

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

University Teaching Committee

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on Thursday 28 April 2011 at 2.00 pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall

Present: The Revd Dr David Efird (Chair), Philosophy
Dr Geoff Cubitt, History
Dr Linda Perriton, Management
Dr Victoria Gould, Mathematics
Dr Adrian Lee, Centre for Life Long Learning (in part)
Ben Humphrys, YUSU representative
Isha Arora, GSA representative

In attendance: Cecilia Lowe, Project Leader, Learning Enhancement
Ellie Reynolds, Office Manager: Registry Services
Rosemary Royds, Director: Registry Services
Elizabeth Stead, Registry Services

Apologies: Kate Dodd, Academic Registrar
Dr Jim Watt, English
Dr David Halliday, Electronics
Kathryn Lucas, Secretary of the Special Cases Committee

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

10-11/60 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2011 were **approved**.

10-11/61 Matters arising from the minutes

M10-11/46 Chair's Oral report

a) The Review of the Policy for Late Submission

The Committee **noted** that responses from staff and student representatives **on** the current policy for the late submission of assessments would be considered at its meeting on 10 June 2011. This was in order to give staff and student representatives' time to fully consider the policy. All Departments and student representatives had been invited to respond by 16 May 2011.

Feedback from Teaching Committee meeting of 14 March 2011 (M10-

11/49)

b) M10-11/37 a) Academic Integrity Tutorial

Teaching Committee approved the recommendation that students on postgraduate taught programmes are required to complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial module before their first assignment is marked (although assignments will be accepted regardless of completion) from October 2011.

c) M10-11/37 b) Checks on Examination papers

Teaching Committee approved the recommendation that departments should implement independent checks of examination papers in order to minimise errors from 26 April 2011.

d) M10-11/41 Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award D13 and D14

Teaching Committee approved the recommendation that the clarification of the wording in § D13 and 14 for Integrated masters students for implementation from October 2011.

(Secretary's note: b) and d) will be updated in the 2011/12 edition of the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback. A memo was circulated to Departments concerning c.)

10-11/62 Chair's Oral Report

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair which highlighted that:

- a) The Forum for Chairs of Boards of Examiners met on 2 March 2011. It was reported that further involvement of external examiners in the assessment process had been discussed, thereby fulfilling an action for the Committee arising from the Review of External Examining (M10-11/11). Notes from the forum have been posted on the Registry Services web pages at <http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/staff/forums/>
- b) An External Examiners' Induction took place 23 March 2011. The Chair was supported by Rosemary Royds, Director of Registry Services, and Alison Thompson, Examinations Officer.

10-11/63 Student Representatives' Oral Reports

- a) The Committee's YUSU Student Representative **reported** that he had been informed of some issues with some recent examination papers. The Chair advised (i) that students should raise such issues with the Chair of their Board of Board of Studies, (ii) that, if contacted, the Committee would advise Boards of Studies on the possible courses of action to resolve such issues, (iii) that, if they are unhappy with the decision made by their Board of Studies, students should submit an appeal to the Special Cases Committee, and (iv) that any subsequent proposals concerning assessment policy should be raised with the

Standing Committee on Assessment.

- b) YUSU had received complaints concerning the lack of study space for assessment preparation due to the library closure during the Easter period (22nd-24th April) and limited opening hours on Easter Monday (25th April). It was **decided** that the Chair with the YUSU and GSA representatives would raise this matter with the Head of the Library.

Action: Chair and YUSU/GSA Representatives

The GSA representative had nothing further to report.

10-11/64 Ordinances and Regulations

The Committee considered and **recommended for approval** to Senate an amendment to 5.2 c Regulations on Assessment for the new modular scheme – Category 2 students (page 55).

This currently reads 'Where a student has failed modules' and should be amended to make clear that this also applies to those who have missed or failed a module they are registered on because of failed or missed assessments.

- 1) Therefore it should read, 'Where a student has failed modules as a result of failed or missed assessments, and there are no mitigating circumstances, and the stage requirements cannot be met, defined re-assessment opportunities are permitted on one occasion only.'
- 2) As a result of the above, §20.2.1 (v) on reassessment in the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback (page 112) would become redundant and should be removed from the Guide issued for 2011/12. The Committee **recommended for approval** to University Teaching Committee this subsequent revision.
- 3) To provide clarity for staff, §20.2.5 of the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback (page 112) required the insertion of the re-sit dates, **Monday 20th- Friday 25th August 2012**. This addition was **recommended for approval** to University Teaching Committee.

Action: Secretary

10-11/65 Reassessment for graduate programmes in the new modular scheme

The Committee **considered** the following rules of assessment for graduate programmes in the new modular scheme, with some proposed additions, highlighted in bold, which clarify when students on these programmes are entitled to reassessment:

1) *Reassessment in Graduate Certificates*

E.5 Where a student fails taught modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 20 credits-worth of failed modules, **provided that they have failed no more than 20 credits.**

2) *Reassessment in Graduate Diplomas*

E.6 Where a student fails modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules, **provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits.**

The Committee **recommended for approval** the above, modified rules of assessment to University Teaching Committee for implementation in 2011/12.

Action: Secretary

10-11/66 Establishing the Identity of Students in Examinations

The Director of Registry Services **reported** that feedback on the current procedure for establishing the identity of students taking examination papers highlighted various issues.

The first issue concerns the procedure for dealing with students in the examination room who are not able to produce their University card. According to the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback §5.6 (page 32) "Establishing student identity" students who are unable to produce their University card are to be photographed in the examination room. This procedure has proved (i) to cause embarrassment to the student being photographed and disruption to other students and (ii) to be time-consuming and stressful for Examinations Office and invigilation staff.

It was proposed that, instead of photographing students who are unable to produce their University card in an examination, Examination Office and invigilation staff should use portable Netbooks with access to the Personal Images database to identify such students.

The second issue concerns the procedure for what, following their examination, students who were not able to produce their University card must then do. According to the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback §5.6 (page 32) "Establishing student identity" students who are unable to produce

their University card during an examination are required to produce two forms of identification, one of which must be their University card, within one working day of the examination to Registry Services, and failure to do so will be treated as a failure to attend the examination and the examination script will not be marked. This procedure has proved to be unreasonably inflexible, causing unnecessary difficulty for both staff and students. In order to resolve this issue in a way which is both consistent and equitable, the Committee **recommends for approval** to University Teaching Committee for immediate implementation the following revised version of §§ 5.6 (b and c):

5.6 Establishing Student Identity

b. A candidate unable to produce their legible University Card will have this noted on their examination script before it is submitted. The candidate will be required to provide a specimen signature in the examination room. The photograph of the student held in the University's database will be checked by the Examinations Office staff during or immediately after the examination. In addition the candidate will be required to provide two forms of identification, one of which must be their legible University Card and one of which must evidence their signature, to the Examinations Office within one working day of the examination session. Except with the express permission of the SCA, candidates who do not provide suitable identification to the Examinations Office within the specified time frame will be deemed not to have attended the examination and their script will not be marked.

c. In order to confirm, in a sensitive manner, the identity of students who veil their faces, it is essential that departments inform the Examination Office in advance that a veiled student will be sitting an exam. An identity check will be conducted by a female member of the invigilation team or Examinations Office staff, in a separate private room, against the student's photograph held in the University's database. Except with the express permission of the SCA, failure to agree to this procedure to establish the student's identity will result in the student not being permitted to sit the examination.

If University Teaching Committee **approve** this revised procedure, Registry Services will report on its effectiveness at the October 2011 meeting of the SCA.

Action: Secretary/Examinations Officer

10-11/67 Taught postgraduate programmes: external examiners' reports 2009/10

The Committee **received** a summary analysis of the 2009/10 external examiners'

reports for taught postgraduate programmes. The analysis identified issues that recurred in the reports, namely, complaints regarding external examiners' inability to unilaterally change marks, unclarity concerning departmental policy on word limits, failure to mark to the full range of marks, inconsistencies in marking, issues regarding research methodology and skills. The Committee **considered** proposals/recommendations in order to address these issues.

a) External examiners' inability to unilaterally change marks

Because the external examiners who raised this issue did not give a persuasive reason for changing the policy that external examiners cannot unilaterally change marks, the Committee recommend no change to this policy. It was noted that this policy is made clear to new examiners during their induction.

b) Word limits

The Committee will contact the Chairs of Boards of Examiners for the programmes whose external examiners raised this issue, namely, Environment, Language and Linguistics, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, and TFTV, to request that they review their published information, including their Written Statement of Assessment (and revise it if appropriate) to ensure that staff, students and external examiners understand the word-limit requirements for assessments and the associated penalties.

c) Marking to the full range and inconsistencies in marking

The Committee will contact the Chairs of Boards of Examiners for the programmes whose external examiners raised this issue, namely, Social Work, HYMS, Language and Linguistics, the Centre for Medieval Studies concerning marking to the full range and Chemistry, Computer Science, Health Sciences, History, NSLC, Politics and TFTV regarding marking inconsistencies, to request that they consider their marking practices to ensure that they are marking consistently and to the full range and to suggest that they take advice from the Project Leader for Learning Enhancement, who is willing to lead a training session on marking to the full range and marking consistently. The Project Leader will report on progress on this issue at the Committee's October 2011 meeting.

d) Assistance for students - Research methodology/skills

Because there is some unclarity on the nature of this issue, the Project Leader for Learning Enhancement will contact the Chairs of Boards of Examiners for the programmes whose external examiners raised this issue, namely, Educational Studies, Environment, History, Politics and the National Science

Learning Centre, in order to give advice on how to take the issue forward.

Action: Secretary/ Project Leader for Learning Enhancement

CATEGORY II Business

10-11/68 Review of Examination Processes

The Committee **received** a report from a Review of Examination Processes undertaken to consider changes needed to the administration of formal examinations in preparation for the full implementation of the Common Assessment Period. During discussion, the Director of Registry Services assured the Committee that Departments have been informed of the forthcoming costs for 2012/13, and the YUSU representative, having brought up the issue of resolving queries during examinations, was informed that this issue would be discussed at the June 2011 meeting.

10-11/69 Academic Misconduct

The Committee **received** an overview of Academic Misconduct cases for 2010/11 (From Oct 2011 to April 2011). Since the production of the report, a further 11 cases had been brought to the attention of the Secretary. However, it was **noted** that the number of cases was considerably lower than last year.

10-11/70 Date of the next meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting as Friday 10 June 2011 at 2.15 pm in Room H/G17, Heslington Hall.