

Standing Committee on Assessment



Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 20 October 2023 at 2.00pm in HG17 Heslington Hall and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:	Dr Patrick Gallimore	York Law School (Chair)
	Eddie Cowling	IPC
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education
	Prof. Kate Arnold	Dean of York Graduate Research School
	Dr Daniel Baker	Psychology
	Sue Faulds	Health Sciences
	Kevin Caraher	SBS
	Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
	Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS
In attendance :	Dr Stephen Gow (Secretary)	Assessment and Academic Integrity
	Jan Ball-Smith	Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning
	Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
	Jenny Matson	SAAS
	Sarah Maynard	DHoFO - Social Sciences
	Claire Pinder (Minutes)	Academic Support Coordinator
	Dr Jen Wotherspoon	Head of Student Administration
	Meely Doherty	YUSU
	Cyntherea Shen	GSA
Apologies:	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
	Isabel Jagoe	DHoFO - Arts and Humanities
	Jayne Lawrence	DHOFO - Health Sciences
	Dr Christian Pillier	Philosophy
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
	Dr Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Nic Streatfield	Student and Academic Services
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager

m23-24/15 Welcome and apologies for absence

Members and those attending were welcomed.

Apologies were received from Daisy Bowen, Isabel Jagoe, Jayne Lawrence, Dr Alet Roux, Nic Streatfield, and Claire Wilkinson.

m23-24/16 Minutes of previous meeting

ACTION: Stephen to circulate SCA minutes from the meeting held on Friday 22 September 2023.

M23-24/17 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters arising log

CLOSED

- m22-23/80 - Inform PG and the A&H AD to discuss the Board of Examiners meeting for the Languages and Linguistics Department.
- m22-23/83 - York Online Programmes to submit a new Access and Participation plan Report from Computer Science to the future SCA meeting.
- m22-23/87 - Chair of SCA to reflect on timings of SCA meetings so that they coordinate with UTC meetings
- m23-24/3 - Ensure SCA dates in 2024 are in calendars, once confirmed as final.
- m23-24/4 - Secretary to share slides with Committee
- m23-24/4 - Chair will relay feedback to UTC that take up of Turnitin Feedback Studio has been lower than expected, and that information has not always been clear.
- m23-24/4 - Chair and Jen Wotherspoon will consult Chair of Board of Examiners (CBoE)'s on PGT and UG progression due to MAB.
- m23-24/4 - Chair and Secretary to brief YUSU/GSA on signing responsibilities.
- m23-24/4 - Consult Chairs of Board of Examiners to get an appraisal regarding dates of SCA signing
- m23-24/5 - Discuss the Maths students, raising MAB contingencies, with Alet Roux as soon as possible.
- m23-24/6 - Paper sent to UTC for approval
- m23-24/7 - SCA working group consider proofreading policy
- m23-24/7 - CITY College AI traffic light guidance with SCA
- m23-24/7 - Include YGRS on development of AI policy
- m23-24/9 - Circulate the ECA policy to SCA and to staff - sending a summary of the policy and of self-certification changes.

ACTION: SCA Chair to follow up about Turnitin Training with UTC

ONGOING

- m22-23/86 - Chair to ensure that SBS have assessment processes in place regarding the probationary policy.
- m22-23/86 - Secretary and YUSU/GSA to discuss the wording of guidance around Academic Misconduct to be made available to students.
- m23-24/7 - YUSU to work with SCA on informing students about assessment changes/rules brought about by Modularisation and Semesterisation.
- m23-24/7 - Arrange communications to students and staff about implications of progression and awards, and assessment changes

NO LONGER NEEDED

- m23-24/83 - YOP submit a new Access and Participation plan Report from Computer Science to the future SCA meeting.

ACTION: SCA Chair to follow up the PG outcomes for Computer Science students which would be considered by the Strategic Insights Team.

M23-24/18 Chair's Report

VLE transformation project: anonymous assessment update

It was **noted** that there was nothing to report.

Industrial Action, External Examiners and Institutional Exam Board Contingency

An update was **considered**:

- The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) had been suspended, and marking of affected submissions was ongoing.
- In November submissions which had not been marked would be reviewed.
- The University had agreed an additional closed graduation would take place w/b 5 December, for students who were affected by MAB, and students based overseas.
- Communications had been released to Departments advising them to have as few boards as possible, as a Institutional Exam Board contingency for MAB. It was recommended that Departments hold one final board, and use Chairs Action in the interim if required.

ACTION: Jen Wotherspoon to send SCA Chair a copy of the communication to Departments about Institutional Exam Board Contingency.

SCA Signing

An update was **considered**:

- A schedule for signing by SCA members had been released. It was expected that demand would be greatest in w/b 26 November which was the PGT Award deadline.
- SCA members were encouraged to sign up to the signing schedule.

Scheduling of exams in 2023-24

An update was **considered**:

- Semesterisation presented new exam scheduling challenges. SCA had issued guidance to Departments to plan safe times for assessments for 2023/24..
- SCA was planning updated guidance to Departments to plan safe times for assessments for the 2024/25 academic year
- There were workload concerns to consider with regard to assessment schedule planning within a three week assessment period.
- Assessment was shifting toward closed exams in response to the challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- It was important to balance pedagogic values concerning assessment scheduling

with timetabling resources, within the ongoing Assessment and Feedback project.

ACTION: Chair to raise an item of concern at UTC about assessment scheduling - balancing pedagogic values with timetabling resources.

Confirmation of priority areas

An update was **considered**:

- SCA Secretary and Chair had met Steve King and Tracy Lightfoot to discuss SCA Priority areas.
- It had been agreed that the priority areas would be narrowed, with the priorities to be: Exceptional Circumstances; the Guide to Assessment, including dissemination of information about assessments.
- Jen Wotherspoon would move forward with Exceptional Circumstances process, and the SCA Chair would move forward with Exceptional Circumstances policy.
- SCA Priority areas would be discussed at the 9 November UTC meeting, and the SCA Chair would share outcomes at the next SCA meeting.

SSPs Review

An update was **considered**:

- The exams team will be responsible for adjustments which are 50% extensions.
- The disability services team are reviewing SSPs policy, and SCA may be required to provide policy wording based on provisional approvals made at SCA.

ACTION: SCA Chair will speak to Claire Wilkinson about the next steps of updating an SSP's policy.

m23-24/19 Report from Students

GSA **noted** that:

- There was uncertainty among international students about navigating Artificial Intelligence and academic misconduct, and those students would welcome a media campaign to raise awareness. It was noted that communications to students about AI would be considered by the SCA.
- Some students in Education who had been affected by MAB had not yet received their results. It was noted that the Education Department were working to a 6 November deadline for release of these marks to students.

YUSU **noted** that:

- The YUSU Rep had met with all Department Representatives to discuss issues around MAB and SITS. It was noted that Jen Wotherspoon is working on a resolution to the SITS issue where if a component is waived, it is marked as zero, which reduces the average.
- An exam which was scheduled to be in a computer lab had changed from open, to closed. Students had raised this as a concern. It was noted that the Department had planned a meeting with the students affected to discuss this issue.

m23-24/20 Assessment Support Policy and implications of AI for assessment (Taught and PGRs)

The proposal was **considered** and **approved**. It was **noted** that:

- AI policy would reference False Authorship in the Academic Misconduct policy.
- The policy on Proofreading is now called the policy on Assessment Support. It is a new iteration of the proofreading policy, which also now includes all instances where a student is seeking to enhance their work beyond their own ability, and gives guidance for students to avoid being at risk of false authorship. [UTC then requested a name change - it is now the Policy on Acceptable Assistance with Assessments, as support was deemed to broad a term which could include SSPs].
- There was good practice at CITY College, who have adopted a traffic light system of guidance to students about using AI.
- There was good practice at YUSU who produced information cards for students, in order to embed new policies. YUSU could produce cards about AI policy, if requested.
- The UTC has a working group on AI which considers the University's approach to AI in teaching and research contexts. The focus of the SCA working group for AI is to establish how the University should police the improper use of AI, and to discuss permissible uses of AI.
- Students should be given early advice and support about AI and translation software. IPC run short courses and their students and staff have questioned what the AI policy is. IPC have created local guidance, and examples of correct usage, which are presented on a webpage.
- It was important to consider how the policy would align to use by PGR students. One AI policy, which included guidance for PGR students would be preferred.
- The AI group would reflect upon an effective communications strategy for AI policy.
- The AI group should consider as part of their communications plan: information on the University website to reflect that guidance will soon be confirmed; the schedule of communications, so that supervisors have access to policy information before students; consistency in information to students about who they can go to for support; presentations about new AI policy to student groups, as a collaboration between Departments and Student Reps.

ACTION: Kate Arnold to inform SCA Secretary about the date of the next PPPC meeting.

ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss this proposal with Steve King.

m23-24/21 Degree Outcomes Statement (UG only)

The proposal was **considered** and **approved**. It was **noted** that:

- Grade inflation had reduced to a pre-pandemic, baseline level, which was ahead of OfS guidance about when this should be achieved.
- It was now possible to determine how the increase in grade inflation could be attributed to mitigations undertaken during the pandemic.
- The UK University sector had largely experienced reduction in grade inflation.
- Semesterisation changes, and MAB adjustments, may have an impact on grade inflation in 2023/24.
- Figures on the award gap were now obtainable using data from Jess Burchill.
- This item would be discussed at 9 November UTC, and would then be taken to University

- Senate, where there would be discussion about wider implications.
- Work on the awarding gap could be aligned with the University's Access and Participation plan.
 - Section six could be extended to include: a note on teaching practices with examples from different departments, and examples from TEF.

ACTION: SCA Chair to request that the University Institutional Examiner comment on this proposal in advance of the 9 November UTC meeting.

ACTION: Daniel Baker to present this item at the 9 November UTC meeting.

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.

m23-24/22 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 8 December at 2pm via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in HG/17 Heslington Hall.

RESERVED BUSINESS

m23-24/23 Individual Examination Arrangements

It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m23-24/24 Appointment of External Examiners

It was **noted** the appointment (or extension to appointment) of external examiners (UG and PGT), approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m23-24/25 Results Lists

Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.