STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on Friday 23rd September 2016 at 2.00pm in HG17, Heslington Hall.

1. Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present: Dr. Steve King, Computer Science (Chair)
Dr. Philip Quinlan, Psychology
Dr. Keith Allen, Philosophy
Dr. Louise Jones, Biology
Dr. Patrick Gallimore, York Law School
Dr. Helen Smith, English
Ms. Tamaki Laycock, YUSU
Ms. Rasha Ibrahim, GSA

In Attendance: Dr. Zoe Devlin, Acting Assistant Registrar: Student Progress
Mr. Jim Irving, Director: Registry Services
Ms. Kathryn Lucas, Special Cases Administrator
Ms. Gillian Wright, Assessment Team
Ms. Cecilia Lowe, Head of Learning Enhancement
Ms. Alison McKay (minutes)

Apologies: Prof. Tom Stoneham, Dean of York Graduate Research School
Ms. Kate Dodd, Academic Registrar
Dr Jennifer Wotherspoon, Assistant Registrar: Student Progress
Mr. Stephen Gow, Academic Integrity Coordinator
Professor Mike Bentley, Chair: Special Cases Committee
Ms Kathryn Lucas, Special Cases Manager
Dr Francesco Bravo, Economics

16-17/1 Welcome
The Chair welcomed new members to the committee. The Chair confirmed negotiations are ongoing for the appointment of two additional members of the Committee, with the aim of having three academic members for each faculty. Names of new members will be submitted to University Teaching Committee for approval at its next meeting.
The Chair also noted that, since the previous meeting, the Director: Student Support Services had left the University. Mr Pete Quinn had been a valuable member of the committee, particularly with relation to the recent review and revision of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, and the committee recorded its thanks to Pete.
16-17/2 Minutes of previous meeting
The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 13\textsuperscript{th} May 2016.

16-17/3 Matters arising from the minutes

i. 15-16/75 Compensation rule change
This was approved by Senate on 5\textsuperscript{th} July 2016 (minute 15-16/44), subject to a review within two years, when data would be available on the effect of the change in 2016-7.

ii. 15-16/78 Impact of fieldwork on progression policy for RSs
This was an action for Prof. Stevi Jackson and Stephen Gow. The Chair agreed to carry this forward.

Action: SK

iii 15-16/81 Changes to Regulations - Category I students
This was also approved by Senate on 5\textsuperscript{th} July 2016 (minute 15-16/45).

iv 15-15/82 Support for students taking resits
The Guide to Assessment has been updated.

v. 15-16/83 Response to PGT External Examiner reports
The Guide to Assessment section on External Examiner reports has been updated. The issue of using an online repository for committee papers is an outstanding action which will be passed on to SG on his return from paternity leave.

Action: SG

vi 15-16/85 Review of annual priorities
For discussion on the current agenda.

vii 15-16/86 Concerns regarding UTC’s deferral of the changes to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances
Following further discussion with the PVC T, L & S / Chair of UTC and Chair, Special Cases Committee, the policy was revised, submitted to UTC and approved. The policy was then raised at Senate and approved. See Chair’s Oral Report.

viii Any other business: 15-16/67 Annual report on Degree Outcomes
Members expressed concern regarding the lack of deep analysis of degree outcomes. Such an analysis was not undertaken last year due to resource constraints and these constraints still exist. The Chair has had discussions with the Business Intelligence Unit and a shallow analysis remains the likely report for this year. The Chair agreed to raise the issue with the PVC T, L & S.

Action: SK
16-17/4 Oral Report from the Chair
The Committee received an oral update from the Chair as follows:

- The Chair noted his thanks to CL for her hard work in putting together and sending the agenda papers, and confirmed that SG will resume as Secretary on his return from paternity leave.

- The Chair reported that the Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy has been approved by Senate. There will be a programme of training for departments, students and colleges. Changes to the rules for compensation have also been approved by Senate.

- CL proposed a schedule (16-17/01) for SCA meetings in the 2016-17 academic year. This has been revised to indicate how SCA meetings will link to University Teaching Committee meeting dates. The revised paper will be submitted to University Teaching Committee on 10 November 2016.

16-17/5 Report from Students
The Graduate Students’ Association reported that Welcome events are being held for new Postgraduate students and there has been a high turnout. The GSA representative raised concerns regarding international Postgraduate students who fail and wish to appeal. The Director, Registry Services confirmed that UKVI requires the University to report Tier 4 students who fail to progress within 10 working days. This means students waiting for an appeal may have to return home during this time and mount the appeal from outside the UK, which is difficult. The University is aware and doing as much as possible to support students in this situation.

The Students’ Union reported that YUSU is preparing for Freshers week. The Students’ Union representative reported that YUSU is keen to engage in national student campaigns. A working group is being set-up to look at the impact of the Disabled Student Allowance cuts on students. The Chair noted the work of a previous working group (led by the Director, Student Services) which highlighted inclusivity as the basis for good practice. The representative suggested closer YUSU involvement in work on the deep analysis of programme results to produce useful data regarding disabled students’ performance. The Chair noted that deep analysis data highlights outcomes rather than progression and therefore might not identify useful data regarding the point at which disabled students experience difficulty.

16-17/6 Terms of Reference
The Acting Secretary noted that the Terms of Reference currently on the SCA web pages and the Terms of Reference approved by UTC in November 2015 do not correspond.
The Committee agreed to recommend the Terms of Reference to University Teaching Committee with the following changes:

Membership:

- Committee membership is not clear. As well as the ex-officio membership of the Dean of YGRS, there should be nine academic members (including the Chair) consisting of three members from each Faculty.
- ‘In attendance’ needs to include the Chair of Special Cases Committee.

Terms of Reference:

- Number 1 - add ‘foundation certificate’ and ‘pre-masters’
- Number 2 - should show ‘and/or’ in the second sentence.
- Numbers 2, 6 Distinguish between departmental Graduate School Boards and the university’s ‘Graduate Research School Board’
- Number 4 - remove ‘and examination’. Mitigating Circumstances should be changed to ‘Exceptional Circumstances’
- Number 7 – ‘To approve the appointment of a non-standard internal examiner’ (SK to check)
- Number 12 - should include ‘and’ in the last line.

The Chair noted the International Pathway College (IPC) needs to be taken into consideration. The committee agreed it would be better to say ‘all taught and research students’ throughout the document to cover all levels of student.

The Secretary to ensure approved Terms of Reference are published accurately.

Action: CL/SK

16-17/7 Annual Cycle of Business
A schedule of business for the year was tabled.

- The Chair proposed the addition of a committee meeting at the end of the Summer Term designed to
  - reduce the gap between the last meeting in one academic year and the first meeting in the next (currently four months);
  - allow the committee time to review and confirm changes to the Guide to Assessment;
  - allow the handover and induction of new student officers to take place.

The committee agreed to the additional meeting. This will be scheduled for Friday 30th June - Week 11 Summer term
Two additions to the cycle of business were proposed by the Acting Secretary: summaries of NSS and PTES results relating to assessment and feedback to be tabled by the Head of Learning Enhancement. The Committee agreed to the additions.

The committee agreed to include a shallow analysis of degree results on the agenda for the meeting taking place on 28 October.

Action: CL

The committee requested a full report of undergraduate degree results for 2015-16 be provided for the meeting on 21st April 2017. The results should include analysis across departments and data from other institutions for comparison.

Action: SG

The committee considered an appropriate schedule for reviewing the operation of the new Exceptional Circumstances policy. The committee agreed that a review of the policy should be undertaken early in 2017-18. This will coincide with a related review scheduled for Senate.

Action: SK

The report on CAP exam errors is scheduled for the 28th October 2016 meeting. The committee agreed that, in future, this should be discussed in the September SCA meeting.

16-17/8 Areas for action for the 2016/17 academic year

An updated list of ‘Areas of Action’ was distributed in the meeting. The Chair noted other items may be added mid-year due to issues raised by APRs.

Committee members agreed to take responsibility for specific items:

a) Planning the impact of Ramadan on the Common Assessment Period (CAP) in 2017
   Responsible: RI + CL (for discussion at the 28th October or 2nd December meeting).

b) Reconsidering the 6 week feedback rule
   This forms part of the consideration of the Student Partnership Group. The committee agreed to leave this item for now. Departments have been asked for their feedback.

c) Establishing a working group to consider repeat study and ‘repeat on demand’
   The Chair will prepare a paper as this will need to go through UTC and Senate.
   Responsible: SK (for discussion at 10th February 2017 meeting).
d) **Reviewing rules for closed exams re: i) smart watches; ii) frequency of bathroom breaks**  
   **Responsible: SK + PG** (for discussion at 2\(^{nd}\) December meeting).

e) **Further developing staff and student guidance regarding the assessment of group work**  
   **Responsible: LJ + PG + CL** to work together

f) **Reviewing what constitutes reasonable action re: assessment, to encourage student engagement and the submission of formative work**  
   **Responsible: KA** (for discussion at 2\(^{nd}\) December meeting).

g) **Anonymity of student work – clarifying the responsibility of administrators**  
   **Responsible: SK** to ask Richard Walker to prepare a paper for discussion

h) **Multiple module/composite ISMs – defining the rules**  
   **Responsible: SK & GW**

i) **Considering clarity of rules regarding peers being involved in marking summative assessments**  
   **Responsible: to be considered along with item e): LJ+PG+CL**

j) **Considering the impact of the removal of the Disabled Students' Allowance on the performance and achievement of disabled students**  
   **Responsible: TL & SK** (for discussion at the 10\(^{th}\) February meeting)

k) **Defining distinction criteria and ensuring clarity on ‘weighted marks’**  
   **Responsible: SK**

l) **Considering the implications for assessment procedures and rules of an increase in Distance Learning programmes**  
   **Responsible: ZD** (for discussion at 10\(^{th}\) February meeting)

m) **Clarifying issues with the operation of the Academic Misconduct Policy and guidance for STAMPs**  
   **Responsible: PQ** (first step is to check whether the revised 2016-7 Policy deals satisfactorily with the issues)

n) **Clarifying guidance regarding student progression, resits and placements**  
   Issue raised by Special Cases Committee. Guidance on placement should match wording in the new Guide to Assessment. It was agreed this item should be raised at the 2 December meeting to see whether it is still an issue.  
   **Responsible: SG**

o) **(An additional item) – to review constraints of exam schedules for the January CAP**
Some of the above items could be reported as Category II business, as long as the rules are unambiguous.

16-17/9 Any other business: None.

16-17/10 Date of the next meeting
To note the date of the next meeting as Friday 28th October at 2pm in Room HG17- Dawson Room, Heslington Hall.