

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 7 July 2023 at 2.00pm in HG17 Heslington Hall and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:	Dr Daniel Baker	Psychology (Chair)
	Dr Patrick Gallimore	York Law School
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education
	Prof. Kate Arnold	Dean of York Graduate Research School
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
	Dr Christian Pillier	Philosophy
	Dr Kevin Caraher	Social Policy
	Pierrick Roger	YUSU
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
	Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS

In attendance:	Jan Ball-Smith	Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning
	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
	Dr Stephen Gow (Secretary)	Academic Integrity Coordinator
	Isabel Jagoe	DHoFO - Arts and Humanities
	Jenny Matson	SAAS
	Claire Pinder (Minutes)	Academic Support Coordinator
	Dr Jen Wotherspoon	Deputy Director SAAA

Apologies	Dr Eddie Cowling	IPC
	Debayan Dey	YUSU
	Meely Doherty	YUSU
	Gem Kirk	Progression and Awards
	Jayne Lawrence	DHOFO - Health Sciences
	Sarah Maynard	DHOFO - Social Sciences
	Dr Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Nic Streatfield	Student and Academic Services
	Zhang Teng	GSA

m22-23/77 Welcome & Introductions

Members and those attending were welcomed. Welcome was extended to DHoFO Isabel Jagoe who was present.

Apologies were received from Eddie Cowling, and Meely Doherty.

m22-23/78 Minutes of previous meeting

The SCA Committee **approved** the minutes of the SCA meeting held on **Friday 12 May 2023**.

m22-23/79 Matters arising from the previous minutes

CLOSED

- m22-23/54 Update of Priority Areas
- m22-23/60 PSS working group Exceptional Circumstances progress report
- m22-23/65 Chair's Oral Report
- m22-23/66 PGR 6 month correction period
- m22-23/67 Exceptional Circumstances and Self-Certification Working Group Update and in principle proposals
- m22-23/68 M&S Progression and Award Rules
- m22-23/69 External Examiners PG report
- m22-23/69 External Examiners PG report

m22-23/80 Chair's Report

VLE transformation project: anonymous assessment update

It was **noted** that:

- PGR students had been concerned about anonymity of markers - confirmation is needed that GTA will be able to remain anonymous in the marking process.
- UTC will consider the VLE transformation project on Thursday 13 July.
- Departments would test the new system over the summer vacation.

Industrial Action, External Examiners and Institutional Exam Board Contingency

It was **noted** that:

- Contingency rules had been implemented to good effect, and UoY had performed better than comparator institutions.
- 85% of students have awards with no intervention contingency, About 10% of students will get a provisional classification with no detriment - based on marks they already have. 1.76% of students are getting unclassified and 2.8% of students are getting no award - these students were almost exclusively focused in a Department which had not utilised mitigation. A faculty level Board of Examiners had been created to ratify marks from that Department, and those students had been invited to attend graduation day celebrations.
- Many Departments acted strategically, and with the best interest of the students at heart regarding progression. Most students had not been affected by the marking and assessment boycott (MAB), and most of the students who had been affected were supported by a safety net.
- It was not yet known when the MAB would officially end as UCU was reballoting members.
- PGT contingencies had not yet been formally agreed.
- Admission Departments across Russell Group Universities had an agreement to accept partial transcripts from students from other Russell Group Universities. There were current sector-wide negotiations to extend this agreement to other universities outside the Russell Group.

ACTION: Jen Wotherspoon to inform PG and the A&H AD to discuss the Board of Examiners meeting for the Languages and Linguistics Department.

Artificial Intelligence UTC working group

It was **noted** that:

- A paper had been drafted by Stephen Gow and Steve King regarding AI.
- The group had considered current principles around AI from the Russell Group.
- The Academic Misconduct team have been maintaining a record of the AI case data. A Freedom of Information request to UoY about AI had shown that good data records were being maintained by the UoY.
- An AI in Research working group had been put in place.
- The training of admissions staff to identify/ assess applications which utilised generative AI would be considered.

ACTION: Stephen Gow to speak to Steve King and Patrick Gallimore about linking with the PGR AI working group.

m22-23/81 Report from Students

There was no report from the YUSU or GSA representative.

m22-23/82 Exceptional Circumstances and Self-certification Policy - Update

It was **noted** that the SCA was asked to:

- **note** the update on decisions made by UTC in relation to EC processes for academic year 2023/24 and onwards
- **note** the paper to be presented to UTC at its July meeting and to consider the points raised in it in order to make such observations and recommendations to UTC as may help it decide the points of policy or principle to endorse in approving the ongoing work of the SCA working group on exceptional circumstances and self-certification.

The following observations were made:

- Approval in principle would be sought at the July UTC meeting, once SCA members had agreed/provided thoughts on the proposals in the paper. These proposals included:
 - i) Relaxation and clarification of requirements for evidence and deadlines for the production of evidence
 - ii) Review and clarification of bases of claim under the policy
 - iii) Incorporation of additional adjustments for students in specific identifiable categories
 - iv) Incorporation of provision for EC claims by students with 'bunched assessments' to support the current self-certification policy
 - v) Adoption of a semester-based approach to self-certification claims
- The proposals in the paper were intended to be pragmatic - so that a policy would be ready for September 2023.
- The paper detailed proposals of tasks which the working group would progress with over the summer vacation period.
- YUSU was supportive of the proposals in the paper, which had been presented to officers.
- The wording of the policy would be reviewed since it was found to be no longer usually

practical for students to obtain evidence from a professional within a three week window, and so a more relaxed set of principles would be beneficial.

- SCA members supported re-examination/improved definitions, in some of the principles of basis of claim, such as Covid, and bereavement.
- The OIA have stated a preference for Universities to have a unified approach to assessment policies, and wording around SSP's could be further unified/ cross-referenced in this policy.
- Students in certain 'vulnerable' groups who were therefore considered potentially eligible for support in relation to academic adjustments had been previously emailed en masse. This process could be embedded in the policy as a means to communicate with students regarding other types of claims, or assessments. It was noted that this email had included students who were in receipt of financial support- among other groups. It was noted that going forward, students should be made aware of how/ why they have been included in those emails.
- There was no system in place at the UoY to do bunched assessments, and a workaround was developed as detailed in 2.9 of the paper.

ACTION: Pierrick Roger to consult YUSU about Self-Certification.

ACTION: Patrick Gallimore to advise the working group to also consider, and include, cross-referenced wording about the impact of SSP's on Exceptional Circumstances and Self Cert in guidance.

m22-23/83 Degree Outcomes Report

The Degree Outcomes Report was **considered** by the SCA. The following observations were made:

- There had been a reduction across the sector in "good" degrees as mitigations put in place to manage the impact of Covid on assessment were no longer in use. This reduction had realigned results to pre-pandemic levels.
- PG results seem anomalous and the Strategic Insights team have been asked to review the data, with regard to the impact of different modes of attendance. It is suspected that online programmes may have skewed the results. It was further noted that access to programmes should remain widened with regard to admissions strategies, and the diversity of the student body.
- The Strategic Insights group were developing a Department Health Check data pack which will give targeted information to Departments.
- Work was being done by UTC to reduce attainment gaps, some of which had widened due to the loss of safety nets put in place to mitigate the impact of Covid on assessments. UTC wished to focus on a data driven approach to programme review to reduce attainment gaps. The University was working on the reduction of attainment gaps as a priority. Students representatives reported concerns about attainment gaps.
- Data on prior attainment of students could be accessed via a Tableau report. Chairs of Boards of Examiners would find it useful to reflect on prior attainment of students, and value added, when analysing degree outcomes.
- It could be useful to track the degree outcomes of students who had contextual offers. This was currently available for apprenticeship students

ACTION: Zara Roberts would submit a new Access and Participation plan Report from Computer Science to the next SCA meeting

m22-23/84 Guide to Assessment and Award and Progression Rules Update

The Guide to Assessment and Award and Progression Rules Update was submitted to be **considered** and **approved** by the SCA. The following observations were made:

- Progression and Award rules will be finalised before the Guide to Assessment will be reviewed.
- A new structure had been drafted, which would remove repetition, in the Guide to Assessment.
- It was hoped that a new draft of the Guide to Assessment would be ready by the end of July.
- BAME and international students are reported to use online tools to assist SPaG. The use of online and AI tools will be included in the Guide to Assessment, with the emphasis both on maintaining academic standards, and ensuring support to BAME and international students.
- The inclusive learning team were working with the Disability team on SPaG stickers in terms of access and reasonable adjustments.

ACTION: Stephen Gow and Patrick Gallimore will discuss how to progress the new Guide to Assessment draft.

ACTION: Stephen Gow to speak to the Communications Office about how to get the Guide to Assessment set up, so it is consistent with the PGR policy page.

m22-23/85 OFS Retention Schedule

The OFS Retention Schedule was submitted to be **considered** and **approved** by the SCA. The following observations were made:

- The University of York should immediately implement the rule of storing assessments for five years after students have graduated.
- The OFS retention schedule applies to assessments from May 2022 and after..
- There were resource implications of storing assessments for five years after student graduation, to be considered.
- There was currently mixed practice among University of York Departments regarding how long they retain student assessments for after graduation, which would be standardised, with a communication about best practice to be sent to Departments from the Chair of SCA.
- There were challenges to the OFS retention schedule from students who were on Leave of Absence. This had been flagged in the notes as an issue to be considered.

m22-23/86 Academic Misconduct Data Report

The Academic Misconduct Data Report was submitted to be **considered** by the SCA. The following observations were made:

- The general picture was that cases were rising in line with the growth of the academic population.
- There was a large proportion of cases with “no case to answer”. There were a wide number of plagiarism cases, and a low number of cases where work had been commissioned by students.
- It was beneficial for Departments to track where first offences had been committed with a

formal recording system/policy of probationary modules - so that a full picture of individual student behaviour could more easily emerge.

- It was noted that SBS were may not be adopting the probationary policy - which the Department were currently investigating. SBS were running first year cases through StAMP which should be dealt with in the department.
- The definition of “case to answer” would be clarified to distinguish been cases which are not considered by StAMP and those which are considered no case to answer by the StAMP . As part of this, the impact of penalties on students affected by “no case to answer”, and their progression, would be reviewed.
- It was noted that cases involving AI or contract cheating may take longer to investigate and this could have a negative impact on student mental health.
- It was noted that a consequence of the current system was that cases could be raised due to a suspicion, which may mean that students who have done nothing wrong miss graduation, if a case against them is raised in their final year.

ACTION: Chair of SCA to ensure that SBS have assessment processes in place regarding the probationary policy.

ACTION: Chair of SCA to ensure that the definition of “case to answer” would be clarified in documentation.

ACTION: Stephen and Pierrick to discuss the wording of guidance around Academic Misconduct to be made available to students.

m22-23/87 SCA 22/23 reflection and look forward to 23/24

The SCA 22/23 reflection and look forward to 23/24 report was **considered** by the SCA. The following observations were made:

- Consideration of Exam Boards was in progress, and when complete, a wiki with resources and guidance would be shared with examiners at their induction.
- Item 5, ECA policy would be taken to the next UTC meeting
- SCA 22/23 meetings had reviewed a range of issues including: Programmes at risk; External Examiners and industrial action; the appointment of an institutional examiner; award gaps, anonymous assessment; academic integrity and misconduct.
- SCA members were thanked for their contributions, and work toward 22/23 meetings

ACTION: Chair of SCA to reflect on timings of SCA meetings so that they coordinate with UTC meetings

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.

m22-23/88 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 22 September at 2pm via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in HG/17 Heslington Hall.

RESERVED BUSINESS

m22-23/89 Individual Examination Arrangements

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

m22-23/90 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.

m22-23/91 Results Lists

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