About the Academic Support Office

The Academic Support Office (ASO) contributes to the enhancement and quality assurance of learning and teaching across the University. We are primarily a staff-facing service but we have a developing body of work directly for students, particularly in support of academic skills.

We work closely with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning, Teaching and Students, the University Teaching Committee (UTC), the Learning and Teaching Forum, colleagues in academic and administrative departments, and students.

The ASO has four teams:

- **E-Learning Development** (led by Richard Walker) / **Learning Enhancement** (led by Cecilia Lowe) / **Quality Assurance** (led by Jane Iddon) / **Academic Practice** (led by Duncan Jackson).

**Technology-enhanced learning support**

We have wide-ranging expertise to help departments to develop curricula including:

- e-learning: the E-Learning Development Team manages the University’s VLE, *Yorkshare*. The team works with staff across the University to develop e-learning and blended learning provision, and with departments to develop their strategies for technology-enhanced learning;
- distance learning;
- broadening the modes of teaching and learning, such as through group work;
- managing the Replay lecture recording service and promoting its pedagogic opportunities.

**Managing programmes and collaboration**

- We advise staff on the development of programmes and on the University’s formal processes for approving new/modified programmes and modules, to facilitate good practice and UTC approval (each department has a named contact in the Quality Assurance Team).
- We advise staff who are considering collaboration with other institutions, including joint PhD programmes with European partners, and programmes delivered through the Erasmus Mundus scheme. These bring particular opportunities for staff and students, but also potential risks to the University. We quality assure all such provision.
Assessment and feedback

- We have particular expertise to help departments to develop their assessment and marking practices and to explore ways of enhancing the quality of feedback to students.
- We have recently introduced supported facilities for e-assessment and online handling of assessed work, including provision of feedback.

Support services for teaching

- We support the development of skills through a programme of workshops and ‘transition’ resources including material specifically for international students.
- We work with departments on the development of online ‘transition’ resources for new undergraduate students.
- We deliver and develop the Academic Integrity tutorial in partnership with other colleagues.
- We project-manage the use of Turnitin software to support students formatively in developing awareness of academic integrity and good practice in academic writing.
- We run a Maths Skills Centre, with a drop-in facility, to complement departmental provision.
- We run a Writing Centre, open to all undergraduate and taught masters students interested in discussing and developing their academic writing.

Project funding

- We project-manage funding schemes such as the Rapid Response Fund and the Learning and Teaching Strategic Projects Fund to which departments can bid to support curriculum development.
- We assist academic colleagues with bids for external resources such as from the Higher Education Academy.
- We provide equipment such as video cameras to help departments to develop online resources.

Developing your teaching

- Professional development for teaching and supporting student learning:
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP);
  - York Professional and Academic Development Scheme (YPAD);
  - York Learning and Teaching Award;
  - Programme Leaders Course;
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Health Professions Education (PGCHPE);
  - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Network;
- Technology enhanced learning workshops;
- Workshops on a range of learning enhancement topics;
- Learning and Teaching Forum: workshops, conference and magazine for sharing practice

Rewarding Teaching Excellence

- We recognise excellent teaching in a variety of ways: supporting the Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Awards and National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

Reviews and visits

- We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality and experience of our programmes
- managing the programme of Periodic Reviews, advising departments and panel members, and drafting reports on reviews for University Teaching Committee;
- liaising with departments regarding the Annual Programme Review process;
- the validation of programmes delivered by partner institutions;
- taking a key role in analysing results from the National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught Student Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and UK Engagement Survey; working with departments to interpret the results and plan actions to address issues arising.
- we also project-manage preparations for Institutional Reviews by the QAA.

University committees and groups

- We provide administrative support for the University Teaching Committee and its portfolio of work, HYMS Joint Senate Committee, and for related bodies such as the Learning and Teaching Forum, Postgraduate Taught Special Interest Group, Co-ordinating Group for Supplementary Programmes and the Distance Learning Forum.

Project work

- We manage an ongoing suite of learning and teaching projects on behalf of University Teaching Committee, such as the introduction of the new modular scheme, and provide overall project-management support for the Learning and Teaching Strategy:
  https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/procedure/strategy/

Assessment and feedback
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/themes/assessment/

Support services for teaching
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/support/

Project funding
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/support/funding/

Developing your teaching
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/develop/

Rewarding teaching excellence
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/reward/

Reviews and visits
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/procedure/review/

University committees and groups
https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/contacts/committees/