

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27 January 2023 at 2.00pm via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:	Dr Patrick Gallimore	York Law School (Chair)
	Prof. Kate Arnold	Dean of York Graduate Research School
	Dr Daniel Baker	Psychology
	Debayan Dey	YUSU
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
	Dr Christian Pillier	Philosophy
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
	Dr Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Eddie Cowling	International Pathway College
	Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education
	Dr Kevin Caraher	SBS
In attendance:	Jan Ball-Smith	Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning
	Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
	Dr Stephen Gow (Secretary)	Academic Integrity Coordinator
	Claire Pinder (Minutes)	Academic Support Coordinator
	Jenny Matson	Student Administration Manager (Deputy)
	Nic Streatfield	Student and Academic Services
	Dr Jen Wotherspoon	Deputy Director SAAA
Apologies:	Dr Katherine Selby	Nat Sci/Env and Geography
	Zhang Teng	GSA

m22-23/44 Welcome & Introductions

Members and those attending were welcomed to the first hybrid meeting of the SCA.

Apologies were received from Dr Katherine Selby and Zhang Teng.

m22-23/45 Minutes of previous meeting

The SCA Secretary would circulate minutes of the meeting held **Friday 2 December, 2022** for approval.

m22-23/46 Matters arising from the previous minutes

ONGOING

- **2 December m22-23/33 Chair's Oral Report**

SCA Chair and Examinations team to consider Mock assessment period prior to the Spring/ Summer Common Assessment Period would meet on Friday 3 February 2023, and report back to the SCA for consideration.

CLOSED

- **28 October m22-23/17 Report from Students**

SG met with the GSA representative to discuss concerns regarding Academic Integrity of assessments..

- **28 October m22-23/18 PGT External Examiners Report**

Secretary and Chair met to consider how to disseminate issues raised in the report to Departments and Chairs of Boards of Examiners.

- **2 December m22-23/33 Chair's Oral Report**

Guidance on accessing data on relative position on SITS would be shared with Departments. This would be moved into the working group considering information for Chairs of Boards of Examiners.

- **2 December m22-23/33 Chair's Oral Report**

HOfOs had been consulted about the ECA simplified process for next academic year - liaison was ongoing.

- **2 December m22-23/35 External Examiners Report**

Chair checked reference in the Guide to Assessment about External Examiner attendance, and date of attendance on campus.

m22-23/47 Chair's Oral Report

a. Self-cert and ECA update

YUSU had been running a campaign to insert unlimited Self-cert applications, and had sent 1000s of emails to SCA members using an email campaign. It was noted that Deb (current YUSU officer) had been on annual leave during the campaign which was lead by the YUSU President. It was noted that:

- The current three use cap was consistent with the sector.
- YUSU's campaign indicated there were ways current practice was not working, however did not account for alternative routes for extension such as SSP
- Chair of SCA had met with YUSU, Jen Wotherspoon, PVC TLS, Nic Streatfield, and Rich Andrew from ASC to discuss the issues raised, and examine if it would be possible to make current practice more generous/ flexible for a new 2023-24 self-cert policy.
- Chair of SCA to meet with Disability Support Services to discuss implementation of

- the self-cert and ECA policy.
- There were significant workload/ resource implications to an unlimited self-cert extension policy.
- Jen Wotherspoon was looking into the question of if it would be possible for students to reclaim unspent self cert claims, when an ECA claim was successful.
- Chair of SCA would have a further meeting with YUSU.
- It was important to respond with compassion when tweaking the self-cert/ ECA policy.

ACTION: Chair of SCA would report back to the next SCA meeting about steps which could be put in place regarding Self Certification.

b. Industrial Action

It was noted that:

- The VC had informed University of York staff about industrial action days forecast for the Spring Term of the 2022-23 academic year.
- There would currently be no assessment and marking boycott in the Spring Term of 2022-23.
- Chair of SCA would reflect upon provision and progression for students in the instance of a marking and assessment boycott in the Spring Term of 2022-23, since a rebalot was planned.

c. Artificial intelligence: GPT-3 and 4 software update

The following points were noted in an update about Artificial intelligence: GPT-3 and 4 software:

- The SCA had a working group to examine issues around Artificial intelligence (for example ChatGPT and 4 software, it was further hoped that the group would discuss this at the teaching and learning conference.
- Departments had been asked to complete a form providing a contact for Artificial Intelligence and what approaches had been discussed within departments.
- This technology had implications beyond assessment, about the future purpose and function of the sector, and wider systemic issues.
- A member of the committee noted that there have been estimates that up to 10% of journal submissions could be generated by AI. Another noted work produced by AI was not of a high quality but was of a 2:2 standard, depending on the subject.
- The SCA working group will devise an approach to the use of AI in assessment and coordinate with other groups working on AI in the University and sector.

ACTION: Chair of SCA to meet with PVC TLS to discuss approach to AI in the University.

ACTION: Stephen Gow to meet with Jan Ball-Smith to discuss implications of AI for inclusive learning and assessment at the University.

m22-23/48 Report from Students

The YUSU representative noted that:

- Students had provided feedback about the Self Certification Policy.
- A YUSU Election was coming up.
- YUSU and GSA were working together to produce information for students about forthcoming industrial action.
- A postgraduate work room had opened in the library, and YUSU was asking PG students for

- feedback about the facility.
- Overseas students had issues getting Student Support Plans put in place. More guidance about SSP's from Disability Services would be welcomed.

The Committee noted that Jen Wotherspoon was in discussion about inclusive learning so that assessments would be more accessible to students with disabilities. This would also involve the consideration of the impact of adjustments on exams data. It was also noted that some students (but not overseas students) were also supported with reasonable adjustments by DSA (disabled Students Allowance) assessments. The University was required to support overseas students in the same way that home students are supported by a DSA.

ACTION: The GSA representative would provide a report by email for circulation to SCA members.

m22-23/49 PGR Outcomes Report 2021/22

The Committee was asked to **consider** the PGR outcomes data report and what data and insight would be useful to enable discussion of PGR outcomes in the context of delivering the University's strategic objectives. It was noted that:

- 300 to 400 PGR students are awarded each year - and there is a failure rate of 2% to 5%.
- Non-submission of thesis was an issue, mostly one experienced by home students, perhaps chosen by them as an alternative to failing the assignment. Home students were more likely to withdraw from their programme, than fail it.
- BAME students were more likely to fail their programme than withdraw from it - which could be due to the conditions put upon overseas students by their funding providers.
- The Committee discussed the impact of funding on overseas students not wanting to withdraw from programmes, as they often need to pay back fees.
- There was an increase in students failing to take places offered - which could be due to a buoyant jobs market.
- Although BAME is not a homogenous group, the group could not be further divided owing to the small sample size.
- Students who withdrew or failed could be eligible for lower exit awards and further consideration of making exit awards preferable to failure could be considered.

m22-23/50 Degree Outcomes Data

The Committee was asked to **consider** the Degree outcomes data report and what data and insight would be useful to enable discussion of degree outcomes in the context of delivering the University's strategic objectives. It was noted that:

- SCA has already seen this year's data, which has been seen by UTC, and which looks at York results. Another set of data would be made available soon.
- The percentage of good grades awarded has increased to 86%. Russell Group Universities as a whole reflect this trend of an increase in good grades awarded.
- Arts and Humanities students received more good grades than students in Sciences or Social Sciences.
- In 2021 York students had more Firsts and 2:1 degrees, however, York results were lower than the sector average. The results could be viewed on Tableau.
- The attainment gap for BAME students has decreased.
- Data should be considered in more depth at a Department level, with additional focus on progress and value added - the tariff on entry is likely to be associated with attainment.
- The PG data was surprising in that York is moving away from the mean of the Russell Group

with decreasing proportions for those qualifying with an award at the intended level, and increasing proportions for those students who qualified with an award at a different level and the factors that are driving this outcome should be understood - it may Covid related.

- Departments were working hard to support students with language barriers - Covid had to some extent hampered work that Departments could do.

ACTION: KarenPayne to share the new cycle of data, via a Tableau data workbook, with CBoS and CBoE, and will share slides of this cycle of data with the SCA group.

ACTION: SCA Chair will meet with PVC TLS, Steve King, AD's and Jan Ball-Smith to discuss becoming more systematic with the use of data to inform teaching and learning, and sharing data.

ACTION: Jen Wotherspoon will consult Kate Arnold about the PG results and what factor may be driving them.

m22-23/51 York Online - timescale for implementing revised award rules

The Committee was asked to **consider** and **express a view** on when the new award rules should apply to York Online. It was noted that:

- Award rules had been temporarily changed in response to Covid, and had not returned to the pre-covid rules. As new rules were scheduled to be employed in September 2023, there was a query about how this could best be achieved, either with a big bang, or a phased introduction.
- It would not be practical to have many different rules in place at the same time, due to tracking complexities wrought by the flexible nature of York Online programmes. It would be far better for rules to be consistent.

A view was expressed by SCA members that a big bang introduction of the new rules, with the retention of covid rules would be the preferred option.

ACTION: SCA to report to UTC

m22-23/52 YUSU/GSA Reps - exceptional circumstances

The Committee was asked to **consider** and **endorse** the continuation of the policy for 2022/23. It was noted that:

- A new criteria for exceptional circumstances claims of candidates in the YUSU/ GSA rep elections was approved by SCA members for continuation from this 2022-23 academic year, and would be reviewed by SCA in subsequent years.
- YUSU and GSA elections may need to be held at a different time of year from 2023-24 to accommodate changes wrought by M&S.
- The new criteria should not be extended further than candidates in the YUSU/ GSA elections.

ACTION: Stephen Gow to put the new YUSU/GSA Rep criteria in the EC Policy which is published online.

m22-23/53 VLE Transformation project impact on assessment policy

The Committee was asked to **note** the potential impact on assessment and marking of the VLE

transformation project. It was noted that:

- The VLE was being transformed before 2023-24, with impacts by M&S and Blackboard Ultra.
- There were issues with anonymous assessment building blocks, and the implementation of SPaG stickers, on marking sheets.
- Weekly meetings were being held to trial the functions of the transforming VLE.
- It was important to be cautious with the implementation of changes.
- Direct marking on scripts was being considered, and thought to be possible and expected. The Committee had a preference for markers to have a variety of ways to engage with the marking process
- There would be functionality for marking online, however, the option to also mark offline was also required.
- Turnitin and Wiseflow had both been considered, with success for Turnitin.
- The committee would prefer to wait until the project was more complete before communicating any changes to colleagues.

m22-23/54 Update of Priority Areas

The Committee was asked to **reflect** on Committees progress with priorities in 22/23 so far. It was noted that:

1. Production of a university-wide statement on degree outcomes (UKSCQA)- completed.
2. Review of Modular Scheme Progression and Award Rules 2023/24 - An update meeting had been scheduled with Jen Wotherspoon to discuss progress with addressing the issues highlighted by the external consultant.
3. Review of the structure of the Guide to Assessment - This was being considered by Stephen Gow, and the AQ Team.
4. Consideration of Exam Board timings and Development of tools and guidance - ongoing

ACTION: Dan Baker to schedule a group to consider Exam Board timings and Development of tools and guidance.

5. Review of ECA policy and procedure - ongoing.

ACTION: SCA Chair to set up a meeting with at a group of PSS DHoFO's and Assessment Administrators to look at processes to implement in 2023-24.

6. Progression at Risk - ongoing.

ACTION: Jen Wotherspoon to set up a meeting to discuss progression at risk.

7. External Examiners - Stephen Gow and Dan Baker are working on guidance for resignation of External Examiners.

8. Award Gap affecting minority groups in assessment / Inclusive assessment - data would soon be available to inform discussions about this area.

9. Anonymous Assessment - discussed in m22-23/ VLE Transformation project impact on

assessment policy.

10. Academic Integrity & Misconduct:

- a). Contract cheating, translation software, third party support
- b) self-plagiarism
- c) Light touch procedure review

Ongoing - Stephen Gow has set up a meeting to discuss academic integrity and misconduct.

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.

1. Date of the next meeting

To note the date of the next meeting as Friday 3rd March, 2023 at 2pm via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in HG/17.

RESERVED BUSINESS

- **Individual Examination Arrangements**
To **note** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.
- **Appointment of External Examiners**
To **note** the appointment (or extension to appointment) of external examiners (UG and PGT), approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.
- **Results Lists**
To **receive** notification of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.