STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 2 March 2018 at 2.00pm in HG09, Heslington Hall.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:          Dr Steve King, Computer Science (Chair)
                 Dr Patrick Gallimore, York Law School
                 Dr Francesco Bravo, Economics
                 Dr Keith Allen, Philosophy
                 Professor Helen Smith, English
                 Dr John Stringer, Music
                 Dr Danijela Trenkic, Education
                 Dr Anita Savage Grainge, SPSW
                 Julian Porch, YUSU
                 Charlotte Chamberlain, GSA

In attendance:    Valerie Cotter, Dep Academic Registrar/Dir Student Service
                 Stephen Gow (Secretary), Academic Integrity Coordinator
                 Cecilia Lowe, Head of Learning Enhancement
                 Dr Jen Wotherspoon, Assistant Registrar: Student Progress
                 Claire Shanks, Disability Adviser
                 Robert Simpson, Special Cases Manager

Apologies:        Gillian Wright, Assessment Manager
                 Professor Mike Bentley, Chair of Special Cases Committee
                 Dr Louise Jones, Biology

17-18/59 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members of the Committee to the meeting.

The Chair thanked Jen Wotherspoon (Assistant Registrar: Student Progress) for her efforts in mitigating the impact of the ongoing industrial action on students.

The Committee thanked Gillian Wright (Assessment Manager) for her valuable contribution to SCA over the years as she is leaving the University.

17-18/58 Minutes of previous meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26 January 2018.
Matters arising from the minutes of 26 January 2018:

- **16-17/95: Review of Exceptional Circumstances Policy** - The review was scheduled for the November meeting but has been moved to May.

- **17-18/9: Proposal for extra time allowance in 72 hour examinations** - Claire Shanks volunteered for this item and it has been added to the Annual Cycle of Business for May.

- **17-18/10: Update on the Assessments and Retention Projects** -
  a. Report to SCA considering proposal for module results across all years and degree classifications by student being made available at the Board of Examiners - On hold due to UCU action.
  b. University-wide guidance on sampling of assessments for sending to external examiners - A working group is being assembled from Chairs of Boards of Examiners to produce this.

- **17-18/25: QAA Report on commissioning** - A full report on the University’s response to the latest QAA report will be drafted and submitted for consideration by SCA before the end of the year. The Committee was asked to note that advertisements for proofreading and study support have been spotted around the university. Where these services appear to contravene university regulations for proofreading, the advertisements will be removed and the service providers contacted and asked to refer to university policy. If the services continue to breach regulations, the university will take measures to stop them advertising on campus.

- **17-18/36: Deep Analysis of Degree Outcomes** - The Chair has discussed the report on degree outcomes with the Chair of UTC. A further meeting with BIU is planned to consider ways to improve the analysis in future years.

- **17-18/49: Reports from students: Complaints from students regarding Spring CAP 2018.** YUSU have forwarded issues raised to Student Services who are considering the issues and how to address them. Student Services are also working with YUSU to run focus groups to discuss assessment and examinations matters with students.

- **17-18/50: Annual Report - PGT Academic Misconduct**
  a. **Recommendations for next report** - Student Services have been informed of the Committee’s requests for further information in future reports
  b. **No-cases to answer** - The process of feeding back the outcomes of academic misconduct cases to the staff members should be improved, especially where there is no-case to answer. The feedback will help staff to reflect on their
decision to report cases. It may also be necessary to investigate how the cases are being considered by the StAMPs.

- **17-18/51: Errors reported Spring CAP** - Departmental paper checking processes were discussed in the Chairs of Boards of Examiners Forum. There were a wide range of approaches in departments. The key factors departments had to take into account were the risk & security Vs the efficiency/robustness of procedures. Further work will be carried out to ensure better identification of errors prior to examinations.

- **17-18/52: Assessment issues raised via Annual Programme Reviews**
  
  a. **Move SITS entry deadlines back as graduation is later:** Student Services have responded that moving the SITS entry deadlines would not be possible for the reason of a later graduation date. The industrial action, however, is likely to cause delays for some students/departments/programmes so some leeway may be possible. However, if all departments have the deadline moved back, Registry will not be able to process the data on time. There is also an additional graduation ceremony to run (for HYMS, a week and a half early). If necessary Registry will prioritise finalist boards because assessment (and therefore marking) of progressing students has been delayed; though departments are working hard to avoid that.

  b. **Significant number of academic misconduct cases (IPC):** The Academic Misconduct team have been informed of the issues reported by IPC and are discussing the matter with the department.

  c. **Awarding marks as an incentive for formative work:** This issue was discussed at the Chairs of Boards of Examiners and the majority of those present were not in favour, however this was not representative of all departments. A poll will be sent to all Chairs of Boards of Examiners to get a clearer response from departments on this matter.

  d. **University's position on marking and moderation for external examiners:** This issue was discussed at the Chairs of Boards of Examiners and the majority of those present were not in favour. However, this was not representative of all departments. A poll will be sent to all Chairs of Boards of Examiners to get a clearer response from departments on this matter.

  e. **Changes to process of marking of dissertations:** The Education Department has confirmed that no change to marking MA dissertations has occurred as had been reported and they are still fully double marked. It was also confirmed that there is no plan to change this.
f. **Inclusion of students who have not completed the module in marks list:** Student Services are in the process of updating their systems to differentiate between students who have failed (f) and those who have not completed (fn) which should make it easier for departments to get the data they request for their exam boards.

g. **Twenty Day Feedback Rule:** A number of departments noted the impact of this rule, particularly the issue of workload allocation for marking and how the rule will impact part-time staff. The Chair noted that it is the Head of Department’s responsibility to agree the approach to workload resulting from the new rule. There has been an exemption made to this rule for the Archaeology department.

- **17-18/53: Clarifying the role of GTAs with respect to assessment:** The ASO will coordinate with the AQ team to draft guidance for inclusion in the Guide to Assessment and the GTA policy.

### 17-18/60 Chair’s Oral Report
The Chair updated the Committee on the impact of the ongoing industrial action, noting that further strike action was due to take place. He emphasised the University’s commitment to reducing the impact on students while respecting the rights of staff to take industrial action. The Chair also noted that the Committee is doing its best to fairly treat students affected by the adverse weather conditions.

### 17-18/61 Report from Students
**GSA:** The GSA representative noted that they had received numerous queries from students related to the industrial action but also noted that most of these had been addressed in the FAQ provided by the university.

It was also noted that next year GSA will have a different structure including a third sabbatical officer and including a Graduate Teaching Assistant Network.

**YUSU:** The YUSU representative noted that they had received numerous queries from students related to the industrial action and these have been handled effectively and transparently by the university.

### 17-18/62 Proposal to change the grade conversion table for study at ‘Sciences Po’
The Committee approved the Department of Politics’ proposed new grade conversion table for students on a year abroad at Sciences Po (France). Problems with grade conversion have arisen as ‘Sciences Po’ uses a double grading system: a numerical mark (1-20) that indicates absolute results in assessments, and an alphabetical mark (A-F) that indicates relative
performance against other students in the course. The current conversion table used at York only considers the alphabetical mark, which it considers to be in line with ECTS grades, which are also alphabetical. The proposed grade conversion table would use the ‘Sciences Po’ numeric score in respect to the ECTS score instead of the alphabetical score. This will provide an absolute grade than one relative to other students on their course. It was agreed this should be in place for students studying at Sciences Po from the 2018-19 academic year.

[ACTION: SG]

17-18/63 Grade Conversion Checklist for students (from Centre for Global Programmes)

The Committee considered the updated form which York students are asked to complete, in conjunction with their departments, to show that they have considered issues of academic recognition while taking a study/work abroad placement, and that they are aware of the grade conversion process where applicable. It was recommended that the form include further information on pass/fail modules in which marks are awarded and for students to be aware of the language requirements at the institution they are visiting, including considerations of how essays are marked if submitted in English rather than the native language of the country.

[ACTION: SG]

17-18/64 Review of the Impact of New Compensation Rules on Finalists 2016/7

The Committee considered the impact of the New Compensation rules. It was noted that the new rules had not impacted on students who missed out on 1st class degrees due to particularly poor performance on one assessment. The Committee agreed ordinary degrees should be excluded from the rule and recommended all departments be reported, rather than just those where the rule applied. It was also agreed that further consideration is needed where students are compensated for assessments which had been capped due to the outcomes of academic misconduct.

[ACTION: JW]

17-18/65 Guidance for responsibility for recommending non-standard individual arrangements

The Committee approved the guidance however requested the list of staff eligible for responsibility be removed and replaced with the requirement that staff be “a suitably qualified member of academic staff” and the staff responsible are reported to the Examinations team. In certain cases non-academic staff may be responsible, however this must be approved by SCA.

[ACTION: SG]
17-18/66  Proposal for staggered penalties for the late submission of electronic assignments

The Committee considered the proposal from English, History of Art and History to stagger the penalties for late submission of electronic assignments to:
- 2 marks - for up to 5 minutes;
- 5 marks - for up to 30 minutes; and
- 10 marks - for up to 1 day.

During the course of full discussion, the following points were noted:
- The Committee was made aware of the data from 18 institutions on how late submission was handled and noted that staggering the penalties would be in line with the general sector approach.
- It was noted that this issue had become more pronounced with the increase of electronic assignment submission and that with paper submission discretion could be applied more easily.

The Committee agreed after deliberation to a modification of the proposal to:
- 5 marks for up to 1 hour late
- 10 marks for up to a day late.

The revised proposal will be submitted for consideration of UTC in May with a view to coming into effect in the 2018/19 academic year.

[ACTION: SG]

17-18/67  AOB:

The Chair consulted the members of the committee on a proposal being considered to implement the new rules for reassessment as applied to postgraduate taught students on the online learning programmes for undergraduate students. The advantages of such a proposal would be mean less work for Student Services to track reassessment, more retention of students and equity across qualifications at the institution. This would be in-line with the sector and also with the new policy for repeat study. The drawbacks of the proposal would be that more students would resit assessments, there may be more appeals after August and the proposal could merely prolong failure of students rather than avoid it. The Committee agreed a formal proposal should be considered and noted that improved guidance would be required if the proposal was approved.
CATEGORY II
Note: approval of Category II business will be assumed unless a member indicates that they wish to bring forward an item to Category I business.

17-18/68 Chair’s Approvals

- **Chemistry**: Approval of a relaxation of compensation rules for a Stage 3 Chemistry student, due to mid-information being given about reassessments.
- **Health Sciences**: Adjustment to assessment regime for a Health Sciences PGT module, due to mix-up in VLE registrations for some students.
- **Management**: Approval of a non-standard individual arrangement involving the change of the assessment.
- **Law**: Approval of a non-standard individual arrangement involving the change of the assessment.

17-18/69 Date of the next meeting
The next meeting would be on Friday 4th May 2018 at 2pm in room H/G17, Heslington Hall.