

University Teaching Committee

[Unconfirmed] Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2023, 13.30-16.00, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students); Chair for M23-24/1-13
Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Students), Chair for M23-24/14-33
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
Meely Doherty, YUSU Academic Officer
Cytherea Shen, GSA Vice-President, Academic
Tom Banham, Director of Student Administration and Academic Affairs
Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director, Student Services
Duncan Jackson, incoming Head of Academic Quality and Development
Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning
Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships
Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services
Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, CITY College
Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)
Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities)
Michael Bate (representing Sciences)
Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)
Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)
Claire Ball-Smith (representing Social Sciences)
Scott Slorach (representing Social Sciences)
Matthew Perry (co-opted member, Director of the International Pathway College)

In attendance:

David Gent, Academic Quality (Secretary)
Adrian Lee, Policy Manager, Academic Quality
Sally O'Connor, Quality Support Officer, Academic Quality (for M23-24/13-14 only)
Fran Hornsby, Access and Participation Plan Manager (for M23-24/25-26 only)

Apologies: Lisa O'Malley

Section 1: Standing Items

Welcome

23-24/1 The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee. The Committee thanked Hannah Smith for their significant contributions across the University.

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

23-24/2 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

Terms of Reference and Membership [UTC.23-24/1, Open]

23-24/3 The Committee **approved** revisions to its terms of reference, which would go to Senate for endorsement. The revisions added references to the approval of Boards of Studies and to the monitoring of workload arising from the Committee's decisions and the workload of members for the Committee.

The Committee further **approved** a proposal to add an equivalent reference around workload to the terms of reference of its sub-committees, as well as CITY College Joint Learning and Teaching Steering Group and to HYMS Joint Senate Committee as appropriate.

Action: Secretary to liaise with other secretaries

Schedule of Business for 2023/24 [UTC.23-24/2, Open]

23-24/4 The Committee **received** a draft schedule of business for the Committee for 2023/24, with a final plan due to be tabled at the November meeting.

Unreserved minutes of the last meeting held on 13 July 2023 [UTC.23-24/3, Open]

23-24/5 The Committee **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 as an accurate record. Minute UTC.22-23/118 stated that graduation ceremonies would make no distinction between students affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott and other students. It was **reported** that this had not been the case in the ceremony for Mathematics, where students affected by the Boycott were grouped together. This was reported as an oversight.

Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda [UTC.23-24/4, Open]

23-24/6 The Committee **noted** a lack of progress on many actions arising from the minutes. The Secretary would liaise with those assigned ongoing actions to update the log. It was intended to revise the log format so that it would become editable by members.

Report of Chair's action [UTC.23-24/5, Open]

23-24/7 The Committee **received** a report on decisions taken by Chair's action since the last meeting, including approval of revisions to policies on academic misconduct [to take into account AI] and student representation and a revised set of progression and award rules. It was **reported** that the Chair had subsequently also approved revisions to the Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment policy. These revisions reflected earlier principles endorsed by UTC during discussion of the relevant policies and rules at its June and July 2023 meetings.

[Secretary's note: there was a typographical error in the report of approval of the exchange agreement with Lund University: this should read 'Music' rather than 'Music and'.]

Chair's report [oral report]

23-23/8 The Chair and Deputy Chair **reported** the following:

1. The University had been awarded a Gold in TEF 2023. A celebration event was being planned.
2. There would be no industrial action at the University during week commencing 25th September. The University was monitoring the outcome of UCU's recent ballot to members for further industrial action.
3. Thanks were given to departments, professional services and committee members for their ongoing work to support students affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott.
4. Teaching and innovation webpages were due to go live in the coming week. This would act to raise the profile of teaching and learning within the University both internally and externally.

5. The Apprenticeships Monitoring Board had met the previous week and had identified a risk arising from the need for further observational evidence of the quality of teaching on apprenticeship programmes, to support the University's Self-Assessment Report. This was being taken forward by the Apprenticeships team and would be overseen by the Monitoring Board.

Student Representatives' reports [oral reports]

23-24/9 Meely Doherty, the YUSU Academic Officer, **reported** that:

1. YUSU continued to support students affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott and was also supporting students in Natural Sciences affected by the closure of the School.
2. YUSU planned to run a Community Conference, a mix of traditional academic conferences, skills sessions and art showcase, designed to offer students the opportunity to take part in and present at a conference.
3. The Academic Officer had designed and launched a [journal guide](#) which would help students to find resources in their subject. The Committee **observed** that this was a fantastic resource.
4. YUSU had successfully conducted training of Department Representatives.

23-24/10 Cytherea Shen, the GSA Vice-President (Academic), **noted** that there were no specific issues to report from the GSA.

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

Inclusive Education Update [UTC.23-24/12, Open]

23-24/11 The Committee **considered** a report on Inclusive Education, which set out key activities undertaken in 2022/23 and proposed key priorities for 2023/24.

23-24/12 The Committee **endorsed** the proposed priorities for 2023/24 and **observed** that:

1. The Inclusive Education team was to be congratulated upon being given a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) from AdvanceHE.
2. With three other universities, the University was participating in a QAA Collaborative Research Project on [optionality in assessment](#). The report from this project was being drafted and an event was planned for November 2023.

NSS Results 2023 [UTC.23-24/7, Open]

23-24/13 The Committee **considered** a report on the results of NSS 2023, including an action plan in response to the results. Sally O'Connor (Academic Quality) attended for this item and was thanked for their work, alongside colleagues in SIA by the Chair. The Chair specifically **reported** that:

1. The University's performance relative to the sector and Russell Group had declined across all areas. It was important that the University improved its NSS results.
2. Negative open comments tended to focus on industrial action, the COVID-19 response or assessment and feedback. Quantitative results for assessment and feedback also indicated that this remained a key area of concern. The University had a number of ongoing initiatives in this area.
3. Results for Student Voice had improved at institutional level, reflecting work in this area by the University and YUSU.

4. A number of subject areas had recorded good comparative results across different NSS dimensions.
5. The planned annual review process would support reflection on and action against the NSS results.
6. There is a need to move to a centralised model for module and programme evaluation to ensure areas of concern can be identified early, and to also share good practice.

23-24/14 The Committee **endorsed** the proposed action plan and **observed** that:

1. There was thought to be relatively little correlation between size of cohort and results. Some departments with large cohorts had performed well, reflecting successful approaches to generating a sense of community in those areas. Smaller cohorts could be subject to greater fluctuation in results as individual respondents had greater effect on the data.
2. There could be value in pairing departments to work together to improve NSS results so that mutual learning could take place. This was also taking place in newly established Schools.
3. Whilst the paper compared York's results to the Russell Group, not all Russell Group institutions were natural comparators for the University. A distinct comparator group had been used in past reports and it would be worth reviewing what the benchmark group should be.
4. The paper referred to target setting as part of the annual review process. This area of the paper could helpfully be clarified. There would need to be caution in setting targets: members noted that it would be preferable to have targets contextualised to each department and subject. Statistical significance should also be taken into account when considering targets.
5. The paper referred to undertaking 'deep dives' in data for particular subject areas: this could helpfully be expanded upon as it was felt that the meaning was unclear with a particular OFSTED interpretation being well-known in Education.
6. Results for students on combined programmes were not reported on in the paper, but were historically not as positive as for single honours students. This could have an impact on results for particular subject areas. It was important that this was taken into account in reflections on results and in any target setting for departments.

Action: Academic Quality to share NSS results for combined programmes with UTC

TEF 2023 Outcome and Reflection [UTC.23-24/6, Open]

23-24/15 The Committee **considered** a paper on the outcome of TEF 2023, which included reflections on learning for the next iteration of TEF. David Gent (Academic Quality) spoke to this paper. In addition to the details in the paper, it was **reported** that:

1. There were now publicly available results for 175 HEIs (including 19 Russell Group institutions), with results for 53 HEIs unavailable due to appeal.
2. The University's overall Gold was one of 46 in the sector and 7 in the Russell Group. The University's Gold for the Student Experience aspect of TEF was one of 53 in the sector and just 5 in the Russell Group.

23-24/16 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Congratulations were due to all involved in TEF for the Gold award, which reflected outstanding teaching, learning and student support across the University. The Committee noted the contributions of David Gent and the team involved in the TEF submission.
2. YUSU's Student Submission played a key role in helping secure the Gold award: thanks were expressed to YUSU and in particular Gabby Morgan for their work on TEF.
3. Evidence presented on educational gain had not been recognised by the panel as outstanding, and this was a key area for improvement. Once panel statements and

submissions for comparator universities were published in November 2023, it would be possible to learn how other universities had approached this area of TEF.

Action: Academic Quality to share learning as part of TEF preparations

Graduate Outcomes Survey Results [UTC.23-24/8a, Open]

- 23-24/17 The Committee **considered** a paper summarising the results of the latest Graduate Outcomes survey, which related to 2020-21 graduates. Hannah Smith, Director of Careers and Systems, spoke to this paper. In addition to the details in the paper, it was specifically **reported** that:
1. The University's performance on the Graduate Prospects metric had increased by 2.4 pp compared to the last survey, with York remaining in the top quartile of all institutions. Ranking in relation to the Russell Group had however declined.
 2. There had been notable increases in relation to students with disabilities and BAME students, reflecting work in those areas. There had been an increase in the gap in results between students from more disadvantaged socio-economic groups and their peers. The data did not yet reflect the impact of a number of initiatives in Careers and Placements in this area.
 3. Results would be followed up with departments as part of the new annual review process.

- 23-24/18 The Committee **observed** that:
1. There had been a decline in response rate. It was possible that differences in response rates across subject areas might skew overall results.
 2. The paper used the *Times* league table methodology and so excluded international students. This data was however available to the University and would be worth further reflection.
 3. A number of departments were reported as having a comparatively low score for their subject area. It would be beneficial to add further context to this aspect of the report prior to it being considered at Senate. Comparative results for Education were affected by the fact that the University did not offer teacher training at undergraduate level, whilst Nursing had a high absolute score. It was also possible that idiosyncrasies and errors in external SOC coding affected some of these areas.
 4. Whilst the paper indicated that there was no external benchmark, this was provided at institutional level through TEF data. The University's performance was 1.5 pp above the OfS benchmark.

OfS B3 Student Outcomes Data: Progression [UTC.23-24/8b, Open]

- 23-24/19 The Committee **considered** an assurance report on the latest set of B3 Student Outcomes data from the Office for Students. David Gent (Academic Quality) spoke to this item and **reported** that:
1. As previously, the University exceeded all the OfS minimum performance thresholds at institution level and in the vast majority of subject and demographic split indicators. The data therefore was not thought to present regulatory risks.
 2. There were a small number of Arts and Humanities subjects below threshold at PGT level (though not to a statistically significant degree). Investigation had revealed that students classed in 'negative' destinations included those employed in the heritage sector, which was a desirable and targeted outcome for some of the programmes included in the data.
 3. There was only one indicator below the OfS performance threshold to a statistically significant degree, at PGR level. PGR performance would be considered at YGRS Board.

- 23-24/20 The Committee **endorsed** the conclusion in the paper that no further action was needed in response to the data, beyond the planned follow-up of results as part of annual review.

Employability Advisory Group [UTC.23-24/9, Open]

23-24/21 The Committee **received** a paper on the work of the Employability Advisory Group (formerly Employability Strategy Group), summarising the membership, goals and plans of the Group. Claire Hughes (Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning and Students for Sciences) presented this item. In response to queries from members, it was **reported** that:

1. The Group intended to hold an annual employability event, which would take the form of a panel discussion with external involvement. The theme and timing of the event for 2023-24 had not yet been confirmed. Members **noted** the importance of avoiding assessment weeks.
2. YUSU were involved in the Group.
3. There was a strong link with learning and teaching through consideration of employability in the curriculum.

23-24/22 It was **observed** that it might be beneficial to have a more diverse external membership of the Group.

Annual Report on Employability [UTC.23-24/10, Open]

23-24/23 The Committee **noted** an annual report on employability for 2022-23, which summarised the work of the Careers and Placements team to support employability. Hannah Smith, Director of Careers and Systems, **reported** that this included work which was thought by Careers and Placements to have had a positive impact on the Graduate Outcomes survey results.

23-24/24 The Committee **observed** that the work reported in respect of support for under-represented groups was particularly welcome.

Access and Participation Plan [UTC.23-24/11, Open]

23-24/25 The Committee **considered** an update on the Access and Participation Plan, which summarised progress against the current plan and set out a proposed approach for the creation of a new Access and Participation Plan in 2024. Fran Hornsby, Access and Participation Plan Manager, attended the Committee to speak to this item. In addition to the details in the paper, it was **reported** that:

1. The OfS dataset indicated that, although good progress was being made, the target on access for care leavers had been very marginally missed. However, this was imperfect data: internal figures suggested a more positive picture.
2. It was possible that the OfS guidance on Access and Participation Plans would change in the coming months. The timeline for the release of the next OfS dataset was also unclear. Given these uncertainties, it was planned to draft as much of the Access and Participation Plan as possible in advance of the release of the OfS dataset.
3. Under OfS regulation, interventions in the new Access and Participation Plan would need to be fully evaluated so that the University could measure their impact. The University would also need to outline expected investment against targets.
4. YUSU was involved in the development of the Access and Participation Plan and planned to submit an optional student submission.

23-24/26 The Committee **endorsed** the proposed approach to the creation of the new Access and Participation Plan, noting a minor typographic error in committee submission deadlines.

YUSU Excellence Awards [UTC.23-24/13, Open]

23-24/27 The Committee **noted** a report from YUSU on its Excellence Awards 2023. Meely Doherty, YUSU Academic Officer, spoke to this item. Beyond the details in the paper, it was **reported** that:

1. There had not been many nominations for professional services members of staff. YUSU would advertise the fact that all but the Teacher and Supervisor of the year categories were open to professional services staff.
2. There were differing levels of nominations by department. It was thought that this was due to a combination of the size of departments, proactive advertising from department representatives, and engagement in some departments with initiatives that had been high profile at YUSU.

23-24/28 The Committee **observed** that there might be value in creating a student support category, to allow for further professional services nominations. It was **reported** that the Unsung Hero category already served this purpose.

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

[Secretary's Note: there were no items under this part of the agenda for this meeting]

Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes

Annual Review Process [Oral report]

23-24/29 The Committee **received** an oral report from Steve King, Associate PVC (Teaching, Learning and Students) on the new annual review process. It was **reported** that:

1. Guidance on the new annual review process was being finalised: it was intended to circulate this to departments / schools as soon as possible. The process would involve annual review meetings in November 2023, and submission of annual review forms by Christmas.
2. The new process would focus on action planning. There would also be a small number of Faculty-specific and institution-wide questions. The form would be much shorter than in previous iterations of annual review.
3. The process was designed to be data-driven. In the first instance, it was intended to focus on NSS, Access and Participation data, degree outcomes data and employment outcomes, with external examiners' reports also due to feed in to the process.
4. The process for 2023/24 was a first step in the development of a more comprehensive process.
5. The International Pathway College annual review would fall under the University Teaching Committee.

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

Standing Committee on Assessment: Terms of Reference and Summary [UTC.23-24/14-15, Open]

23-24/30 The Committee **approved** proposed revisions to the terms of reference for Standing Committee on Assessment, subject to the addition of a reference to monitoring workload, as per the decision made under the discussion of UTC's terms of reference [UTC.23-24/3 refers]. It was **observed** that the advisory body formed following the discontinuation of Special Cases Committee did not report to any committee: this was, however, not thought to be necessary as it did not have decision-making responsibility. The Academic Registrar, PVC (Teaching, Learning and Students) and Deputy Director (Student Services) were asked to follow this up with the Secretary to UTC.

Action: Academic Registrar / PVC (TLS) / Deputy Director (Student Services)

[Secretary's Note: UTC was due to receive an annual report on special cases at a later meeting]

23-24/31 The Committee **received** a summary report from the July 2023 meeting of Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA). It was specifically **reported** that SCA had agreed to immediately implement

revised rules that assessments should be stored for five years after students had graduated, due to new OfS regulatory requirements in this area. It was **noted** that the sector had pushed back on this aspect of regulation and it was possible it would be updated by the OfS.

Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups [UTC.23-24/16-18, Open]

23-24/32 The Committee **received** summaries or notes arising from the meeting of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups for all three Faculties held in June or July 2023. It was **reported** that:

1. A new approach to student representation had been adopted at the Sciences FLTG, which no longer had a single Faculty representative. Department representatives in the Faculty were meeting in advance of FLTG to discuss the agenda and share issues; a small number of those representatives would then attend the meeting.
2. Further to the concerns raised in the Sciences FLTG around academic skills provision, funding for a part-time Mathematics advisor post had been secured for a further year.

David Gent, Academic Quality Team
2 October 2023