

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 8 December 2023 at 2.00pm in HG17 Heslington Hall and via Zoom online video conferencing.

## Attendance and apologies for absence:

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

## m23-24/26 Welcome and apologies for absence

Angela Lipscomb - DHoFO for Biology and Natural Sciences was welcomed to SCA.

Apologies had been received from Claire Wilkinson, Eddie Cowling, Jasper Heinzen, Christian Piller, Jen Wotherspoon, and Nic Streatfield.

## m23-24/27 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as correct, subject to the amendment of a typographical error.

## M23-24/28 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters arising log

### ONGOING

- m22-23/86 Academic Misconduct Data Report - The Chair has requested an update, the School of Business and Society are changing their Chair of Board of Examiners.
- m22-23/86 Academic Misconduct Data Report Secretary, YUSU and GSA to discuss wording.
- m23-24/7 Schedule and priorities, The Chair has sent a document to Meely Doherty (YUSU), which will be edited and shared with students.
- m23-24/7 Schedule and priorities - Arrange communications to students and staff about implications of progression and awards, and assessment changes.
- M23-24/18 Chair's Report - Jen Wotherspoon to send SCA a copy of communication to Departments about Institutional Exam Board Contingency - The Chair will follow this up.

### COMPLETED

- M23-24/17 Matters arising from the previous minutes -The Chair has followed up outcomes for Computer Science students.

### NO LONGER NEEDED

- m23-24/21 Degree Outcomes Statement - the Degree Outcomes Statement has been considered by Senate and Council - it is proposed that SCA consult the Institutional Examiners on the review of the statement earlier in the process in 2023/24.
- m23-24/21 Degree Outcomes Statement UTC, Patrick presented this item at the 9 November UTC meeting and thanked Daniel Baker for leading this work. The degree outcome statement is [now online](#).

## M23-24/29 Chair's Report

- Guide to Assessment update:** It was noted that the Guide to Assessment went to UTC for discussion, where an outline of the structure and style of the document was submitted to UTC. Comments and observations about the content of the Guide to Assessment were received. A meeting will be scheduled to take place in December with Steve King, Tracy Lightfoot, Adrian Lee, Stephen Gow, and Duncan Jackson to discuss the Guide to Assessment. Further thought was required to ensure that the Guide to Assessment included guidance about provision for non-standard programmes within a well-structured design.
- Industrial Action, External Examiners and Institutional Exam Board Contingency - SCA Signings:** An impact of industrial action, has been extra pressure on the progression and awards team, who have more work than usual, and fewer staff members. The progression and award team are currently working through graduations for students who were affected

by the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), and they are also working through issues for other students who were affected by MAB. In the new year the progression and awards team would focus on creating a safety net for those students. The progression and awards team were commended for their hard work and professionalism.

**c. Scheduling of exams this year:** The exam timetable was published on 7 December 2023. It was noted that:

- There were concerns around a few incorrect duration and assessment types, these issues had been exacerbated by the Programme Module Catalogue (PMC), and would be reviewed. Resultant changes would be completed by 15 December 2023.
- The exam period duration of three weeks has allowed favourable spacing of assessments.
- Closed online exams raised challenges in computer room availability, and securing enough invigilators who were trained in this type of assessment.
- Tom Banham would investigate the process around exam timetabling, and exam arrangements, including accommodating closed online exams, would be reviewed.
- The optionality of exams made available in the Guide to Assessment should be reviewed in order to ensure that options can be resourced before they are agreed.
- The exams team would benefit from funding for more staff and computer room resource, if departments are to continue to set closed online exams. It was noted that some institutions rent marquees and computers.
- A currently inactive initiative to allow students to bring their own laptops to exam rooms could have enabled more rooms to be available to the exams team for closed online exams, if successful. This initiative could be reactivated.

**ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss the University's strategic vision of exam resourcing with UTC Chair.**

**d. Assessment Assistance [Policy](#) and [Guidance](#):** It was noted that this policy was now up and running clarifying the use of Generative AI and other assistance with assessment, it was available for Departments and Schools, and for dissemination to students.

**e. Degree Outcomes Statement approved by Senate/Council:** At the December UTC meeting there was a congregation conferring awards on over 2000 students. This included students whose outcomes were delayed by Exceptional Circumstances claims, and for overseas postgraduate students. A standing process for a congregation to happen at UTC on a regular basis may be introduced, which may result in graduations become celebrations, with conferment occurring at meetings such as UTC.

**f. Special Cases Policy Review:** It was noted that:

- The senate had agreed in the summer of 2023 to dissolve the special cases policy review committee, and to replace it with an advisory committee that the team can call on if needed, which would now be reviewed.
- A thorough review had been completed, a summary of which went to 7 December UTC, and was approved subject to revisions to be signed off via Chairs Action.
- There would be Terms of Reference for the advisory group, three academic members from each school, and procedures had been modernised.

- Daisy Bowen and the Special Cases team, and senior staff, rather than the committee have delegated authority for consideration of Special Cases.
- A progress case policy has been drafted. The Special Cases team is working with the Marketing and Communications team to get the policy on the webpage, so students can access it when needed.
- The policy outlines the financial implications of any changes made, and regulation six will be updated to reflect those changes. The special cases team are aiming for it to go live at the end of January.

## m23-24/30 Report from Students

### a. YUSU noted that:

- Students could access a new [Academic Officer Box](#) initiative where students submit questions which can then be followed up by YUSU's Dept Reps and Sabbs.
- Students report feelings of stress centering on exams, some students have complained of stepped marking where the step is 10 marks. Students are also concerned about scaling, which should be fully explained to them by departments and schools. It was noted that Social Sciences were reviewing their approach to stepped marking, and that scaling would be discussed at the 15 February UTC meeting.
- Students might find information about stepped marking and scaling that helps reduce their stress in the Guide to Assessment.
- It is unusual that some students report that scaled marks are different when the raw mark is the same.
- Claire Wilkinson and Disability Services were thanked by YUSU and SCA Chair for their support with assisting disabled students, which resulted in a modified deadline for exams
- The exams team were thanked for publishing the exam timetable.

**ACTION: Meely Doherty and SCA Chair to discuss exam assessment.**

### b. GSA noted that:

- GSA is reaching out to students reminding them of support offered by the Exceptional Circumstances process. The GSA will share a video on the GSA website, electronic newsletter and in social media. The video will signpost students to support available.

## m23-24/31 SCA Priorities

SCA priorities were brought forward to be **considered** and **approved**. It was reported that:

- A paper about SCA priorities was presented to the 7 December UTC meeting for sign off.
- A proposed SCA priority relating to data and assessment information would be considered as a project outside the SCA, and would no longer be an SCA priority.
- The SCA priority relating to Exceptional Circumstances (EC) would reflect on the policy for EC, and on University policy on posthumous degrees.
- UTC had advised SCA to keep SCA priorities 4, 5, 6, and 7 under active review.
- UTC had advised SCA to focus on Guide to Assessment in 2023/24.
- The order of SCA priorities would be adjusted.

**ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss process improvements for 2024/25 SCA priorities with UTC Chair.**

## **m23-24/32 Exceptional Circumstances Policy Update**

Exceptional Circumstances Policy Update was **considered**. It was reported that:

- Changes to the policy in terms of types of claims that will be accepted have been approved, and the policy has been reordered
- Further consideration would be given to the implementation and running of the new process. UTC have asked SCA to review if there should be a faculty owned process.
- SCA were asked to consider if there was a need for a Departmental EC committee, noting that although the Office for Students have said that decisions do not usually require academic judgement, this may be required in some cases.
- The EC form is not owned centrally, and should be reviewed by SCA, so that data collection can be enhanced to provide a holistic view of the claimant so that pastoral support offered to claimants can be more targeted, and standardised, with regard to further communications and response approaches, and safeguarding for claimants.
- SCA members agreed that although Departments should retain some ownership of the EC process, so that programme nuances could be observed, it was important that there should be one layer of decision making.
- A modified EC form should be tested by students and Departments before a formal launch.
- SCA members agreed that the process could be reviewed in Semester one, once quantitative and qualitative data from the launch is obtained.

**ACTION: SCA Chair will speak to Biology and Natural Sciences students about a new EC process.**

**ACTION: SCA Chair to speak to Head of Student Administration about who should own the new EC process and resource implications.**

## **m23-24/33 YUSU proposals for provision of dictionaries in examinations.**

YUSU proposal for provision of dictionaries in examinations was **considered**. It was reported that:

- Focus group feedback was that access to English language dictionaries would make closed examinations less stressful for many students.
- Access to English language dictionaries would have resource and logistical implications for: invigilator duties; number of invigilators required; training invigilators on a new way of working; cost and storage of dictionaries;
- Students taking exams in different languages already have access to e-dictionaries in some cases.
- The following aspects of dictionary policy should be considered: how many dictionaries would be required per capita per exam; would any Departments require specialist dictionaries; how to ensure that dictionaries are not tampered with; level of dictionary required for students studying at higher levels;
- A set of principles should be in place before a pilot to see how the initiative works.

**ACTION: YUSU Student Rep will arrange a pilot of the initiative.**

**ACTION: SCA Chair and YUSU Student Representative to meet Jenny Matson to discuss the implementation of dictionaries in examinations.**

## **m23-24/34 Turnitin Contingency Planning for the Assessment Period - Discussion Paper**

Turnitin Contingency Planning for the Assessment Period - Discussion Paper was **considered**. It was reported that:

- Turnitin feedback studio is not always reliable. There have been 47 hours of downtime since the summer, and contingency planning was underway. Turnitin does not have its own contingency system.
- SCA requested a sense of what scale of disruption is needed to trigger a contingency response.
- It was proposed that students could have a 24 hour delay for closed exams, (subject to Department variation/ nuance), and that students with open exams, may need an email workaround.
- If students are not available in the additional 24 hours provided, they may later submit EC Claims which would have an administrative impact. It was also noted that an extension may create timetabling issues to be considered.
- A consistent solution for all students in all Departments (subject to Department/ School variation/ nuance) would be preferred.

**ACTION SCA Secretary to collate views of SCA Committee, and share draft with SCA Committee before sending to Richard and team.**

It was reported that:

- The moderation pack was found by staff to not be supportive enough, it can be used as part of the moderation process in their interaction with Turnitin.

**ACTION: SCA Secretary to report this matter to VLE Transformation Team**

## **Category 2**

### **Items for Information**

#### **m23-24/35 Centre for Global Programmes: Grade conversion tables for renewal, revision and approval.**

It was reported that:

- SCA Chair has requested that the Centre for Global Programmes table a report which shows workings and where they come from, so that SCA can make an informed decision.

#### **m23-24/36 Individual Examination Arrangements**

To note that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

## Standing Committee on Assessment

### **m23-24/37 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.

### **m23-24/38 Results Lists**

To note notification of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

### **Date of the next meeting**

Friday 26 January, 2023 at 10:00am in HG17 Heslington Hall and via Zoom online video conferencing.