

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on Friday 20 November 2009 at 2.15 pm in HG17, Heslington Hall

Present: Dr David Efird (Chair), Philosophy
Dr Linda Perriton, Management
Mr John Brown, Social Policy and Social Work
Dr Jim Watt, English and Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies
Dr David Halliday, Electronics
Charlie Leyland, SU representative
Kieran Aulden, GSA representative

In attendance: Mrs Rosemary Goerisch, Student Progress: SAS
Mr Philip Simison, Student Progress: SAS
Ms Cecilia Lowe, Project Leader Learning Enhancement

09-10/103 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Kate Dodd, Academic Registrar; Dr Anne Duhme-Klair, Chemistry; and Dr Pat Ansell, Health Sciences

The Chair welcomed Kieran Aulden, GSA, the Committee.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

09-10/104 The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2009.

09-10/105 Matters arising from the minutes

- i. Using students work as feedback (M08/97)
The department of Sociology is seeking ways to improve the feedback given to undergraduate students. They think that one way this could be done is to provide students with exemplar pieces of assessment work. Students will be asked to give their consent to their anonymised work being used for feedback when they submit their assessments.

The Committee approved this proposal and asked the department to note: that a range of examples should be shown to students in conjunction with the marking criteria; they will need to ensure that students' permission is obtained when assessments are submitted electronically; and that the Committee would like to use the department's

experience in this regard as a trial and ask that a report is submitted to the Committee's June meeting so, if successful, the proposal can be extended to all departments in October 2010.

- ii. Access to progressional exam scripts (M09-10/93)
The Chairs of Boards of Examiners forum held on 28 October agreed with the Committee that if possible all students should have access to their marked examination scripts.
- iii. Feedback from UTC on the process for determining degree classifications for students on combined degrees.
The Chair reported that UTC agreed that there was insufficient time to make changes to the way degrees for students on joint programmes are classified. The Committee has been asked to ensure that each Combined Board Executive Committee provide a clear statement on how they determine the degree classifications of their students.

The Chair will ask each Combined Board to provide these details for the Committee's February meeting. **Action:** Chair

- iv. GSA to highlight the academic misconduct results for 2008/9 to overseas students (M09-10/89)
In their absence the GSA were charged with raising the issue of academic misconduct and the consequences of committing it to overseas students. The GSA representative agreed to do this.
- v. UTC minute of 19.10.09
At the meeting held on 19 October UTC noted that some departments did not know about the six week turnaround time for summative feedback and marks and that further notification may be required.

The Chair **noted** that the issue was highlighted in the Guide to Assessment; that it was discussed at the Chair of Board of Examiners forum and though not every BoE chair was present at the forum, all Chairs received the minutes which includes this item.

Members discussed effective means of communicating the Committee's decisions to relevant staff and agreed that it appears that an effective method had yet to be found. The Chair asked that the University's Director of Communications be contacted for advice and guidance.

Action: RG

Secretary's Note: this has been done and the Chair will meet with the Director shortly.

vi. The Chair reported that there has been confusion recently as to the definition of open assessment and the use of stickers for students with relevant disabilities. A meeting will be held soon to resolve the issue.

vii Transferring penalties (M09-10/85iii)
UTC asked that the policy on the transfer of academic misconduct penalties be clarified. Members approved the proposal to define the policy further.

viii E-submission of theses
Members were informed that the process was almost ready to go live on the web; all that needs to be added is the instructions for students.

09-10/106 Chair's Oral Report

The Chair reported that:

1. Chairs of Boards of Examiners Forum was held on 28 October and all present felt the meeting was beneficial and agree that it should be held termly

2. An internal review of the external examining process at York
The Chair of UTC has asked that the Committee conduct a review of the external examining process at York. More details will be available at the Committee's February meeting.

3. UTC held on 9 November 2009
The Chair reported that UTC approved all of the Committee's proposals from the October at the meeting held on 9 November 2009.

4. The Academic Misconduct Working Party has met and will be meeting again in December.

09-10/107 To receive an oral report from student representatives

The SU reported that they are planning campaigns for feedback and academic integrity. The Chair asked that they discuss a definition for collusion before the academic integrity campaign begins

The GSA reported that they are providing training for course representatives.

09-10/108 Statistical analysis of classification of degrees I

This item was scheduled to be received at this meeting but is not yet available and will be considered at the January meeting

09-10/109 Annual report on invigilation

The Committee **received** the annual report on invigilation. The changes introduced in 2008/9 were reviewed and all were considered to be appropriate and reduced the disruption for students and invigilators.

It was reported by the senior invigilators employed by the Examinations Office that:

1. English language dictionaries are being used inappropriately. For example, some students are using them to answer exam questions that require the giving of a definition. In some sessions, invigilators can spend their entire time distributing dictionaries and not fulfilling their invigilating role.

The Committee **agreed** that departments and students should be consulted on the removal of dictionaries from October 2009

Action: RG, SU/GSA

2. Removable correction tape is now being used by some students, and invigilators are not able to tell if the used tape was brought into the exam with text written on it or if it was written on during the exam.

The Committee **agreed** in principle that, if after consulting with departments no objections are received, correction tape and fluid will not be allowed in University examinations from January 2010

Action: RG

The Committee also **agreed** that as there could be no sanction for using the examination question paper for rough work. Students will be told from January 2010 that it there responsibility to cross out rough work in their answer booklet.

09-10/110 VLE and delivery of summative assessment

The Committee **received** proposals for the delivery of summative assessments on Yorkshire.

Members **noted** the risks associated with using the VLE for summative assessments and **agreed** that anyone wishing to use the VLE for such

assessment should submit a proposal for doing so to the SCA first.

Action: Update the GoA

09-10/111 PGT modularisation – attendance of external examiners

The Committee **received** proposals regarding external examiners attendance at Progressional and Award Boards.

The new modular scheme for postgraduate taught students requires a progression point when the taught modules have been assessed. This will require a meeting of the Board of Examiners at which, under the University's current rules, the external examiner should be present because awards may be made and reassessments discussed; the reassessments will then need to be considered by the external examiner; the external examiner will need to attend the final Board of Examiners and will also need to consider the resubmission of any independent studies that were given 40-49 on first submission.

It is unreasonable to expect the Board of Examiners to sit four times in four months and ask the external examiner to be present at all meetings.

The Committee agreed that:

- an external examiner must be present at the final Board of Examiners
- samples of reassessed work must be considered by the external examiner but the results could be dealt with by Chair's Action
- it was unreasonable to ask external examiners to attend the Progress Board but they did not come to an agreement as to who should oversee the business of this Board and that business is conducted fairly, having rejected a proposal that it should be the department's UTC representative.

Action: further suggestions will be submitted at the Committee's next meeting

09-10/112 Application of rules on suspension of studies and extension for research students

The Committee **received** proposals from Professor Ian Shaw regarding the application of rules on the suspensions and extensions for research students. Professor Shaw's proposal that the deadline for the submission of research student's theses include five working days after the final end date was rejected. Members noted that the date of submission is important for students funding and must not be extended without proper cause.

Professor Shaw is also concerned that students' with mitigating circumstances in their writing up year are not able to apply for a

suspension of their studies; rather they can apply for an extension. He argues that the student then suffers the penalty of a late submission. The Committee reaffirmed that only extensions were permissible during a writing up year and that no penalties are applied in these cases.

09-10/113 Date of the extraordinary and the next meeting

Members **noted** that the date of the extraordinary meeting is 16 December at noon in Derwent Terrace and the next Committee meeting is Friday 8 January 2010 at 2.15 pm in Room HG17, Heslington Hall.