

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of University Teaching Committee held on Thursday 8

February 2018

(full minutes at <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/committees/teaching-committee/>)

M17-18/79 Annual Programme Reviews

The Committee **considered** a University-level summary report and a report from each Faculty on the outcomes from Annual Programme Reviews for 2016/17 (UTC.16-17/54a-d). Members were thanked for having supported the process by attending their departments' APR meetings.

Some of the themes identified in the University summary report and in the Faculty-level summary reports were highlighted. The ongoing implementation of the Pedagogy was identified by many departments as a priority for the coming year and a number of departments had identified curriculum enhancements which had been brought about or implemented through the Pedagogy. The workload associated with the implementation of Pedagogy was also a significant theme, particularly with respect to using the Programme Design Document.

The Chair advised that the Pedagogy Steering Group was being reconvened and that it would consider the recommendations arising from the York Pedagogy Initial Evaluation report. The Dean of the Faculty for Arts and Humanities considered that the strength of feeling with respect to concerns arising from the implementation of the Pedagogy, voiced in the Departmental APRs from Arts and Humanities, was not adequately reflected in the University-level summary report. It was reported that the 2016/17 APRs had informed the York Pedagogy Initial Evaluation report and that the individual comments relating to the Pedagogy would be shared with the project team to follow up as necessary. The Dean requested that the paper (Spring 2017) from the Arts and Humanities, which captured the faculty's key concerns in relation to the Pedagogy, and the minute of the FLTG April 2017 arising from discussion of that paper should also form part of the evidence base considered by the Steering Group. The Chair confirmed that feedback with respect to the Pedagogy would be looked at in the round by the Steering Group.

The challenges associated with the delivery and management of combined and interdisciplinary programmes, as in previous years, had been highlighted as a concern by several departments. It was reported that the Faculty of Arts and Humanities had established a Working Group to consider and address the lower levels of satisfaction expressed by combined course students in NSS feedback. It was suggested that Senate's decision to discontinue Combined Boards of Studies (M17-18/74 refers) might be perceived as a reduced focus on the management of combined programmes. The Chair advised that the programme leader was responsible for managing the experience of students on a combined course and mechanisms would need to be developed to strengthen the authority of the programme leader with respect to actions (in the interest of enhancing the students' experience) required in a partner department(s).

As was the case last year, a number of departments and the Faculty summary reports for Sciences and Social Sciences raised concerns about the impact of increasing student numbers on the student experience. Whilst the theme in the APRs was primarily related to the impact of unplanned student number growth, members noted similar concerns arising

from planned student number growth. The Committee recognised the competing priorities relating to Institutional-level decision making with respect to student numbers. That said the Committee agreed that the student experience and teaching quality should be given equal primacy, alongside financial considerations, in decisions relating to unplanned student number growth. The Committee agreed that the Chair should liaise with the Chair of Planning Committee to consider ways to embed more deeply the weight of the impact of the student experience as a factor in decision-making regarding student number growth.

Action: Chair

The Committee was pleased that the concerns raised in the 2015-16 APRs about the resourcing of Disability Services and the availability of the Open Door Team appointments did not feature significantly in APRs for 2017/17, suggesting that the additional investment had begun to have an impact.

The Committee was advised that several reports had highlighted poor student engagement and attendance as a concern. Members were reminded that whilst a University Attendance Monitoring Policy had been approved by Senate in July 2017 its implementation was dependent on the procurement of an appropriate IT system. It was reported that Enterprise Systems did not currently have the resource to take this project forward. In the meantime, the Committee agreed that departments should be encouraged to converge departmental processes and practices towards the Policy.

Action: Chair

Concerns related to the structure of the academic year (including the timing and length of the University Common Assessment Periods) were expressed in a number of reports. The Summary reports from both the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Social Sciences requested that consideration be given to revising the CAPs. It was noted that, following similar concerns last year, a proposal to lengthen the Spring CAP had been taken to Faculty Executive Groups in the Spring of 2017 and that it had been rejected by all three Groups. Members agreed that semesterisation (referenced in the Faculty of Social Sciences summary report) had the potential to address several issues but noted the considerable workload involved in restructuring the academic year. It was noted that the overall costs and benefits of revising the academic year required substantial discussion prior to formulating a consultation paper. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss the proposal for a consultation on the structure of the academic year with the Deans.

Action: Chair

The revised policy on feedback turnaround time had been highlighted as a concern in several reports and had also been identified as a common concern in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities summary report. Members were advised that there was a process for considering exemptions (a rationale should be submitted to the Chair of SCA who would make a recommendation, for approval, to the Chair of UTC). In considering requests for exemption the impact on the student experience was the primary guiding factor.

Members were advised that ineffective communication between UTC / FLTG and departments, in relation to teaching and learning, had been raised in a number of reports. The Committee agreed that the Chair of UTC, the Deans and the (soon to be appointed) Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning should consider how best to strengthen the communication channels between departments/centres, FLTGs and UTC.

Action: Chair / Deans / Associate Deans (T&L)

The Committee was asked to consider whether there was a sufficient focus on employability in the current APR process, especially given the relative weighting of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey in the TEF 3 metrics. It was agreed that in future it should be a requirement for all departments to reflect on employability data such as the DHLE in the department-level APR.

Action: Academic Quality Team

Members accepted the recommendations in the University-level summary report regarding the APR process for 2017/18, that:

- the deadline for 2017/18 departmental-level APR reports be Wednesday 14 November 2018;
- it continue to be a requirement of the APR process for departments to report on progress with Pedagogy enhancement plans;
- it be a requirement for a programme-level reflection for each programme (or cluster of related programmes) for taught provision;
- the programme-level reflection pro forma (for each taught programme - or cluster of related programmes) be simplified to focus on major issues, risks and planned actions.

UTC would receive, for approval, the revised templates and guidance at its March meeting.

Action: Academic Quality Team