THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee held on 10 December 2012

Present: the PVC for Learning and Teaching (Chair), the Academic Registrar, the Head of the Academic Support Office (ASO), the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA), Dr I Abrahams, Prof W Bonefeld, Mrs L Booth, Dr A Carpenter, Mr T Clarke, Prof P Drew, Mr G Osborn (YUSU Representative), Mr T Rajab (GSA Representative), Dr K Selby, Professor L Siciliani, Dr H Smith, Professor C Thompson, Dr R Vann, Professor A Young

In attendance: Mr R Gill (Secretary), Dr J Grenville (DVC), Dr J James (Academic Support Office)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr A Kaloski-Naylor and Dr M White.

Category I

12-13/58 Welcome

12-13/59 Minutes
The Committee approved the minutes from the meeting held on 5 November 2012 (UTC.12-13/36), subject to the following correction to M12-13/39 (b) to read “the timing of feedback on the ISM. This was confirmed as being within the standard six weeks, but with an aim to circulate it earlier online”.

12-13/60 Matters Arising
The Committee considered a report on matters arising from the minutes (UTC.12-13/37) and noted that most items had been closed. The following amendments to the report were noted:
• on M12-13/40 (withdrawal of the MA in Music Technology and changes to the MA in Music), it was **noted** that the Chair had discussed and agreed with the Department of Music the arrangements put in place for current MA in Music Technology students, had received and approved revised module descriptors for the MA in Music, and had discussed the Department’s capacity to provide appropriate supervision for students taking the two new specialist streams of music

• on M12-13/41 (use of KIS data), it was **noted** that monitoring of departmental KIS webpage hits would start immediately, even though it was likely that the impact of the introduction of the KIS would be more significant for the UCAS cycle for 2014 entry.

**12-13/61 Oral Report From the Chair**

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair as follows:

**General Committee business**

• The Chair thanked Paul Drew, who was standing down, for his contribution to the Committee

• The UTC strategic meeting on 17 December 2012 would look at standardisation versus diversity in relation to a range of learning and teaching issues

• Members were reminded that the Annual Programme Review (APR) process was now underway and that they should provide comments on their allocated APR reports by 21 December

• The proposed changes to teaching slot start times (M12-13/37 refers) had been considered by Operations Group and would be implemented from Autumn Term 2013

**Working groups**

• The working group on the academic year had met again and a document would be sent to the Committee for comment, before going out to departments for consultation

• The working group on visiting students had approved a number of relatively minor changes, proposed by the Study Abroad Office, to the way in which the University deals with visiting students and a document would be circulated to departments shortly. More significant changes to the visiting student offer would be contingent on the outcome of the working group on the academic year.
• A short-term working group would be established to look at the wider context of eLearning within the University in order to inform the VLE tendering process (M12-13/19 refers)

*Teaching building*

• Following input from the Committee’s working group and a meeting of the Learning and Teaching Forum, the Chair had submitted a proposal for a new teaching building to the Senior Management Group (SMG) (M12-13/78 refers). A further paper would be submitted to the SMG in the new year, following work with the University’s strategic space planners on costing the new building

• The Chair noted that the SMG had reaffirmed the original budget but that he was keen to be ambitious in terms of what a new teaching building would offer (and to maximise the teaching space liberated within departments to serve as learning space) and he was therefore looking into additional sources of income (e.g. by working with DARO) and/or whether a multi-phase build might be appropriate

• Roddy Vann noted the importance of the Committee’s involvement in terms of prioritising any decisions relating to the new teaching building and the Chair confirmed that this would be achieved via re-convening the Committee’s working group on the new teaching building and/or direct correspondence with Committee members

• Kate Dodd noted the importance of involving the Examinations Office in any discussions about the new teaching building given the current pressure on the examinations timetable due to space constraints.

*Secretary’s note: any further comments on the teaching building proposal should be emailed to the Chair.*

*Other news*

• Tony Ward from Electronics was leading the SALEIE (Strategic Alignment of Electrical and Information Engineering in European Higher Education Institutions) Erasmus multilateral network project

• The Researcher Development Team had won the Times Higher Award for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers for their Research Leaders programme.

12-13/62 Oral Report from Student Representatives
The Committee received an oral report from the Student Representatives as follows:

**YUSU**
The YUSU representative noted that:

- YUSU had held a successful training event for course representatives; over 120 representatives had attended and alternative support had been provided to those who were unable to attend. YUSU felt that there had been good engagement from departments, and had helped some to set up their Staff Student Liaison Committees
- YUSU was seeking the views of students on the academic year to feed into the Committee’s working group on this issue
- YUSU was aware that the SCA was looking at the potential impact of the new modular scheme assessment rules on degree classification.

**GSA**
The GSA representative noted that:

- Following elections, all principal officers, including a new president, were now in post
- A training event for course representatives had been held, with a good attendance of over 30
- The GSA had been working with the Academic Support Office regarding the promotion of the PRES survey
- The GSA had been working to improve the turnaround of work submitted to supervisors
- The GSA was very concerned about the likely negative impact on the GSA’s activities arising from the loss of the dedicated welcome week at the start of the 2013/2014 academic year (due to the change in the start and end date of the academic year)
- The GSA believed there was a need to improve training in data analysis (software use) in the social sciences.

With respect to the loss of the welcome week in 2013/2014, the DVC noted that she was aware of the GSA’s concerns and was doing all she could to ensure that they were mitigated. The Timetabling Office was trying to accommodate all the normal welcome week content in weeks 1 and 2 of the timetable.
Summary Report on the Undergraduate External Examiners’ Reports 2011-12

The Committee received a summary report on the undergraduate external examiners’ reports for 2011/2012 (UTC.12-13/38). It was being considered by the Committee in advance of the SCA as it provided useful context for APR (see M12-13/61) but the Committee would need to return to the report once the SCA had proposed recommendations arising from it.

In the course of discussion it was noted that:

- The SCA would need to pay particular attention to the reports which had been flagged as requiring a University-level response
- The Chair of the SCA had noted the concerns raised by one department about the usefulness of the assessment reports generated by SITS. Departments had different needs with respect to whether they wanted results presented by programme or across the entire cohort and SITS could not do both. One possible solution that was being investigated was the use of the powerful presentational software Tableau
- External examiners’ reports did not tend to mention Postgraduates Who Teach (PGWT) but PGWT course representatives should have access to the reports for information via Board of Studies and APR meetings
- The SCA should pay particular attention to comments about generous marking made in a number of reports. The SCA should endeavour to understand the background to each remark and ensure that the departments concerned had taken appropriate action
- It would be helpful if the SCA could produce a digest of frequently occurring issues to circulate to all departments to raise awareness.

Teaching Space and Timetabling

The Committee noted that the annual report on teaching space and timetabling would be considered at its next meeting.

Centre for Applied Human Rights: Postgraduate Certificate in Defending Human Rights

The Committee noted that a proposal for a Postgraduate Certificate in Defending Human Rights had been postponed, as the programme had been withdrawn from Planning Committee in the light of further discussions about the programme’s business case.
The York Management School: MSc in Global Marketing

The Committee considered a proposal from The York Management Schools (TYMS) for an MSc in Global Marketing (UTC.12-13/41) to start in 2013. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Carl Thompson and Luigi Siciliani and had their support and that of the external assessor.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The programme leader, who was new to the University, had worked with Carl Thompson to improve the proposal prior to its submission
- The two nominated members had raised a number of issues, for example in relation to staff capacity and module timing, with the programme leader and had received satisfactory answers
- The external assessor’s report was not as detailed as might be hoped
- The programme would be offered in full-time mode only, not part-time as suggested by some of the documentation.

The Committee approved the programme but noted that:

(a) TYMS should be asked to provide a second external assessor’s report;
(b) As the programme leader was new to the University, the ASO should ensure that he was provided with appropriate support in terms of taking the programme through to its launch date;
(c) TYMS should consider whether it was appropriate that the 20 and 10 credit modules should have the same number of teaching hours.

Secretary’s note: the external assessor report form will be modified to make it clear that an academic email address should normally be supplied for correspondence. ACTION: ASO

Department of Psychology: PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Psychology for a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging (UTC.12-13/42) to start in January 2013. The programme was a variant of the existing PhD programme, for students focused on neuroscience and neuroimaging
rather than traditional Psychology. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Katherine Selby and Carl Thompson and had their support and that of the external assessor.

During discussion, it was noted that the programme leader had responded satisfactorily to the questions raised by the nominated members, including clarification of the length of the part-time programme (six years), the timing of the taught modules (predominantly in year one), and how attendance at seminars would be monitored.

The Committee approved the programme. It was noted that the Psychology Department should ensure that in its postgraduate research degree programmes: (i) it is clear whether taught modules need to be passed or just completed, and what compensation and/or re-assessment rules apply to taught modules, and (ii) the Graduate School Board does not retrospectively waive confirmation requirements such as the completion of taught modules (though it can prospectively waive the completion of taught modules via APEL).

The Committee noted that the Academic Support Office would produce an abridged external assessor report form for postgraduate research degree programmes. ACTION: ASO

12-13/68 Attendance Monitoring

The Committee considered the institutional Attendance Management Policy for Sponsored International Students (UTC.12-13/43), which specifies the formal attendance points for sponsored international students and where responsibility for monitoring these lies.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The policy (which was just one element of the requirements placed on HEIs by the UKBA) had arisen as a result of an internal audit which had indicated that a single institutional policy was required (rather than individual departmental policies as originally envisaged)
- The policy had drawn on guidance issued by the UKBA and was not out of line with policies developed by other HEIs
- The policy aimed to satisfy UKBA monitoring expectations whilst drawing as much as possible on ‘business as usual’ interactions between students and departments to minimise the additional burden placed on staff and sponsored students
• Centrally and locally held records of student attendance would need to be reconciled frequently prior to the introduction of SITS software to facilitate monitoring
• Guidance would need to be added to the student transfer form to clarify expectations for the monitoring of students transferring between departments. ACTION: Academic Registrar

The Committee approved the policy and the Chair thanked the Academic Registrar for her work.

12-13/69 Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR)
The Committee noted that further discussion on the proposed implementation of the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) had been postponed until further notice, following further reflection on the issue by the PVC for Learning and Teaching, the Academic Registrar and Careers. This was because the University was not (due to the lack of an appropriate database) currently in the position to produce the Diploma Supplement, which would form a key part of the HEAR. The postponement would enable the University to ascertain how the HEAR was being used within the sector and by graduate recruiters.

12-13/70 Languages for All
The Committee considered a paper on the future of Languages for All (LFA) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (UTC.12-13/45) and noted that it had been asked to approve: (i) guidelines summarising the operation and resourcing of LFA for credit and not-for-credit, and (ii) proposed amendments to the Undergraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design to enable undergraduate students at stages 1-3 to study a language ab initio, or to continue to develop a language below the expected University level, within their programme (if permitted to do so by their department).

With respect to (i), it was noted that it was beyond the Committee’s remit to approve the proposals relating to resourcing. With respect to (ii), it was noted that:
• The proposal would help departments where students wanted or needed to develop generic language skills e.g. for international business in the case of Management students or to enable History students to read secondary sources in a foreign language for their dissertation
• The proposal would not prevent departments, such as English, from continuing to offer bespoke language modules as part of their degree programmes (such modules were a combination of language and discipline-related skills and therefore at the credit level appropriate for the year of study)

• At Keele, language modules were allocated to the credit level of the year in which they were taken (e.g. a module in introductory French taken in the final year of a standard undergraduate degree would be allocated to level 6), subject to a number of rules.

The Committee decided to postpone a decision on the proposed amendments to the Undergraduate Modular Scheme subject to the provision of further information on what comparator institutions within the sector were doing in relation to this issue. ACTION: DVC

With respect to the other queries raised in the paper, the Committee:

(a) Supported the proposal of further enhancing the profile of LFA registration during the enrolment process;

(b) Strongly supported the proposal for free language provision for all postgraduate students and hoped that this would be achieved as soon as resources permitted;

(c) Had no objections in principle to the University offering language-focused foundation years (although it was noted that it could be difficult to achieve viable numbers) or pre-sessional language courses (which would also enhance the diversity of students on campus over the summer) but noted that it was not for the Committee to make these strategic decisions;

(d) Supported moving some smaller community-focused LFA courses to the Centre for LLL, in the light of the support from the Centre for LLL for this move;

(e) Noted that with regards to LFA tutors the Committee’s interest lay in ensuring that tutors were appropriately qualified and prepared for teaching; the issue of how the tutor role was graded in HERA was a matter for Human Resources.

12-13/71 QAA UK Quality Code Draft Chapter B4: Supporting Student Achievement

The Committee received for comment the QAA’s UK Quality Code draft Chapter B4: Supporting Student Achievement (UTC.12-13/46), which focuses on the range of mechanisms and services that HEIs put in place to support students and to enable every student to achieve their learning
objectives and make the most of their student experience throughout their period of study, whatever their mode of learning, prior educational background, or other needs.

It was suggested that:

- The expectation should be amended to read “Higher education providers have effective, efficient and reasonable arrangements in place to support all students appropriately in achieving their learning objectives”
- The usefulness of indicator 4 was questioned
- The postgraduate dimension was not sufficiently well-represented in the explanatory text.

These comments would be fed into the institutional response, together with any other comments emailed to Juliet James by 14th December.

The Committee noted that the consultation on the QAA’s UK Quality Code draft Chapter B9: Appeals and Complaints on Academic Matters would close before the next meeting of the Committee. It was therefore decided that the draft chapter should be circulated to the Committee, with any comments received to be collated and circulated around the membership to prompt discussion. ACTION: ASO.

The Committee’s deliberations would then be passed to the Academic Registrar, who was coordinating the institutional response (including circulating the draft chapter to other interested parties). ACTION: Academic Registrar

The Chair noted that the Academic Support Office would be looking at the UK Quality Code with a view to allocating responsibility for the oversight of chapter expectations and indicators. ACTION: ASO

12-13/72 Periodic Review of The York Management School

The Committee considered and approved the report, external examiners’ reports and action plan arising from the periodic review of The York Management School (TYMS) (UTC.12-13/47).
It was noted that the periodic review and the arrival of the new Head of School provided an opportunity for TYMS to make a fresh start. There were encouraging signs of progress, reflected in NSS result improvements in 2012, although there also many challenges, particularly of a strategic organisational management nature. It was also noted that close monitoring of the action plan would be beneficial. ACTION: Chair to develop a schedule for tracking progress and implement this in consultation with the Head of School.

The Committee decided that it should commend TYMS for the progress it was making and the comprehensive action plan which, if properly executed, should help the School continue to improve. It was, however, decided that the TYMS should consider whether responsibility for the action plan actions should be shared out between more individuals to spread the load and increase the ownership of the action plan. ACTION: TYMS and ASO.

The YUSU representative noted that one action was to improve the relationship between his organisation and the School and that he would approach TYMS to take this forward. He also noted that assessment and feedback and student expectations were issues that continued to be raised with YUSU by TYMS’ students.

It was noted that a paper would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to consider how best to follow up periodic review actions allocated to the University. ACTION: ASO.

12-13/73 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee received a report on the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on 9 November 2012 (UTC.12-13/48). It was noted that:

- The Academic Misconduct Policy was being revised
- The SCA would look again at the issue of the approval by Boards of Studies of decisions taken by Mitigating Circumstances Committees
- Handling mitigating circumstances cases involving long-term mental health issues remained a challenge
- The SCA had approved changes to reasonable adjustments for examinations.

Category II
12-13/74 Distance Learning Forum
The Committee noted that that the minutes of the meeting of the Distance Learning Forum held on 12 October were available online at: https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/groups/distance/#tab-4

12-13/75 Chemistry: Accreditation of Department’s Programmes
The Committee received a report from the Royal Society for Chemistry on the accreditation of the Department’s programmes (UTC.12-13/49)

12-13/76 Theatre, Film and TV: Skillset
The Committee noted that following an accreditation visit from Creative Skillset in June 2012, the MA/MSc Post Production (with VFX and Sound Design) has received Skillset accreditation for an initial period of three years. The next monitoring activity would be paper-based in summer 2013.

12-13/77 Computer Science: Accreditation of Department’s Programmes
The Committee received reports from The British Computer Society (BCS) and The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) on the accreditation of the Department’s programmes, the Department’s response, and the modifications approved by the Chair as a result (UTC.12/13/50).

12-13/78 New Teaching Building
The Committee received a report on plans for a new teaching building (UTC.12-13/51).

12-13/79 Internationalisation Change Programme
The Committee received a report from Paul Roberts, CELT Director, on the University’s participation in the HEA’s Internationalisation Change Programme (UTC.12-12/52).

12-13/80 Strategic Learning and Teaching Projects
The Committee received a report on Strategic Learning and Teaching Projects 2010-2012 (UTC.12-12/53).

12-13/81 Register of Collaborative Provision
The Committee received an updated register of collaborative provision (UTC.12-13/54).
The Committee noted that the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had approved modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study (UTC.12-13/55) as follows:

**Biology:** Approval of a four-year PhD in Mechanistic Biology. Note that the Committee approved the four-year PhD in Biological Chemistry at its meeting in October, on which the four-year PhD in Mechanistic Biology had been based, and agreed that it should be revisited to ensure that it met current University requirements for four-year PhD programmes and to resolve issues relating to student registration on the programme (*M11-12/187 refers*). The Committee should have been received the details of the PhD in Mechanistic Biology at the same time, but due to an oversight it did not. Minor revisions due to the updated TAP process have been included in the approval pro forma, as was agreed and carried out for the PhD in Biological Chemistry. Both programmes have been approved by Planning Committee.

**Computer Science:** Approval of an exception from 2012 to the University’s rules for compensation and reassessment at M and H level for projects for all accredited routes. (*NB omitted by accident from the October modifications report*).

Approval (following Planning Committee approval) of the withdrawal of the MSc in Natural Computation from October 2013.

Approval (following Planning Committee approval) of name changes from MEng Computer Systems and Software Engineering (UMCSESCSE4) and MEng Computer Systems and Software Engineering (with a year in industry), (UMCSESIND5) to MEng Computer Science and MEng in Computer Science (with a year in industry). Revised programme specifications will be forwarded to the Secretary.

**Education:** Since the recent approval of the BSc Psychology in Education, a further exception to the University rules on assessment has been approved in order to meet the
criteria for the forthcoming BPS accreditation visit. Students must pass the dissertation and this pass cannot be compensated.

**Heath Sciences:** Approval (including Planning Office approval) of the withdrawal of the MA in Public Health (International) from October 2013. The MA in Public Health will continue with minor changes to three modules (the merger of *International Health* and *International Health and Health Policy* into a single 20-credit module entitled *Communicable and Non-communicable Disease Control* and the evolution of the module *Public Health Information in Practice* into a 20-credit module entitled *Public Health Foundations and Practice*).

Approval of modifications to the online PGCert/PGDip/MSc in Haematopathology, to come into effect for new entrants 2012/13. 20-credit M-level modules *Diagnosis 1, 2 and 3* to become non-compensatable to correspond with other modules in Health Sciences which assess clinical skills. Plus the introduction of continuous assessment throughout each module. (*NB omitted by accident from the October modifications report)*

**Language and Linguistics:** Approval of a modification to the BA in English Language and Linguistics programme to increase the number of required credits of English language from 60 to 120 (40 per stage). This modification brings the programme in line with the requirements of the French/German/Spanish and Linguistics programmes and will apply to students beginning the programme from Oct 2013.

Approval of a change to the deadline for the summative assessment of the ‘Phonological Development’ module: for autumn term 2012-13 only, the deadline for the summative assessment will be the Tuesday after term has finished in response to staff absence during term-time.

**Philosophy:** Approval of a modification to the BA in Philosophy and Sociology: instead of choosing between a Philosophy dissertation or a Sociology dissertation in stage 3, students will choose either a Sociology dissertation or 40 credits of taught modules from Philosophy. This change will come into effect for students entering stage 3 in 2013/14.
**PEP:** Approval of changes to Stage 2 and Stage 3 of BA in PEP for students entering Stage 1 in October 2012, to allow students more flexibility (a minimum of 30 credits has to be taken in each of the three subjects at Stage 2 and Stage 3, and the remaining 30 credits at each stage can be freely chosen from any of the three subjects). Students can, however, opt to undertake the programme as per the prospectus and other publicity material. *(NB omitted by accident from the October modifications report)*

**Sociology, Language and Linguistic Science, Education and Psychology:** Approval (following Planning Committee approval) of a change of name from PhD in Communication Studies to PhD in Language and Communication, for new starters, to better reflect the nature of the research being undertaken by students. The management of the PhD will transfer from Sociology to Language and Linguistics.

**SPS:** Approval (following Planning Committee approval) of a new named degree pathway within the School of SPS from October 2013: the BA in Social and Political Sciences with Philosophy (students undertake a 30-credit Philosophy module in Stage 1 and Stage 2 and a 20-credit Philosophy module in Stage 3).

**SPSW:** Approval (following Planning Committee approval) of three new named Postgraduate Certificates (involving no new modules): the Postgraduate Certificate in Delivery and Change for Public Services (to start in September 2013) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Delivery and Strategy for Public Services and Postgraduate Certificate in Public Management in the Information Age (to start in April 2013).

**York Award:** Approval of changes to the assessment process for the York Award for 2012/2013 [the assessment panel which interviews students to determine if they have achieved the York Award will be reduced from three to two (where possible, the panel will be made up of a member of University staff and an employer representative – at least one of the interviewers (the chair) will be experienced and will participate in more than one panel over the assessment period). Students will be asked four interview questions from a bank of 25]
12-13/83 Dates of next meetings

The Committee noted the dates of the next meetings in HG15, Heslington Hall:

- Monday 17 December 2012 (1.45 pm)
- Monday 4 February 2013 (1.15 pm)