STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 8th July 2022 at 2.00pm via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:

Dr Patrick Gallimore	York Law School (Chair)
Dr Daniel Baker	Psychology
Dr Kevin Caraher	SPSW
Debayan Dey	YUSU
Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
Ekansh Kapoor	GSA
Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
Dr Katherine Selby	Natural Sciences/Environment and Geography

In attendance:

Tom Banhan	Director SAAA
Prof Michael Bentley	Physics
Dr Martin Cockett	Chair of Special Cases Committee
Zara Burford	Online Programmes
Laila Fish	Disability Services
Dr Stephen Gow (Secretary)	Academic Integrity Coordinator
Claire Pinder (Mins)	Academic Support Coordinator

Apologies:

Prof. Kate Arnold	Dean of York Graduate Research School
Dr Nicoletta Asciuto	English (on Maternity Leave)
Dr Jim Buller	Politics
Eddie Cowling	International Pathway College
Cecilia Lowe	Head of Learning Enhancement
Kathryn Lucas	Student Services Manager
Vanessa Richardson-Pratt	Student Administration Manager
Jen Wotherspoon	Deputy Director SAAA

m21-22/64 Welcome
Apologies were received from Jim Buller, Eddie Cowling, Robert Simpson, and Jen Wotherspoon. Tom Banham, was attending in lieu of Jen Wotherspoon.

m21-22/65 Minutes of previous meeting

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2022.

m21-22/66 Matters Arising from the previous minutes

- **13 May 2022 21-22/59 Revisions to Regulation 7: Discipline and Academic Misconduct**
  To be discussed under item **m21-22/73**. **[OPEN]**

- **13 May 2022 21-22/60 Revised policy on thesis and assessment requirements and proposed University requirements for journal-style PGR theses**
  Stephen Gow had spoken with Juliet James regarding the use of Turnitin for PGR Theses **[CLOSED]**

- **13 May 2022 21-22/62 Exceptional Circumstances - Self-certification Data analysis**
  This will be added to annual cycle of business. **[CLOSED]**

m21-22/67 Chair's Oral Report
The Chair **reported** that:
a) **Industrial Action:** The Chair asked the Committee to note the resolution of problems caused by the resignation of External Examiners as a result of industrial action - the solution involved the Chair of SCA applying an extra level of scrutiny to satisfy University quality assurance processes.

b) **Committee membership:** The Chair **thanked**, on behalf of the Committee, Ekansh Kapoor, Martin Cockett and Cecilia Lowe for their service to the Committee as their terms have come to an end. The Chair thanked Daniel Baker and Alet Roux for continuing on the Committee and **noted** the Committee still requires two representatives from the Arts and Humanities Faculty (this has now been resolved). It was further **noted** that Professional Support Service staff had expressed interest in attending Committee meetings.

ACTION: Chair to consider Deputy Head of Faculty Operations to attend the Committee.

c) **Closed Examination:** The Chair **noted** that guidance on closed examinations is forthcoming shortly and will set out the University's *Digital First* approach which will allow closed examinations where PSRB or pedagogic requirements necessitate them. In order to run closed examinations, students will need to be informed of their assessment schedule and have mock examinations - either in the department or with central support.

The message that Departments should only move to in person examinations if they have carefully reflected upon which would be the best assessment format, had been

communicated to Departments. It was **noted** that Tom Banham would be engaged on a project in 2022/23 which would reflect on examination format and would steer Department and student expectations.

mSCA21-22/68 Report from Students

GSA - The Committee **noted** the report from GSA that there were significant issues with students being wrongly invited to the July graduation ceremony and the miscalculation of degrees leading to students missing graduation. SCA agreed to look into the matters described.

YUSU - The Committee welcomed Debayan Dey to SCA as the Academic Officer for YUSU and students representative.

m21-22/69 Exceptional Circumstances Working Group Report
The Committee **agreed** to proposals from working group lead, Mike Bentley, for the Exceptional Circumstances and Additional Consideration Policy from 2023/24 onwards. These included:

- Limiting self-certification and applying self-certification to individual assessments (rather than a period of time).
- A revision of principles about decision-making for ECA requests, with a greater role for PSS staff in deciding the validity of claims and the automation of outcomes where possible. More complex cases would be passed on to a small ECA committee.
- A proposed framework for an ECA decision making process and the constitution of the ECA committee - based at Faculty level.
- New policy principles relating to group-work and cohort-wide circumstances.
- An outline of a suggested new policy on caring responsibilities (Section 4).

The Committee was broadly in favour of the proposals, though concerns about limiting self-certification were raised by the student representatives and concerns were also raised about introducing a new approach to ECAs when there is already a great deal of change occurring.

m21-22/70 Proposal for Self-certification Policy 2022/23
The Committee **agreed,** after lengthy discussion, that **Self-certification should be limited to 3 assessments per academic year and that extensions should remain at 4 days for open assessments**. There was a clear split between academic members of the Committee, who favoured significantly limiting options for self-certification, and the student representatives - who favoured unlimited opportunities for self-certification. Student representatives asked for students to have the option to self-certify for at least 50% of all assessments (YUSU) or 6 opportunities per academic year (GSA).

The Committee **agreed** that the proposal for clear guidance for students and staff on the policy should be circulated as soon as possible. It was hoped that student guidance and dialogue with YUSU and GSA would help clarify the purpose of self-certification as being for exceptional circumstances rather than expected assessment anxiety or strategic planning of assessment deadlines. When Self-certification is used in a limited way, in coordination with evidenced Exceptional Circumstances claims and SSPs, students have a package of significant support with regard to personal circumstances which may impact their assessments. It was noted that PSS staff were greatly impacted by unlimited Self-certification and this had been taken into account in considering the proposals.

m21-22/71 York Online Fit-to-Sit Policy
The Committee **agreed** to the student-facing Fit to Sit / Submit policy, which includes areas that were not defined in detail in the policy proposals considered in May. This detail related to:
- Escalation of complex claims to the department's Chair of ECA or deputy.
- Addition of the policy regarding group work.
- Students only need to submit evidence when they notify the University of an issue after they have started the exam or after the assessment deadline.

It was **noted** that further attention would be given to the definition of what constituted close familial relationships as outlined within the policy, with suggestions for further inclusions offered by Committee Members.

m21-22/72 PGT External Examiners Report
The Committee **agreed** to table this discussion until the next meeting.

m21-22/73 Academic Misconduct - Reg 7 and proposal for Summer review
The Committee **agreed** to table this discussion until the next meeting.

m21-22/74 Submission to the wrong VLE module
The Committee **agreed** this matter would be resolved outside the meeting to be included in the 22/23 Guide to Assessment.

m21-22/75 SCA Review of Priorities
The Committee **agreed** to table this discussion until the next meeting.

CATEGORY II
Chair's Approvals:

m21-22/76: Date of the next meeting
The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 23 September 2022 at 2pm via Zoom online video conferencing.