1. CONTEXT

1.1. The University Strategy Key Objective 2 Part 1 reads “We will articulate a University of York pedagogy and apply it to all our programmes”... “All new programmes will be designed in accordance with our pedagogy. By 2017-18, all programmes in the University will comply with the principles of the University pedagogy.” The subsidiary Learning and Teaching Strategy describes the York pedagogy in more depth.

1.2. The broad programme for roll-out of the strategy has, since summer 2014, been:

- 2014-15: Pilot projects review existing programmes according to the principles of the pedagogy (drawing also on the TESTA methodology); development of policy, documents and supporting tools.
- 2015-16: Implementation framework in place; all departments enabled to put undergraduate programmes into the framework, with most programmes done. New programmes designed according to the pedagogy.
- 2016-17: Completion of the application of the York pedagogy principles and framework through all undergraduate programmes. Application of the pedagogy to all PGT programmes.

1.3. 2015-16 is the pivotal year for implementation of the strategy. The key policies, processes, documents and mechanisms of support have been decided over summer 2015, based on analysis of the pilots and other work done in 2014-15. In the coming year we must engage, equip and enable departments with these processes and tools.

1.4. It is important to establish the roles of programme leaders now. In the “steady-state” or long term they will have important responsibility for programme design and maintenance. Where possible, during the transition phase of the next two years, we would like programme leaders

---

1 Implementation will allow some flexibility for departments to review all of their programmes simultaneously or to phase the process through the year, starting with a ‘pioneer’ programme and propagating thereafter.
to be at the heart of applying the York pedagogy. In what follows we describe first the steady state and then the transition period.

2. **PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP IN THE “STEADY STATE”**

2.1. Although all staff who teach participate in the design of learning and teaching, for every programme of study there should be someone whose concern is the programme as a whole as experienced by students. This person is the Programme Leader. Every programme has a single leader, but a single person can lead more than one programme.

2.2. Because admin roles are allocated by departments, Programme Leaders will be departmental appointments. Combined programmes will have Programme Leaders just as single-honours do, and the departments concerned must work together to ensure effective support of those programme leaders.

2.3. The Programme Leader will be supported by a programme team of those with prominent teaching roles on the programme, departmental office holders and administrators as appropriate.

2.4. The leader drives, steers, and accomplishes the programme team’s thinking about and planning of a programme. They have responsibility and authority in four key areas:

- overall programme design;
- ongoing programme design, maintenance and improvement;
- monitoring of the programme in operation;
- coordination of the programme team.

Programme leaders have authority to get things done, but are expected to maintain collegial discussion about the programme.

2.5. The four key areas are described further in Appendix A. Departments may add to these responsibilities, for example in respect of recruitment. Programme leaders’ responsibility interacts with the responsibilities of other role-holders in the Department, such as the Chair of Board of Studies.

2.6. As specified in the Learning and Teaching Strategy, the roles of Chairs of BoS, Chairs of Teaching Committee, Directors of Teaching and Learning will be reviewed in the coming year. This may change the interactions between various role holders. The pivot for review will be programme leadership. Success with the pedagogy depends on getting this right. For
the time being Appendix A serves as the description of programme leadership, but for the avoidance of doubt our current expectation for the formal role description of programme leaders (for adoption after review of the 2015-16 pedagogy rollout) is given in Appendix B.

3. PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP IN THE TRANSITION PHASE

3.1. In the coming two years programme leaders will have a transitional role to shape existing programmes to the York pedagogy. Thus their first responsibility “Overall programme design” will, until 2017 include re-specification of existing programmes to the framework of the York pedagogy.

3.2. At least one programme per department will transition to the new pedagogical framework in 2015-16. We would encourage the transition of all undergraduate programmes at once, but it may be that a particular programme leader is best able to pioneer the change. Other key role holders, notably the Chair of the Board of Studies, and colleagues from the central York Pedagogy project team will work closely with the programme leader(s) to explore and implement the principles of the pedagogy and to use the experience to catalyse the outworking of the pedagogy to other programmes within the department. This first ‘cohort’ of programme leaders will have important roles to play in the success of the strategy.

3.3. In the transition phase programme leadership has two big tasks: specifying what the programme is for, and explaining how it gets there. The pilots of 2014-15 and the decisions and documents of summer 2015 have put much flesh on the bones of the York pedagogy and the article “The York Pedagogy: What and Why, How and Why” article which accompanies this paper outlines the process and mechanisms.

3.4. We have new Programme Specifications, guidance and support documents to help programme teams to develop powerful learning outcomes, to help create the programme map, and to look at both the overall picture and at the detail. The programme leader will be the primary author, capturing in compact form the essence of the programme. They will lead their colleagues in debating the above themes, drawing where appropriate on consultative input from students and from other relevant parties such as the department’s Industrial Advisory Board. Programme leaders are the ones who must oversee the representation of student work and then start to use it to ask questions: Are these tasks getting maximum benefit from earlier learning? Is it appropriate to
practice or develop an existing skill in this context or that? Why are these things going on at the same time?

4. SUPPORTING PROGRAMME LEADERS

4.1. Departments will be supported throughout the implementation of the new pedagogy by members of the central York Pedagogy project team and by resources including guidance materials and bespoke workshops on key and emergent themes.

4.2. Specific, additional support for programme leaders will be provided through the new Programme Leaders’ Course being developed and offered this academic year. It is recommended that the leaders of pioneer programmes attend the first run of the course.

4.3. As noted earlier, policy, processes and documents have been developed to support the roll-out of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. One of the key audiences for these will be programme leaders and they have therefore been designed to provide as much support for that role as possible.

4.4. Appendix B provides a roles and responsibilities description for Programme Leaders. This is intended to be long-lasting and so concentrates on the steady-state role. However, as stressed earlier, their role in strategic transition over the next two years is crucial. Programme leaders have a pivotal role in the delivery of the York pedagogy.
Appendix A

Programme Leadership

Programme design is a central theme of the 2015-2020 Learning and Teaching Strategy. Although all staff who teach participate in the design of learning and teaching, for every programme of study there should be someone whose concern is the programme as a whole as experienced by students. This person is the Programme Leader. Every programme has a single leader, but a single person can lead more than one programme.

In considering programme leadership, four key areas of activity can be identified and are elaborated upon below. It is to be expected that the individuals identified as programme leaders will play an essential role in ensuring that these activities are effectively undertaken. These responsibilities will be refined after review of the rollout of the Learning and Teaching Strategy in 2015-16 and may then be replaced with a formal description of the role and responsibilities.

Programme leadership entails:

1. **Responsibility for the overall design of the programme in accordance with the principles of the York Pedagogy.**
   It is fundamental to the York Pedagogy that all programmes are defined by between 6 and 8 well written, challenging but realistic learning outcomes that convey to students the distinctiveness of the course of study upon which they are embarking. For these outcomes to be the powerful drivers for learning that they are intended to be, the steps by which students will progress towards achieving them will have to be clearly articulated and charted through the programme curriculum. These steps can then be anchor points against which summative assessment is designed so as to accurately and reliably measure student learning and progress. The steps will also allow programme leaders to liaise with module leaders to ensure that student work, whether undertaken within classroom-based settings, through engagement with online activities or as a result of independent study, is planned so as to progressively support an increasing sophistication of learning or competence. Moreover, they will enable the purposeful planning of contact between staff and students, be that synchronous or asynchronous, to be genuinely formative in terms of propelling student learning towards achievement of the programme-level outcomes.
2. **Responsibility for ongoing programme design and maintenance.**
   All programmes offered by the University of York must operate in accordance with the University’s regulations and policy. Any changes to regulation and policy that have a programme-level impact should therefore be acted upon promptly and all programme-level documentation, whether student-facing or University-facing, needs to be updated and made available in a timely manner. Equally, the substantive content of programmes should be properly cognisant of the academic discipline as it evolves. For example, changes to the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, or developments in Subject Benchmark Statements should be appropriately reflected in the curriculum. Alongside this, it is important that our programmes make tangible the University’s commitment to an educational experience that is situated within a vibrant research environment. This means that a scholarly knowledge and understanding of both relevant cutting edge disciplinary research and the integration of this research, where appropriate, into the curriculum needs to be maintained. Finally, it is essential that York programmes remain competitive within the sector and align well with the needs and requirements of employers and other stakeholders. Therefore, there should be proper direction to ensure that the broad cross-curricular themes of employability, sustainability, inclusivity, internationalisation and digital literacy, are given appropriate presence within the curriculum.

3. **Responsibility for the student learning experience on the programme.**
   All students should be given the opportunity to engage with a supported, but challenging and intellectually stimulating learning experience and the effectiveness of the programme in providing such an experience needs to be monitored. There should be regular tracking of patterns of student progression through the programme with a view to addressing serious issues where necessary. Robust and meaningful processes for obtaining on-going student feedback on their learning experience should be implemented, and the data from such processes should be objectively viewed along with other sources of information (for example the NSS) both to identify and disseminate effective practice and to identify and address points of concern. Recommendations made by external experts, for example by the external examiner or through Periodic review, should be given due consideration and acted upon where it is deemed appropriate. It is also expected that the resourcing given to programmes, in terms of staffing, timetabling, equipment, library resources etc., is regularly monitored for sufficiency and where potentially detrimental shortfalls are identified, the substance
of such shortfalls brought to the attention of the head of department or other relevant member of the departmental management team.

4. **Responsibility for the effective coordination of colleagues who contribute to the design and delivery of the programme.**

The successful design, maintenance and delivery of a programme curriculum under the York Pedagogy is a collaborative enterprise but one that is directed, focused and organised. Most importantly, this means there needs to be an effective demarcation of responsibilities and clear lines of communication between key individuals in the department / teaching centre who are responsible for the design and delivery of a programme curriculum, including the: Chair of Board of Studies, Chair of Teaching Committee (where appropriate), Deputy Head for Teaching (where appropriate), Chair of Exam Board, Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes, Programme Leaders, module leaders and support staff. Beyond this, however, it is essential in realising the aspirations of the York Pedagogy that an environment of cooperation and shared ownership is cultivated around programme design and delivery. Staff should have a definite sense of their involvement in one or more programme teams and they should be confident that their responsibilities in regard the programme have been apportioned in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner. They should be aware of who is responsible for the programme(s) to which they contribute and to whom they should direct any issues or questions they have about the programme. All members of the larger programme team should feel motivated to become constructively involved in curriculum decision-making and should know how to input into discussions around programme development and delivery.
Appendix B

Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader

Programme design is a central theme of the 2015-2020 Learning and Teaching Strategy. Although all staff who teach participate in design of learning and teaching, for every programme of study there should be someone whose concern is the programme as a whole as experienced by students. This person is the Programme Leader. Every programme has a single leader, but a single person can lead more than one programme.

There are four key areas of responsibility for programme leaders, described below. Departments may invest additional responsibilities in line with how teaching is operationalised and managed locally, and should provide programme leaders with appropriate authority and sufficient time to do all parts of their role.

Programme leadership entails:

1. **Responsibility for the overall design of the programme.**
   In line with the principles of the York Pedagogy, programme leaders ensure that:

   a. The programme is defined by between 6 to 8 challenging but realistic outcomes which are empowering to students and which accurately portray the distinctiveness of the course of study;
   b. Progression towards achievement of the programme outcomes is carefully and realistically charted through the component modules of the programme;
   c. Summative assessment is devised at programme-level to accurately and reliably measure student progression towards achievement of the programme learning outcomes;
   d. Student work, be that undertaken within classroom-based settings, through engagement with online activities or as a result of independent study, is planned so as to progressively support an increasing sophistication of learning or competence towards achievement of the programme learning outcomes;
   e. Incidents of contact between students and staff – whether synchronous or asynchronous, face-to-face or virtual – and opportunities for formative guidance propel student progression towards the achievement of programme outcomes.

2. **Responsibility for ongoing programme design, maintenance and improvement.**
   Programmes will be monitored, and developed where appropriate, to ensure they remain current and relevant. Programme leaders ensure that:
a. Developments in University regulations and policy as they pertain to academic programmes are promptly assessed for impact and acted upon as necessary;
b. Where the requirements of applicable Professional, Statutory and Professional Bodies change, or where other disciplinary guidance is modified (for example subject benchmark statements) this is appropriately reflected in the curriculum;
c. Prevailing market conditions, including the requirements of employers, and the actions of key competitors are monitored and responded to as appropriate;
d. A scholarly knowledge and understanding of both relevant cutting edge disciplinary research and how this research can be integrated into the curriculum is maintained;
e. Programme documentation, whether student-facing or University-facing, is updated and made available in a timely manner.

3. Responsibility for monitoring the programme in operation.
Significant operational issues should be addressed effectively. Students should be provided with the opportunity to engage with a supported, but challenging and intellectually stimulating learning experience. Programme leaders are responsible for:

a. Monitoring patterns of student progression across the programme with a view to addressing issues where necessary;
b. Overseeing student evaluation data, be that from module evaluations, NSS or other sources and taking action, in collaboration with colleagues where appropriate, to address identified issues;
c. Ensuring recommendations made by the external examiner are given due consideration and acted upon where it is deemed appropriate;
d. Maintaining an informed awareness of the importance to student learning of the employability, sustainability, inclusivity, internationalisation and digital literacy agendas and ensuring these are given sufficient presence within the curriculum;
e. Evaluating the resource requirements of the programme (including staffing, timetabling, equipment, library resources etc.) and bringing resourcing issues to the attention of the head of department (or other relevant member of staff) where necessary.

4. Responsibility for the effective coordination of colleagues who contribute to the design and delivery of the programme.
The successful design, maintenance and delivery of a programme curriculum under the York Pedagogy is a collaborative enterprise but one that is directed, focused and organised. This means that programme leaders are responsible for:

a. Acting as academic lead for the programme and to the team of staff who contribute modules to the programme. This includes representing the programme at relevant departmental meetings and during the course of review processes such as annual programme review and periodic review and liaising on matters
pertaining to the programme with other key Departmental officers such as the Chair of Board of Studies, Chair of Board of Examiners and Head of Department;
b. Cultivating an environment of collaboration and shared ownership by ensuring colleagues are involved in curriculum-decision making and providing appropriate opportunities for the programme team to consult and interact on issues that relate to programme development and delivery;
c. Organising the curriculum and co-ordinating colleagues in a way that is equitable and non-discriminatory;
d. Effectively managing and sustaining change and development and motivating colleagues with regard to their involvement with the programme;
e. Being a first point-of-call in mediating, assessing and solving problems relating to the design and delivery of the programme curriculum.