, for instance via moderation. There were concerns around a relatively short-lead in time for a change in policy and the impact of such a change (and related mitigations) on academic and administrative staff workload.
- f. Members noted the potential for students to express dissatisfaction with a move to non-anonymous marking, though student views were unclear. It was important that students be involved in co-creation of any mitigations in this area.
- g. The growing use of AI in assessment may make assessment practices that could not be marked anonymously more necessary.

22-23/61 **Resolved:**

1. **To endorse the use of Turnitin Feedback Studio as the key assessment submission tool within the VLE for a minimum of two years.**
2. **To approve a temporary suspension of anonymous assessment for a period of one year, with a review point at the end of 2023/24.**
3. **That a plan of necessary actions to mitigate the risks of suspending anonymous assessment should be created, involving co-creation with students and informed by good practice in departments that currently use non-anonymous assessment.**  
**Action: Tom Banham and Jan Ball-Smith**
4. **That a timeline of key decisions, changes to published policy, communications to students and necessary actions should be created to inform work in this area.**  
**Action: Patrick Gallimore, Tom Banham and Jan Ball-Smith**

#### **Artificial Intelligence [Oral Report]**

22-23/62 The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair in relation to Artificial Intelligence. It was specifically **reported** that:

1. Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence in relation to assessment had been issued to students and staff.
2. A UTC Working Group would be convened to consider the implications of Artificial Intelligence more widely, under the chairship of the Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students. The Working Group would bring a consistent University approach in this area and would consider a number of areas, encompassing policy; the development of communities of good practice, and the creative use of AI in teaching and learning, including co-creation with students. The University would thus adopt an approach whereby the opportunities, as well as negatives, of AI were considered.

3. CITY College had published useful guidance on this issue for its students [*Secretary's Note: this was made available to members in the Category 2 papers folder*].

### **GSA Academic Representation Report, 2022-3 [UTC.22-23/47, Open]**

- 22-23/63 The Committee **considered** a report from the GSA on academic representative elections and training during 2022-23. Teng Zhang, GSA Vice-President (Academic), spoke to this item. It was **reported** that:
1. Over 50% of PGT and PGR representatives were vacant by the close of GSA elections, with appointments made in collaboration with departments. This pointed to a need for the GSA to improve recruitment via engagement with departments, reflected in the report recommendation.
  2. The report contained further recommendations that GSA work on creating methods for Academic Representatives to share knowledge with each other and to maintain an increased level of training content. Training had received positive feedback from representatives.
- 22-23/64 The Committee **observed** that the pilot of paid Student Champions covered both undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, and might have influenced the figures reported in the paper.
- 22-23/65 The Committee **endorsed** the recommendations in the report as they applied to PGT students, noting that PGR students were the responsibility of York Graduate Research School Board.

## **Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters**

### **Self-Certification Policy [UTC.22-23/48, Open]**

- 22-23/66 The Committee **considered** a paper on the self-certification policy. Hannah Nimmo, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer, attended the Committee for this item.
- 22-23/67 Dr Patrick Gallimore, the Chair of Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA), **reported** the following:
1. Between March 2020 and August 2021 the University had permitted unlimited Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment (ECA) claims without an evidence requirement. Between August 2021 and August 2022, the University had allowed students unlimited self-certification, which resulted in extensions of 4-days or deferral of exams, alongside a discretion to waive evidence requirements for Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment (ECA) claims. These measures reflected the particular circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and were a departure from the University's previous position that adjustments to the assessment timetable were made exclusively through the ECA procedure and - for students with disabilities - Student Support Plans (SSPs).
  2. Self-certification had been used nearly 25,000 times in 2021-22 in the unlimited system. Departments had expressed concern that this system had resulted in significant adverse consequences for student welfare and academic progression and had placed very significant pressures on academic and administrative staff.
  3. An SCA working group, including representation from former YUSU and GSA sabbatical officers, had reviewed the self-certification policy during 2021-22, reflecting on implications for student welfare, the integrity of assessment, sector practice and the principles of proportionality and fairness. This review was informed by an analysis of data on self-certification claims (as reported in the paper).
  4. SCA had voted to restrict self-certification to three times per academic year for 2022-23 (using this alongside the ECA procedure and SSPs). Student representatives had voted against this policy at the relevant SCA meeting.



5. SCA's position reflected a view that the ECA procedure and SSPs should be the primary mechanisms for adjustments to the assessment timetable in a way targeted to student need; concerns over the impact of unlimited self-certification; and that limited self-certification could be helpful to student welfare, but should primarily be used for short-term issues (such as illness) for which it was not pragmatic to provide evidence. Limited use of self-certification was felt to be in line with OIA guidance on this issue [provided in the paper].
6. YUSU had since campaigned against this policy, and wished to return either to unlimited self-certification or to extend the limit to six self-certifications per year. In response to YUSU's campaign, SCA had worked with student representatives to put in place a number of changes to the ECA procedure and to issue guidance around ECAs and SSPs to encourage a compassionate interpretation of these procedures. These were recorded in a document linked in the paper, and included (but were not limited to) the following:
  - a. That ECA claims could be made and considered whilst evidence was being gathered; and that departments could, exceptionally, approve ECA claims without evidence where it was not possible for students to provide evidence.
  - b. A compassionate interpretation of the sorts of evidence required to substantiate ECA claims, including the acceptability of less direct forms of evidence.
  - c. The establishment of a system whereby students in defined, more vulnerable groups (as listed in the paper) would be issued with a letter that would allow them to ask for 4-day extensions or exam deferrals under the ECA policy without further evidence, as if they had self-certified. This included students who were awaiting Student Support Plans. It was reported that this procedure would reach around 4,000 students [roughly 26% of the taught student population]. This was designed to directly address YUSU's concerns around student welfare among the most vulnerable student groups.
  - d. That, via the ECA procedure, a single self-certification claim could be extended to other assessments due on the same day at the student's request.
  - e. Guidance around adjustments for assessments under Student Support Plans, including a reminder of flexibility under this procedure.
7. The ECA procedure and policy was under review and would be revised for 2023/24. Work was also being conducted to improve the implementation of Student Support Plans. Members **noted** the importance of this work.

22-23/68 Hannah Nimmo, the YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer, **reported** the following:

1. A very high number of students had responded to the YUSU campaign, illustrating the depth of feeling among students on this issue. YUSU felt that self-certification was an important tool to aid student welfare across all student groups, with mental health being the most common reason behind claims.
2. Students had reported problems with the ECA and SSP processes and used self-certification to address these problems. YUSU felt that limits to the use of self-certification should be extended whilst the University was reviewing and improving the ECA and SSP processes.
3. Whilst welcoming the adjustments made to the ECA process for the most vulnerable students and the guidance issued by SCA, YUSU was concerned that this would not be sufficient to ensure consistent and compassionate implementation across all departments; and felt that it did not sufficiently address difficulties faced by students who were not among the most vulnerable groups.
4. Students had different assessment diets depending on their programme, which meant that some students had already used their quota of self-certification claims. Some students also

had multiple assessments due within a short time frame: if ill or otherwise unable to complete assessment due to adverse circumstances, all assessments in that time frame were likely to be affected. The revised ECA process did not address this as it only permitted self-certification to be extended to assessments due on a single day.

5. YUSU was concerned that students would have to pay for evidence for self-certification claims, which was particularly difficult during the cost of living crisis. YUSU also reported that Unity Health had not been prepared for the revision to University policy.

*[Note: the guidance sent to departments indicates that departments should accept online medical records as evidence of a medical problem, rather than requiring a letter from a GP]*

22-23/69 The Committee **observed** the following:

1. YUSU's campaign had been important in driving this agenda forward.
2. The University was unusual in the Russell Group in permitting self-certification post-COVID. The Chair had conducted an informal poll of Russell Group universities which suggested that most had returned to a position where self-certification was not permitted.
3. In response to the concerns raised by YUSU around the implementation of the revised ECA policy and procedure and guidance on ECAs and SSPs, the Committee agreed that this should be re-communicated to departments and students.

**Action: Jen Wotherspoon and Patrick Gallimore**

4. In response to the issue of assessment bunching, members observed that it was common in employment for self-certification to cover more than a single day. The linkage of self-certification to a single assessment and (in the revised ECA procedure) assessments on a single day partly reflected a problem of functionality in University systems. Changes to this might require resource-intensive manual workarounds. The Committee agreed that the possibility of extending self-certification claims so that they covered a short time period beyond a single day should be investigated to see if this was practically possible.  
**Action: Jen Wotherspoon and Patrick Gallimore**
5. There was concern from departments that students who had used the self-certification system had not fully understood its implications. Some departments had experienced students failing deferred exams and requiring leave of absence (LOA), a negative consequence for student welfare and retention. The number of students who were on LOA had significantly risen, from below 30 to more than 200. Members further noted that it was important for international students to be made aware of any implications for their visa, including financial implications, arising from the possibility of needing to take leave of absence.
6. Departments reported that the high number of self-certification claims in an unlimited system had placed significant pressure on departmental administrative teams, which it was felt had prevented usual pastoral follow-up with students.
7. Self-certification created specific problems for professional programmes with integral work placements and for degree apprenticeships.
8. There was concern from some members that a mid-year change in policy would be unfair to students who had made decisions around assessments based on the existing limit and that this would thus be inequitable.

9. SCA had investigated the likely implications of a mid-year change in policy. There was specific concern that departments had not planned assessment deadlines in ways that would be consistent with an anticipated rise in use of self-certification and were not resource-enabled to handle such a change, which could thus have adverse implications for staff workload, timeliness of feedback and progression.

10. The University had a project to promote inclusive assessment, and members **noted** the importance of this. The new semester system from 2023/24 would also reduce assessment burdens.

22-23/70 **Resolved:**

1. **To endorse SCA's policy of maintaining the current limit of self-certification to three uses per academic year, noting however the action to examine if it was practically possible to extend a single use of self-certification across a short time period rather than a single day.**
2. **To note the changes already made during the year to the policies around ECA and self-certification.**
3. **To endorse the revisions to the ECA procedure agreed by SCA and the guidance to staff and students on the interpretation and implementation of ECAs and SSPs, noting the action to re-communicate this guidance to departments and students.**

22-23/71 It was **noted** that the YUSU representatives disagreed with this decision.

#### **Annual Report on Apprenticeships [UTC.22-23/49, Open]**

22-23/72 The Committee **considered** the annual report on apprenticeships for 2021-22. Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning, spoke to this item. Degree apprenticeships had distinct regulatory requirements, including oversight and inspection from OFSTED. It was **reported** that the annual report included a summary of the University's self-assessment report, which was part of the continual monitoring of quality and standards for degree apprenticeships.

*[Secretary's Note: the self-assessment report and the minutes of the Apprenticeships Monitoring Board were made available to members via the Category 2 papers]*

22-23/73 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The report showed that degree apprenticeship provision was exceeding its KPIs. These were targets set by the University and reflected a high standard: the University's performance significantly exceeded national averages.
2. Degree apprenticeships required infrastructure at department level that was not common to other programmes. It was important that Faculties built these requirements into planning for future growth in relation to degree apprenticeships. The Chair intended to raise this with Heads of Departments and Faculty teams. The importance of departments discussing planned degree apprenticeships with the University Apprenticeships team was emphasised.
3. Degree apprenticeships required a specific set of good practice, including peer observation of teaching, which were not common to other programmes. There would be value in reviewing the University's policy around peer support for teaching (including in relation to peer observation), to ensure that it reflected the needs of degree apprenticeships and, more generally, appropriately supported staff on teaching and scholarship contracts.  
**Action: Duncan Jackson**
4. Degree apprenticeships were overseen by the Apprenticeships Monitoring Board, which reported to UTC. One of the Associate Deans for Teaching, Learning and Students should be added to the membership of the Monitoring Board.  
**Action: Jan Ball-Smith**

#### **Annual Report on Special Cases and Appeals [UTC.22-23/50, Open]**

22-23/74 The Committee **considered** the annual report on special cases and appeals for 2021-22. Jen Wotherspoon, Acting Chair of Special Cases Committee, spoke to this item and **reported** that:

1. There had been a significant increase in the number of appeals in 2021-22. The majority of appeals were not upheld at the formal review stage. The high number of appeals, combined with the loss of experienced staff in the Special Cases team, had created a significant backlog for appeals cases. This was adversely affecting the experience of students for whom appeals were justifiable.
2. It was thought that the increase in appeals was correlated to higher programme failure rates and, for international students, may be connected to English Language requirements. However, the Special Cases team lacked sufficient data to fully analyse appeals in relation to these and other aspects of student journey and in relation to demographic categories. Commissioning such data would allow appeals data to be used to inform work on attainment gaps.

22-23/75 The Committee **observed** that it would be useful to have additional data to connect other aspects of the student journey to appeals. It was important that the University joined-up datasets to ensure that it was effectively using resources to help address attainment gaps, and more widely to ensure we can support students more effectively, and to enable staff to do so.

#### **Reports on Complaints [UTC.22-23/51-52, Open]**

22-23/76 The Committee **considered** both the annual report on formal complaints for 2021-22 and the report on the OIA statement on complaints relating to 2021. The Academic Registrar **reported** that, whilst a number of complaints related to industrial action or the pandemic, it had not been possible to disaggregate the data in the reports to illustrate this due to change in staffing. This sort of disaggregation would be done for future reports.

### **Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes**

#### **Summary of Undergraduate External Examiners' Reports [UTC.22-23/53, Open]**

22-23/77 The Committee deferred consideration of this item until its next meeting.

### **Section 5: Sub-committee Summaries and Meeting-related information**

#### **Committee reports (unreserved)**

22-23/78 The Committee deferred oral reports from the Academic Skills Steering Group; Interdisciplinary Board of Studies and Special Cases Committee until its next meeting.

22-23/79 The Committee **noted** the following minutes or summaries from its sub-committees:

- Arts and Humanities Faculty Learning and Teaching Group, 18 January 2023 (UTC.22-23/54, Open)
- Social Sciences Faculty Learning and Teaching Group, 8 December 2022 and 24 January 2023 (UTC.22-23/55-56, Open)
- Sciences Faculty Learning and Teaching Group, 14 November 2022 and 10 January 2023 (UTC.22-23/57-58, Open)
- Standing Committee on Assessment, 2 December 2022, 27 January 2023 and 6 March 2023 (UTC.22-23/59-61, Open)

Dr David Gent, Academic Quality Team  
4 April 2023