Teaching Committee

COORDINATING GROUP FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2014

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair), Ms M Blake (Information Directorate), Ms L Booth (CLL), Dr R Grant (RDT), Dr M Ferguson (LFA), Mrs L Catt for Dr D Jackson (PGCAP), Dr P Roberts (CELT), Ms A Hastie for Ms A Selvaratnam (CPD), Mr M Smelt-Webb (IRO), Mr D Whitmore (YUSU), Ms Xiaoyin Yang (GSA)

In attendance: Ms E Stead (Academic Support Office)

Apologies: Dr T Ryan (LET), Mrs H Stout (on maternity leave)

13-14/1 Welcome
The Chair welcomed all members.

13-14/2 Minutes of the Last Meeting
The Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2013.

13-14/3 Matters arising from the last meeting
The group noted most matters were now closed. An update was received regarding the provision of HR advice on the management of casual staff contracts (M12-13/1 refers). CELT had moved to a 90% contract for summer programmes and the IRO had agreed a market supplement to pay-rates after discussions with HR.

The Chair reported that IT services were addressing the issues with the Online Store system discussed at the last meeting (M12-13/12 refers).

13-14/4 Terms of Reference and Membership
The group approved the terms of reference and membership for 2013-14 noting that Heather Stout, currently on maternity leave would be replaced by Ms Becky Jones. It was suggested that the group would respond to the consultation on a new University strategy due to take place in the summer term and a further meeting should be convened in June to do this.

Action: Secretary

(Secretary’s note: This meeting will take place on Friday 13th June at 10am in HG15)

Reports from Members
13-14/5 Academic Liaison Section of the Library and IT Training

The group received a written and oral report from the Head of Relationship Management and noted:

- The Skills Framework project had been completed by the student intern and findings reported to the Chair and contributing support departments which would feed into a UTC working group (M12-13/17 ref).  
- Induction for PGR students had been further developed to better manage expectations and a recent change in the structure of the Relationship Management Team had resulted in dedicated research support staff, who would work with the RDT and Research Office to explore student requirements. In addition further work was underway with research staff to identify needs.  
- A review of the teaching provided by the Library was underway to consider where improvements might be made. It was noted that the correct skills should be delivered at the most appropriate time for students and work was progressing with Health Sciences to develop further on-line and tailored courses.  
- Recent analysis of the annual library survey had positive outcomes in the main but the Library discoverability tool, YorSearch required some improvements. Departmental actions plans were being developed using the survey data in conjunction with national survey outcomes and being discussed with departments staff this month. The IT survey had recently closed and analysis underway.  
- Feedback on the new Library website was positive, the re-developed Archives website went live on 25 February 2014 and the Information Directorate by summer 2014.  
- A public talk and a variety of events had been organised to celebrate World Book Day on 6 March.  
- The Directorate was being assessed for the Customer Service Excellence Award in March 2014.

13-14/6 Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT)

The group received a written and oral report from the Director of CELT and noted:

- In-sessional courses had been further integrated in Education, Law, SPSW, Management and Economics  
- Credit bearing modules in Academic Speaking, Academic Writing, the Practice of English Language Teaching, Teaching English as a Foreign Language and English Language, British Culture had begun and two
additional open –access courses in Business English and Early Research Writing had been developed.

- Due to new financial arrangements, whereby Departments pay directly to CELT for Departmental English courses, Economics have decided to forego its courses and would therefore probably take up places on the open access courses. It was agreed that the Director would provide specific details to the Chair (and copied to the YUSU representative) who would then contact Economics to discuss.

  **ACTION: PR, Chair**

- UTC approval was being sought for the withdrawal of the Pre-sessional Graduate Certificate in English Language Teaching, and would be replaced with an 8-week Pre-Sessional course for Education P/G students.
- Two new Pre-Sessional courses would be introduced for students who’s Departments required higher level English Language entry and for Departments requiring lower than the University norm.
- Discussions had started with YMS concerning the integration of CELT credit-bearing modules.
- Feedback from students attending Academic Speaking classes and participating in small group work activities were finding that they could not do any similar activity back in their departments.

Discussion concerning the approval process of credit–bearing courses and the experience of LFA in the recently approved initiative whereby 20 credits of LFA modules could be taken as electives below the required stage level (provided the programme permitted it and the award standards could be met) was shared with the group and it was agreed that the Director would contact Juliet James (the CELT QA contact) to discuss any future proposals.

In order to alleviate problems with late timetable changes it was intended that all courses would be ‘pseudo-modularised’ to appear on the generic timetable and it was suggested that the Director should speak with Matt Burton in the Timetabling Office to resolve any further issues.

  **ACTION: PR**

- Support from YPP stopped at 5pm and was problematic for staff and students (e.g. printer breakdowns) and it was agreed that the Michelle would pass this feedback to the YPP team as they were currently considering feedback from the Library and IT Services.

  **ACTION: MB**

**13-14/7 Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL)**

The group received a written and oral report from the Director of CLL about the science projects they had been involved with and noted:
• The launch of two Postgraduate Diplomas in Railway Studies and Creative Writing for 2014/15 and the development of an on-line programme in Yorkshire Geology.
• The successful delivery of a course on democracy for York councillors and the public.
• A number of taster courses aimed at non-traditional learners (as part of the University’s OFFA agreement) had been run at community sites this term. It was noted that Aim Higher funding had been withdrawn.
• The continuation of sciences courses to parents of Key stage 2 and 3 children aimed at improving aspiration and learning through the family unit. These had been popular and a 6 week mook had engaged parents. The Institute for Effective Education were investigating resources to enable the continuation of such courses.
• The new brochure of programmes would be published in June 2014 and would offer the larger number of programmes to date.

13-14/8 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
The group received a written report from Anna Hastie on behalf the Head of CPD and noted:

• The continued engagement by Departments in CPD activities and the increased income in 2012/13. The CPD unit had delivered 14 courses to over 100 local SMEs since September 2013.
• A telemarketing specialist had been appointed to support departments in promoting their CPD courses.
• Ongoing work with YMS to assist in the delivering of executive training to the Shepherds Group, Garbutt and Elliot and MooD International. Contracts were being drawn up to deliver to the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance.
• The contract with the Chamber of Commerce was met in part by meeting targets for SME engagement as the unit has a pool of 10 associates able to deliver a wide range of business courses.
• Approval by the ILM of a level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management

It was noted that the implementation of the course management system was delayed due to problems scheduling work between IT services and Finance.

During discussion, members were keen to hear about the benefits of the course administrative system ‘Administrate’ used by the CPD Unit and were welcome to contact Anna Hastie to explore this.

ACTION: AH and interested members

The Chair noted the approvals process for CPD courses and that any ethical questions concerning modules and programmes fell under the University’s Ethics
Policy. Anna confirmed that the Unit had links with the Ethics Committee and any implications from prospective companies would be discussed with them.

13-14/9 Languages for All (LFA)

The group received a written and oral report from the Director of LFA and noted:

- The maximum number of students taking LFA courses (1,700) had been reached given the number of teaching rooms and timetable slots available and demand had increased to include Chinese. It was agreed that room availability in the Library would be investigated and made available for LFA classes if possible.

  **ACTION: MB**

- Demand had increased for short courses, in particular for Japanese and Polish.
- The Academic Language and Culture Day for PGRs (White Rose Event) held on 4 July 2013, focused on the promotion of French language skills for researchers and received very positive feedback and a second expanded event took place on 15 November (promoting French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese language skills). The funding for this project is now finished, but the language-learning training and online materials which have been developed would be integrated into the training for PGRs in the arts and humanities in the three White Rose universities.
- In December 2013, a Spanish language learning project gained funding from the Rapid Response Fund. The aim was to use the online Tango application (video-based communication software) to create virtual pairings between Spanish learners at York and English learners at the University of Oviedo, Spain.
- A new one-day conference on Italian culture (Witchcraft and Local Folklore) was held at Kings Manor on 30 November 2013 and was well attended.
- A Languages Hub has been created on the first floor of the Harry Fairhurst building (next to the Maths Skills Centre) devoted specifically to language learning resources (e.g. reference works and online materials).
- A report had been produced highlighting the challenges with the IT systems for LFA registrations, timetabling and group allocation, in particular the inability to process registrations from internal and external applicants in the same way, to note that ‘free entitlement’ had been used up or to provide a snapshot of student numbers at any given time. A new student allocator system was hoped to resolve such problems but technical difficulties with the system had prevented this.
The group agreed that over the years different bespoke systems had been created to overcome similar issues as highlighted above. The Chair agreed to speak with Kate Dodd (Academic Registrar) and Heidi Fraser-Kraus (Deputy Director of Information and Head of IT Services) about systems support.

**ACTION: Chair**

**13-14/10 Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP)**
The group received a written report and oral report from Lesley Catt on behalf of the Director of PGCAP and noted:

- The Academic Practice element of HR Learning and Development (i.e. Duncan Jackson and Lesley Catt) had moved to Academic Support Office. In the light of the projects and work underway an additional post would shortly be advertised.
- PGCAP recruited for 2013/14 start under a new admissions policy which capped numbers at 30 (with a hard cap of 40). Forty-one participants were admitted with 8 either being rejected, deferred or withdrawing from the application process and 24 expressions of interest for 2014/15. It was confirmed that extra staff would be appointed to deal with the increase in numbers.
- Programme modifications were awaiting UTC approval (e.g. Module1: to allow staff without the range and scope of responsibility expected of an academic to access the programme). It was intended that this would start in summer 2014.
- The Periodic Review would take place on 7th May 2014.
- The evaluation of the University’s Peer Support for Teaching Policy would be reported to UTC in May 2014.
- The development of the Framework for Professional Development in Learning and Teaching, aligned to the UKPSF would enable all staff with teaching commitments to gain HEA recognition. This had been recently endorsed by UTC and the group agreed that it would be beneficial for them to meet and consider the proposed framework.

**13-14/11 Researcher Development Team (RDT)**
The group received a written and oral report from the Research Student Developer and noted:

- The number of attendees on courses had increased, but this was from repeaters rather than new PGR students. Student evaluations (as of 31st Jan 2014) demonstrated a similar pattern to last years’ figures. It was noted that there was a worrying increase in students not attending courses they had registered on and were in the process of investigating why this was the case.
Paul Roberts offered his help to discuss solutions with the RDT and it was acknowledged that the focus of courses should be on active learning rather than conveying information.

- Evaluations to assess usage of skills (2012-13) done 6-12 weeks after attendance showed approximately 50% had used the skills, approximately 40% had not had an opportunity to use any of the skills, and approximately 10% have had an opportunity but had not used the skills.
- York is holding an internal three minute thesis competition on 12th June, and holding one of the National Semi-finals on 16th July. The final would be held at the annual Vitae Conference in Manchester 4-5th September.
- Points could be earned towards York Award on many the RDT sessions.
- New sessions had been developed including new VLE sites to support blended learning for several sessions and an academic tutorial for PGRS was in train.
- The team are represented on the training and engagement groups for AHRC and ESRC DTP/ DTCs.

**13-14/12 Learning Enhancement Team**

The group received a written report from the Academic Skills Project Officer who was unable to attend the meeting on this occasion.

The group were interested to know how sessions at the Writing Centre related to other kinds of writing support and the Secretary agreed to contact the LET for more information.

**ACTION:** Secretary and LET

**13-14/13 International Relations Office**

The group received a written and oral report from the Academic Programme Manager Officer and **noted:**

- The expansion of courses and generally a good number of applicants.
- The development of Summer Schools with the first one being held for students from Peking University at York and one in Rochester USA.
- The successful deliver of the initiative with English and Management with students from Catania University (Italy) and Zhejiang University of Technology (PR China).
- Internal QA procedures needed to be developed but resource issues had prevented this so far.
- Issues around lack of teaching space and lack of accommodation continued year on year and had resulted in turning down some students as no further courses could be housed. Priority was given to conference bookings at James College and the group agreed that resulting high charges from the University
could mean the service suffered constraints and might not be able to reach it targets. It was agreed that the Chair would speak to the Registrar.

**ACTION: Chair**

- Work was underway to register students as College students in order that any emergencies could be dealt with as other students.
- IT services has advised the use of Google sites to become more interactive with administration and Michelle agreed to give a presentation on Google functions at the next meeting.

13-14/14 **Any other Business**

1. It was reported that LFA, supported by YUSU and the Employability Coordination Group were supportive of the provision of a British Sign Language course at Certificate level. These programmes were accredited by ‘Signature’, the professional body and it was acknowledged that the costs were quite high and fees would need to be appropriate. Suitably qualified staff would need to be recruited too. It was unclear where the programme would ‘live’ but the administration would be the responsibility of the LFA. The proposal would be considered by the Better Management Sub-group in the first instance and Dan was underway with producing this.

**ACTION: DW (YUSU)**

2. The group agreed that a further meeting should take place in June to consider and respond to the Vice Chancellor’s consultation on the University’s Strategy, consider the proposed Framework for Professional Development in Learning and Teaching and implications for the groups’ departmental staff and receive a presentation on the functionality of Google to assist with administration and communication from Michelle Blake.

**ACTION: Secretary**

13-14/15 **Next Meeting**

A further meeting will be held on **13 June 2014 in HG15** from 10-12 to discuss the items noted in 2. above.

The next main meeting will be held on **9 July 2014 in HG19** from 2-4.30pm.