Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor D Smith
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), Professor T Lightfoot
Dean (Social Sciences), Professor S Bell
Dean (Sciences), Professor B Fulton
Acting Dean (Arts & Humanities), Professor J Buchanan
Director of the International Pathways College, Dr M Perry

Mr S Alzahrani (GSA student rep) Professor U Macleod
Dr R Aitken Dr S O’Keefe
Professor K Atkin Dr F Polack
Dr K Attwood Dr G Richardson
Professor Y Birks Professor J Schofield
Dr E Brown Professor M Smith
Professor D Bruce Professor L Stewart
Professor I Graham Mr C Stickels (student rep)
Professor A Higson Professor Q Summerfield
Professor M Hodson Professor J Swaffield
Dr R Ibrahim (GSA President) Professor S Thompson
Professor P Kerswill Mr A Urquhart (SU President)
Professor C Hunter Dr R Vann
Professor M Freeman Mr G Wall
Professor A Field Dr R Waites
Professor P Johnson Mr M Worrall (student rep)
Professor N Mackay

In attendance: Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Officer, Ms H Brian
Planning & Governance Administrator, Ms B Carter Ellis
Business Analyst, Mr D Cashdan (for M16-17/56)
University Governance Officer, Dr P Evans
Registrar & Secretary, Ms J Horsburgh
Finance Director, Mr J Lindley
SU Academic Officer, Mr J Porch
Dean of Graduate Research School, Professor T Stoneham

Apologies for absence were received from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), the Director of Information Services, Professor D Attwell, Professor L Black, Professor D Brown, Professor I D’Amico, Professor M Goddard, Dr G Hurst, Dr O Lisagor and Professor K Mumford.
16-17/51 **Membership/University Officers**

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked those members who were attending their last meeting.

Senate also welcomed the new Registrar & Secretary, Ms Jo Horsburgh, to her first meeting, noting that she was *ex officio* Secretary of Senate.

16-17/52 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2017 (*S.16-17/39*) were approved, subject to deletion of the following clause from M16-17/38(d):

“[…] *its use as a ‘consolation prize’ for unsuccessful professorial applicants*”

16-17/53 **Executive Report on Research**

Further to M16-17/37 (Senate Effectiveness Review), Senate received for information the most recent executive report to the University Council from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Research (*S.16-17/40*).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor drew Senate’s attention to the following aspects of the wide-ranging report:

- coverage of all aspects of University research activity;
- identification of areas of concern;
- monitoring of research performance, including research income;
- sectoral developments affecting the research environment.

16-17/54 **Academic Promotions Review**

Further to M16-17/38 (Academic Promotions Review), Senate considered a revised recommendation from the review group in respect of the membership of the Academic Promotions Committee (*S.16-17/41*).

Presenting the proposal as Chair of the group, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor drew Senate’s attention to the key features, as follows:

- enlargement of the Committee’s constituency to comprise nine members nominated by Faculty Executive Groups (two professors and one Grade 8 academic from each faculty, with no more than one member from a single academic department);
- professorial applications only to be considered by professorial members (consistent with recruitment practices);
- professorial members to chair Faculty Promotions Advisory Panels.

*Senate: 11 July 2017*
Following confirmation that applications for Reader/Professor would be considered only by professorial members, Senate approved the proposals in respect of the future operation of the Committee.

16-17/55 Statement by the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor reported the following matters, noting that from 2017/18 he would provide a shorter written report for advance circulation with other agenda papers, as recommended by the Senate Effectiveness Review Group.

- Following the election of a minority Conservative government, a number of political uncertainties remained in respect of Brexit, immigration, tuition fees and schools sponsorship (with the latter topic no longer appearing to be included in government policy in the way previously expressed).

- The Russell Group Vice-Chancellors had recently met with the Universities Minister (Jo Johnson) to discuss policy matters such as tuition fees and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

- The University had received a ‘Silver’ TEF award and, following analysis of the treatment of the University’s metrics and submission, had decided to appeal against this designation as unreflective of its teaching excellence. The right to appeal had been granted and a detailed case was therefore being prepared. It had however been notable at the recent Open Days that prospective students and their parents did not seem aware of the TEF exercise and outcomes.

- The following features of REF2021 were gradually emerging from HEFCE ahead of the expected publication of the official guidelines in early August (late September for staffing matters):
  - all ART staff and all research-only staff at grade 8 and above were anticipated to be returned (with a clear definition of research independence still required for decisions on grade 7 staff);
  - at least one output per FTE to be required (top of the range likely to be 5/6 outputs);
  - non-portability of the outputs to be enforced, but with some flexibility likely around number and date of enforcement;
  - impact case studies from REF2014 would be allowed to be re-submitted, subject to additional evidence of continuing impact;
  - institutional impact case studies to be piloted from August 2017 (although unlikely from this timing to be included in REF2021);
  - submission deadline could be late July rather than late November 2020;
  - the University would be expected to submit to Research England the number of FTE staff it planned to submit, following which information would be provided on the number of institutional outputs required.
Nicola Dandridge (currently Chief Executive of UUK) would be the first Chief Executive of the Office for Students, an appointment that had been welcomed across the sector.

In order to alleviate the current year’s financial shortfall and balance the budget agreed by the University Council, it had been decided to admit additional UGH (x86) and PGTO (x194) students in the summer recruitment round. The distribution of these additional numbers across departments was currently being finalised with the Deans/Heads of Departments and represented an achievable target that was lower in terms of UGH numbers than the previous year (4120 in 2016, cf. 4063 in 2017). As this provided an opportunity to improve tariff outcomes, it had also been decided to set a minimum A-level requirement of B-B-C for admissions during confirmation and clearing, with all departments expected to maximise tariff outcomes as a strategic objective.

Following consultation with stakeholders, reports on progress with the campus masterplan would be submitted to both Senate and Council during Autumn Term 2017. There would be opportunities for consultation with and feedback from the wider University community as part of the ongoing process.

The development of online learning continued to progress well, with further reports to be submitted to the next meeting.

Following the Grenfell Tower disaster in London, the University had undertaken fire-safety checks of all its residential and non-residential buildings, which had confirmed that it did not have any buildings clad in the same material as Grenfell, nor did it have any buildings over eighteen metres (the regulatory threshold for different fire-safety requirements). The University also operated a policy of immediate evacuation in the event of a fire alarm, rather than a ‘stay and wait’ system, and had sought appropriate assurances from providers of private off-campus student residences. It was noted that fire safety would be strongly promoted across campus during 2017/18, with particular emphasis on reinforcing the arrangements for those individuals who might need a personal evacuation plan. UEB would receive a report on this topic at its upcoming meeting.

**16-17/56 Statistical Analysis of Degree Outcomes**

Senate considered the annual statistical reports on undergraduate/taught postgraduate outcomes and postgraduate research submission rates (S.16-17/42).

Attending the meeting to present the first report, Dan Cashdan (Business Intelligence Unit) highlighted the following aspects:

- use of the degree outcomes of the 2015/16 graduating cohort in the university league tables published in 2017;

*Senate: 11 July 2017*
- percentage of good undergraduate degrees increased by 0.7% to 81.2% (2014-15: 80.5%)
- general upward trend among RG institutions continued (up 0.8% percentage points to 83.3%);
- considerable undergraduate variation at departmental level (from 54.8% to 97.3%);
- percentage of PGT students achieving their course aim increased by 1.7% to 89.5% (2014/15: 87.8%);
- slight increase in RG of 0.5% to 89.3%;
- considerable PGT variation at departmental level (from 71.6% to 97%).

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) A deeper analysis of the undergraduate results was being prepared for consideration by Teaching Committee, including consideration of demographic factors and study characteristics. Some of the data would also be used in the current retention project to reduce student withdrawals.

(b) It was technically possible to capture data on PGT students over-performing as a measure of teaching (e.g., registration for a PG Diploma culminating in a Masters award), but sectoral benchmarking would be difficult.

(c) As regards the reference in the report to a notable increase (7.3%) in the percentage of first-class awards at a competitor institution, it was noted that deeper analysis would be required to identify the reasons for this increase and the potential effect on strategic decision-making by other universities.

As regards the PGR report tracking on-time submission, the Dean of the Graduate Research School drew specific attention to the following:

- 83% of full-time PGR students starting in 2012/13 had submitted within four years;
- welcome improvement in submission rates of overseas students;
- linkage to Research Councils’ (RCs) reporting requirements (which were changing to monitor submissions “in the funded period”);
- importance of dealing with student difficulties at an early stage rather than relying on extensions at the end of the submission period.

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) Breakdown of the data by disability could be explored further. Full data by department was available through the Management Information Gateway (although suitably anonymised to ensure individual student circumstances were not visible).

(b) Although it was potentially complex and some flexibility was allowed by the RCs, it would become necessary to start recording submission rates in the
funded period (as defined at the start of each enrolment). It was agreed that this had implications for the number of students who could be supported from RC funding, the length of PhD programmes, the fee charging regime and the extent of the training content.

(c) The definition of the “funded period” would include all elements of the programme, including any years funded by industry, as this related to the student’s progression rather than the funding itself. The overarching intention was that funding should not be provided to students during their writing up period.

16-17/57 Repeat Study for Undergraduates

Senate considered a proposal from Teaching Committee to initiate a pilot of repeat study for undergraduate students failing to progress from Stage 1 (S.16-17/43).

Presenting the report, the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students) reported that consultation with departments had been undertaken through the ongoing retention project led by the Operations Manager (Arts & Humanities), with subsequent consideration by the Standing Committee on Assessment, Special Cases Committee and Teaching Committee. It was noted that the main drivers for the recommendation were the personal cost of withdrawal on individual students, the intention of improving the University’s retention statistics (particularly important in the context of TEF metrics) and the need to minimise the impact of lost tuition fees.

In response to comments and queries from Senate members the following points were noted:

(a) The proposed pilot would apply to new cohorts in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (i.e. not to students failing to pass Stage 1 in the current 2016/17 year).

(b) Students on Tier 4 study visas were likely to need to return to their countries of origin over the summer to apply for visa extensions if required to repeat a year’s study.

(c) There were clear resource implications for departments in terms of providing different assessment materials for those students re-taking Stage 1, although the proposal did allow departments to apply for exemption if they felt their pedagogic model did not allow for repeat study (e.g. as a consequence of multi-cohort teaching, laboratory practicals or problem-based learning in groups). The short timeframe was also noted as regards provision of new materials for any students failing in August re-sits.

(d) The current student loan system allowed for loans to be taken out for the duration of the programme plus one year, which would therefore cover a year of repeat study.

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(e) Other possible grounds for repeat study (e.g. fitness to practice, academic misconduct etc) had not been considered in drafting the proposal, but it was noted that cases requiring consideration by the Special Cases Committee would continue to be heard, albeit with some changes to that Committee’s practice to accommodate the new repeat study arrangements.

(f) As regards the potential for formal complaints arising from lack of equity between students in similar situations but different departments, it was acknowledged that testing such possible eventualities was the purpose of a pilot exercise.

(g) It was felt that, as the proposal was to the advantage of students, it was unlikely to be contrary to Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements.

(h) As the options at the end of the pilot period were threefold (continue, discontinue or extend), it was suggested that a decision to discontinue at that stage could represent an unfair advantage towards those students who had been granted permission to repeat during the trial period.

(i) It was suggested that the questions asked on this matter as part of the retention project had not allowed for sufficient departmental input on the possible ramifications of the proposal in some areas.

(j) In response to a query about other possible means of improving retention, it was reported that consideration was also being given to improvements in attendance monitoring, an area in which some departments were more proactive than others.

(k) A query was raised as to the possible implications of the proposal for accreditation of certain programmes by professional and statutory bodies.

(l) It was acknowledged that the risk of providing unfair advantage to students allowed to repeat was less relevant in a system in which they were assessed against agreed standards and outcomes rather than through their ranking within a cohort. Similarly, the chance to re-visit teaching materials was now relatively common as a result of developments such as the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and recorded lecture capture.

(m) It was noted that the proposal sought to provide an opportunity to repeat to those students who remained firmly committed to continuing their studies in York, i.e. it was a voluntary decision.

(n) The various interactions with Special Cases Committee business were noted, especially in terms of timing as such special cases required provision of evidence, could not be granted retrospectively and in some cases provided a
‘clean slate’ in terms of assessment (i.e. the fail marks were not carried on the student’s record).

Following the above discussion Senate decided to ask Teaching Committee to undertake further consultation with Chairs of Boards of Studies and Heads of Departments in respect of potential difficulties and obstacles to the proposal, with a decision then to be taken by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate via Chair’s Action as to whether the pilot could be implemented from 2017/18 or needed to be referred back to Senate for further consideration at its next meeting. It also decided that, in the event the Vice-Chancellor approved implementation of the pilot, the changes that would then be necessary to the Guide to Assessment would be deemed to be approved by Senate as an associated measure.

16-17/58 Policy on Research Degrees

Senate considered the revised Policy on Research Degrees (S.16-17/44), noting that it had been approved by the Policies and Programmes Sub-Committee of the Graduate Research School.

Presenting the policy the Dean of the Graduate Research School outlined the main areas where changes had been introduced in respect of:

- provision for integrated PhDs;
- allegations of research misconduct;
- options for examiners if the requirements for the degree concerned had not been satisfied.

In response to comments and queries from Senate members on specific aspects of the updated policy, the following points were noted:

(a) Departments were required to remain in contact and provide ongoing guidance to students required to undertake revisions (details for this were provided in §7.9).

(b) It was suggested that further consideration might usefully be given to the quality assurance of off-site research undertaken away from the University.

(c) It was noted that the minimum resubmission period of three months remained in outcome (vi) even though it had been removed from outcome (iii) in §12.32. This would be corrected.

(d) It was suggested that for greater clarity the section on Home Office requirements for sponsored international students (§7.25) could be enhanced, especially as regards restrictions on paid employment and volunteering.

(e) A query was raised as to why the requirement had been dropped for four-year PhD programmes to have a distinctive title (§1.18).

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(f) It was suggested that verification might be required of the clause relating to limits on “additional activities” (§9.9) to ensure it was consistent with current practice in all four-year PhD programmes.

(g) A comment was made on the extent to which further information might be required from students once their period of enrolment had come to an end (§12.40).

(h) It was suggested that the instruction to examiners with respect to students who had not yet met the requirements for a degree could be read as requiring them to assess whether the student was in fact capable and diligent, which was not the intention (§12.32).

(i) The Dean confirmed that the tone of communication of outcomes to students would be modified in accordance with the revised language used in the policy, especially as this related to work that had “not yet” satisfied the examiners’ requirements.

Following the above discussion Senate approved the revised policy, subject to further clarification in respect of the points raised by members above.

**16-17/59 Teaching Committee: Combined Boards of Studies**

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students) reported that the student faculty representative (Sciences) had requested that a matter be brought forward for discussion from the Teaching Committee synopsis report in Category II business (S.16-17/45 refers), namely the proposal that combined Boards of Studies be discontinued, with associated changes to University Ordinance 1 (Constitution of Boards of Studies).

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor reported that, despite provision of extensive background material clarifying the rationale for this proposal, the student representative remained concerned about the possible implications for effective student representation in respect of combined programmes. Senate therefore approved the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s recommendation that the matter in question be referred back to Teaching Committee for further consideration, noting that this did not alter Senate’s approval for the Committee’s other related recommendations in respect of enhancements to programme and departmental governance, in particular those concerned with programme leadership and departmental teaching committees (M16-17/60 below refers).

**16-17/60 Business from Committees**

Senate noted and approved business from the following committee meetings (S.16-17/45):
Teaching Committee: 19 May and 22 June 2017
Research Committee: 26 April and 28 June 2017
Planning Committee: 26 April and 7 June 2017
Student Life Committee: 15 June 2017
HYMS Joint Senate Committee: 4 May 2017
Arts and Humanities Faculty Board: 17 May 2017
Social Sciences Faculty Board: 12 June 2017
Sciences Faculty Board: 22 May 2017

16-17/61 Appointments to Committees

Further to M16-17/42 (Forthcoming Committee Vacancies), Senate approved the following appointments to committees (S.16-17/46):

Council
Professor Deborah Smith (Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Research) [re-appointment]

Nominations Committee
Professor John Schofield (Archaeology)

Research Committee
Professor David Barnett (TFTV)

Special Cases Committee
Dr Sam Hellmuth (Language & Linguistic Science) [re-appointment]

[All appointments for a period of three years from 1 August 2017 until 31 July 2020]

Senate also noted that forthcoming vacancies remained on the following committees:

- Court (four members of Senate, appointments co-terminous with Senate membership)
- Council (one academic member of Senate from Social Sciences)
- HYMS Joint Senate Committee (one academic member, but excluding members of the HYMS Board of Studies)
- Teaching Committee (one academic member from Social Sciences, normally with experience of a leadership/management role in relation to teaching and learning)

Senate decided to delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor to make appointments to these remaining vacancies.
16-17/62 Amendments to University Regulations 2, 3 and 8

Senate approved proposed amendments to University Regulations 2, 3 and 8 in respect of non-academic debt (S.16-17/47).

16-17/63 Periodic Review: Social Work

Senate received for information a periodic review report in respect of Social Work (S.16-17/48).

16-17/64 Dates of Meetings in 2017/18

The dates of Senate meetings in 2017/18 were noted as follows:

- Tuesday 17 October 2017
- Tuesday 30 January 2018
- Tuesday 8 May 2018
- Tuesday 10 July 2018
  (all 2.15pm, Bowland Auditorium, Berrick Saul Building)