

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on Friday 8 January 2010 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 Pat Ansell, Health Sciences
Dr Anne Duhme-Klair, Chemistry
Ms Charlie Leyland and Mel Fox, SU representatives
Mr Rui Huang, GSA representative

In attendance: Mrs Kate Dodd, Academic Registrar
Ms Rosemary Royds, Manager, Student Admin Services
Mrs Rosemary Goerisch, Student Progress: SAS
Mr Philip Simison, Student Progress: SAS
Ms Wendy Shaw and Mrs Nadia Fenn, Special Cases Committee
Ms Cecilia Lowe, Project Leader Learning Enhancement

09-10/120 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr David Halliday, Electronics and Dr Amanda Rees, Sociology.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

09-10/121 The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2009.

09-10/122 Matters arising from the minutes

(i) 09/10-105 iii Classifying joint degrees
Chair will ask all combined executive boards to provide a clear statement on the classification of degrees for their programmes for the Committee's February's meeting. **Action:** Chair

(ii) M09/10-109 Invigilation issues
All Chairs of Boards of Examiners were consulted on the removal

of correction tape and fluid from January 2010, and the majority agreed. The Committee agreed that correction fluids and tapes would no longer be permissible in an exam from January 2010.

Removal of dictionaries from October 2010

Departments were consulted on the use of English language dictionaries in a closed University examination, and the majority agreed that they should be removed from October 2010.

The Students Union proposed that bi-lingual dictionaries be reintroduced. The Committee **decided** to reject this proposal because using them is not a good study habit, they are not always correct and they provide a means for committing academic misconduct.

Having a selection of bi-lingual dictionaries for students to consult was also discussed but it was **decided** this is not a viable option. It was **noted** that students can consult the paper setter in the first few minutes of the exam if they have a query. The Committee asked that students be made aware of this opportunity.

Action: RG

Members **agreed** that:

1. All internal examiners are given guidance on writing examination questions for students whose first language is not English before October 2010 and that guidance will be included in the Guide to Assessment. **Action: CL**
2. Examiners must state in the examination rubric if access to a dictionary is allowed and the relevant department must provide an adequate number of staff to distribute them during the exam.
3. If dictionaries are allowed all students will have access to them

(iii) 09/10-111 PGT modularisation - External Examiners attending Boards of Examiners

This issue was deferred from the last meeting and will be discussed with the Chair of UTC.

- 09-10/123** The Committee **received** the Chair's Oral Report
The Chair reported that:
1. The Academic misconduct working party had met twice and would be making a proposal to the Committee at the next meeting.
 2. The Mitigating Circumstances working party's proposals and procedures will be considered at the February meeting of Senate.
 3. The meeting with the Director of Communications re communicating with academic staff was very helpful and it is hoped that communication with departments will be more productive in the future.
 4. The internal examiner approval process is now complete.

- 09-10/124** 1. The Committee **received** an oral report from student representatives
The Students Union reported that 25-29 January is Academic Integrity week. The needs of part-time and distance-learning students will also be included.

The SU tabled a paper that **proposed** paper setters or another responsible person is present during an examination to answer students' queries. The Committee **approved** the proposal and asked that departments be consulted on the viability of requiring staff to attend each examination. **Action: RG**

The SU also **proposed** that the record of exam question paper errors is reported to the relevant Board of Studies at the end of each academic year. The Committee agreed to **recommend** to Teaching Committee that departments should state in their Annual Programme Review how these errors were addressed and how they will be avoided in the future.

2. The SU **proposed** that students be informed when a cohort's assessment marks are rescaled or changed in any way and that this requirement is included in the Guide to Assessment. The Committee **approved** the **proposal**. **Action: Update the GoA**

- 09-10/125** **Statistical analysis of classification of degrees I**
This item was deferred until February as the analysis was not available.

09-10/126

Submission of thesis

The Committee **received** a proposal regarding the submission of incorrect versions of a thesis or dissertation. A small number of PhD students having submitted their theses for examination have asked to retrieve them soon afterwards for a variety of reasons.

The Committee **approved** the following proposals:

1. When students submit their theses for examination, they sign to say they accept that it may not be retrieved.
2. Guidance on non-retrieval to be included in the guidance on submission of theses.
3. The Chair of the SCA may, in exceptional circumstances, approve a request to retrieve a thesis.

09-10/127

Stickers denoting the disregarding errors of spelling and grammar

The Committee **received** a proposal to change the current policy. Students who have a statement of needs that states they should not be penalised for spelling and grammar errors should have the opportunity to have stickers attached to all their assessments regardless of duration was **approved**. The Committee requested that Steve Page, the Manager of Student Support Services, is consulted regarding the implementing this change. **Action:** RG

Secretary's Note: Steve Page has been consulted and recommends that the change is implemented as soon as possible but at the latest by 1 April 2010.

09-10/128

Annual priority 2

The Committee **received** proposals on the process that should be in place for types of oral examinations, other than viva voce examinations, such as presentations and language oral examinations. It was **noted** that Appendix E: Assessment Formats and Marking Processes, which were approved by UTC, contains guidelines on the marking of presentations, oral examinations and performances but limits this type of assessment to less than 11% of the total module mark. Members **decided** that departments should be consulted on this limit to ensure it is appropriate. **Action:** RG

09-10/129

Fitness to practice

The Committee **received and approved** a proposal from Health Sciences to make two minor changes to the Fitness to Practice policy.

Action: AM Guide to be updated

09-10/130

Turnitin trial

The Committee **received** a briefing from Clare Wiggins, Project Officer regarding using Turnitin, academic misconduct detection software, as an informative and pedagogic help to students. Before this can be implemented there needs to be a trial in a few departments so that operational issues can be identified and addressed. It is anticipated that a proposal will be considered at the Committee's June meeting.

Action: CW

09-10/130.

Date of the next meeting

The Committee **noted** that the next meeting will be on Friday 26 February 2010 at 2.15 pm in Room HG17, Heslington Hall.