Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 14th March at 10.00am in CL/A/027 and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:	Prof. Steve King	Computer Science (Sciences), APVC-TLS (Chair)
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics (Sciences)
	Dr Eytan Zweig	Language & Linguistic Science (Arts & Humanities)
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD-TLS Social Sciences
	Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
	Fenella Johnson	York SU, Academic Officer
	Dr Daniel Morgan	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
	Assoc. Prof. Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Dr Patrick Gallimore	Law (Social Sciences)
In attendance :	Aimée Yeoman	SCA Secretary & Policy Officer
	Dr Zara Burford	York Online
	Richard Andrew	York SU, Advice & Support Manager
	Richard Firth	Student Administration Manager for Progression and Awards
	Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality & Development
	Jess Penn	Head of Inclusive Education
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
	Diane Atkinson	Student Services Manager, School for Business & Society
	Sarah Finch	Head of Faculty Operations - History, History of Art, Archaeology & Centre for Medieval Studies
Apologies:	Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS
	Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
	Dr Juliet James	YGRS
	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Jan Ball-Smith	Head of Student Success

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m24-25/70 Welcome and apologies for absence

Committee members and those in attendance were welcomed and apologies noted.

SCA Chair welcomed Sarah Finch (Head of Faculty Operations - History, History of Art, Archaeology & Centre for Medieval Studies) to SCA, as she has replaced Isabel Jagoe.

m24-25/71 Declarations of Interest

N/A

m24-25/72 Minutes of previous meeting (SCA 24-25/28)

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 31st January were confirmed as correct.

m24-25/73 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters Arising log

CLOSED

m24-25/25 PGR Use of Turnitin, SCA Priority Group on academic integrity tutorial (AIT) to read through the PGR AIT tutorial.

Completed.

m24-25/54 Report from Students, AL to check if YorkSU are involved in the review of the GTA policy.

Completed, AL spoke to Maeve Pearson who had been in touch with York SU about the policy revision.

m24-25/55 EPA monitoring group update (Oral), SCA Chair to be SCA rep. on the EPA monitoring group.

Completed, SCA Secretary informed Sarah Farrell.

m24-25/56 A&F project update (Oral), PG to join Technical proficiency in English language Working Group as SCA representative.

Completed, SCA Secretary informed JB-S.

m24-25/56 A&F project update (Oral), JP to report back to WG 4 on SCA's support for a holding statement on non-SSP adjustments to be in place for the Summer CAP.

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Completed, JP reported back to the A&F project board and it was agreed that WG 4 would prepare interim guidance for Semester 2 CAP, with a view to have a draft of this for a meeting of WG 4 in w/b 24th March.

m24-25/57 Calculator policy student feedback (Oral), SCA Chair, SCA Secretary and Jenny Matson to get feedback from exams team for invigilator view on calculator list changing

Completed, feedback gathered and included in oral report on calculator policy item in this meeting.

m24-25/58 The purpose of anonymity in assessment, JW/AL to feed SCA discussions on anonymity into A&F Project work.

Completed, proposed policy to go to UTC 27/03.

m24-25/59 Department/School Assessment Word Count and Duration Strategy: Template, AL to pass changes back to Assessment & Feedback project.

m24-25/59 Department/School Assessment Word Count and Duration Strategy: Template, A&F Project to discuss appropriate text to be inclusive of York Online.

The above two actions have been completed, AL ensured that SCA feedback was incorporated into the policy revision for proposal to UTC 27/03.

m24-25/61 Release of Turnitin Feedback Studio (TFS) marks where AM is suspected (Oral), FJ to get student feedback on student understanding of 'marks are provisional'.

Completed, FJ to provide details of this in the Report from Students update item at this meeting.

ONGOING

m24-25/39 Academic Misconduct from YorkSU Perspective, AR to lead work on StAMP guidance with other members of the committee (including an SU rep)

m24-25/52 Matters arising from the previous minutes, SCA Secretary to support the set-up of a StAMP guidance working group.

The above two actions are to be incorporated into an AQ/SCA project over the summer period, which will be looking at StAMP processes, email templates etc.

m24-25/54 Report from Students, SCA Chair and Digital Education Team to discuss issues reported by York SU.

SCA Chair is currently awaiting a report from the Computer Science CBoE to inform discussions.

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m24-25/57 Calculator policy student feedback (Oral), Survey departments that use calculators, and ask if it would be a problem to add A-Level calculators to the permitted list.

JM has only recently been given the list of proposed calculator models and therefore is awaiting responses from departments.

m24-25/60 Update to acceptable assistance in assessment policy (to incorporate PSRBs), SCA Chair to revise the definition of professional programme to cover all courses which have PSRB requirements, via Chair's action.

Ongoing.

NO LONGER NEEDED

m24-25/58 The purpose of anonymity in assessment, JB-S to discuss anonymous marking with the Student Expert Panel.

Discussion from Jan SCA meeting was not deemed relevant to take to the Student Expert Panel.

m24-25/74 Chair's Report (Oral)

SCA **considered** the Chair's oral report. It was noted that:

- The normal process for policies to be approved is for them to come to SCA then UTC for approval, but for the Assessment & Feedback Project, as members of SCA are involved in the review groups, policies are to go straight to UTC for sign off and then will come back to SCA in Cat II papers for information.
- The Committee discussed what to do if they check these policies in Cat II papers and notice errors/things that have been missed, issues for future enhancements etc. It was suggested that SCA members should go to the SCA Chair and make him aware of any issues. The Committee acknowledged that signposting to other documents within certain policies had not been updated yet. [Post-Meeting Note: A spreadsheet has been set up where UTC/SCA members can record issues for future work.]

- SCA Chair noted that a second External Examiners Induction took place for this academic year last week.

- SCA Chair also noted that the first Chairs of Boards of Examiners Forum (CBoE) of the academic year was held last week. A set of summary notes from this forum are being finalised and can be circulated to SCA members.

> **ACTION: SCA Secretary to circulate CBoE Forum summary notes to SCA members.**

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- SCA Chair noted that there had been a strong message from CBoEs regarding time pressures after the Semester 2 CAP. The Committee discussed the knock-on impact this could have on exceptional circumstances, reasonable adjustments etc.

ACTION: SCA Chair to flag to Tom Banham about dept concerns with time pressures

m24-25/75 Report from Students (Oral)

York SU **noted** that:

- YorkSU Academic Leadership Team (ALT) had received feedback from Computer science course representatives about a specific exam in mathematics that had previously been online, but for this academic year is in person. Students complained regarding the difficulty of the exam now it is in person and that grades achieved on this exam are lower than expected.

- Politics course reps have raised concerns about the impact that 4 hour exams (previously 24 hour exams) have on the quality of work they can create in that time.

- FJ reported that student representative feedback regarding the release of marks in cases where there are suspicions of academic misconduct was that students would prefer not to receive marks that might be subject to change, though it was recognised current policy is to release marks for a number of practical and wellbeing reasons.

- YorkSU noted that in academic misconduct investigations, some StAMPs are not following current academic misconduct policy/procedures or are not using the most up-to-date version of StAMP templates. The Academic Quality team have been previously made aware of such issues and are actively trying to address them

ACTIONs: SCA Secretary to issue reminder on recent AM process changes, and advice to ensure updated templates are being used.

SCA Secretary to build review of this into StAMP Summer project.

m24-25/76 SCA Priority Group - Condonation - Oral update

The Committee **noted** the report:

- The priority group discussed what the meaning of condonation is, how condonation could be helpful for individual circumstances of students but also considered how this could

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affect compensation, grades, resits, deferrals, progression and award marks etc. if it becomes policy.

- The priority group noted the following actions from their meeting:
  - Investigate how condonation is implemented in other universities across the sector, looking at Russell Group, competitor and post-92 universities.
  - Collect data to investigate the need for condonation (are there students who fail to progress, numbers of resits, deferrals, etc) and any possible impact (i.e. grade inflation, increased progression/award rates).

- The Committee discussed a proposed timescale for the impact of implementing condonation and it was noted that given other priorities, potential implementation would be for the 26-27 academic year.

m24-25/77 SCA Priority Group - Academic Integrity Tutorial- Oral update

The Committee **noted** the report:

- The priority group discussed the feasibility of re-introducing the Academic Integrity Tutorial (AIT) as a requirement for student progression, with a general agreement that this should be done.
- The Committee discussed whether it is appropriate to stop students progressing and the pressure this would put on PSS staff.

> **ACTION: AIT Priority group to discuss this at their next meeting**

- The priority group discussed that departments should be given the freedom to find the ideal time for them to introduce the requirement to students, as long as students are aware of the tutorial before their first summative assessments.
- The priority group discussed that there are two versions of the AIT - one for most taught students (UG/PGT) and one for IPC. There is also the research integrity tutorial for PGR students. There does not seem to be a need for separate UG and PGT tutorials, as long as the scope of the tutorial remains as it is now.
- The Committee generally agreed that the IPC version should be aligned with the main version in content.
- The Committee discussed that there needs to be consideration of how IPC Kaplan 1 year programme students, articulation agreement international students etc. will engage with the AIT. The Committee also noted that City College was happy to use the same AIT as York students.

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- The priority group discussed how the AIT(s) needs developing:

  - content needs updating to match current guidelines
  - ensuring its aim is to provide a baseline awareness of academic integrity/academic misconduct offences
  - videos need updating to be accessible and to match policy
  - False Authorship, particularly improper use of generative AI, needs to be included (at the appropriate level of detail).
  - Removal of content referring to commissioning.
  - whether referencing training belongs in the tutorial, or whether the tutorial should just stress the need to reference and the training should be provided elsewhere.

    ACTION: EZ & YorkSU to work together to go through the various AITs & identify areas for change etc.

- The Committee discussed that the learning enhancement team (LET) has limited resources and that this needs to be considered when planning for any updates to the AIT.

m24-25/78 SCA Priority Group - FREPEAT- Oral update

The Committee **noted** the report:
- The priority group discussed what data/evidence is needed to inform their work:
  - the original intention behind setting FREPEAT up at UoY
  - the extent to which FREPEATs are successful - i.e. progression & award outcomes
  - the proportion of FREPEAT offers that are taken up
  - demographics of students taking up FREPEAT offers (in relation to EDI), associations with SSPs etc.
  - a sector review of good practice in other HEIs
  - how effectively are departments guiding students about whether they should accept the FREPEAT offer, and how things need to change in order to achieve success second time around?

- The priority group discussed how the need for FREPEATS could be reduced by making better use of available data to identify and intervene with at-risk students, i.e. linking SSP system with disability data etc.
- The priority group also discussed how strong support systems need to be in place, to help students develop good study practices and behaviours so that they can succeed.

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- The priority group discussed the possibility of a suite of routes to success, to include compensation, condonation, progression at risk etc. noting that FREPEAT is for absolute disaster scenarios.
- The priority group discussed a potential expansion to the scope of FREPEAT, such as extending to UG2 and possibly UG3 to allow more time for reasonable adjustments to be put in place and to also potentially reduce pressure on the appeals system. The group also discussed how there is some support for allowing modules to be repeated rather than whole years of study.

m24-25/79 SCA Priority Group - Exceptional Circumstances Policy- Oral update

The Committee **noted** the report:

- The priority group discussed that students with 'additional caring responsibilities' are an APP category and that work is going to be carried out on reasonable adjustments for students with protected characteristics, however students with caring responsibilities do not fall within this.
- The priority group discussed whether the exceptional circumstances policy should be reviewed alongside the assessment and feedback policy.
- The priority group discussed the 'golden ticket' letter that some students receive to allow for extension and questioned how students who are eligible are identified. The priority group suggested that the exceptional circumstances policy may not be the most appropriate place for this and that instead, it may be more appropriate to have a standalone policy on adjustments.
- The priority group highlighted the importance of understanding the perspective of students on this and also of further discussing eligibility criteria, processes, links to APP work and impact that this has on students (i.e. deferral leading to build-up of work etc.)

> **ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss with JB-S about support for students with caring responsibilities on a wider level. York SU to be involved in discussions.**

- The Committee discussed the importance of linking YorkOnline into future discussions due to the different demographic of students.

m24-25/80 SCA Priority Group - Progression at Risk- Oral update

The Committee **noted** the report:

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- The priority group noted that there is only one specific circumstance in which UoY currently allows 'Progression at Risk' - where students have completed study abroad or placement years but are awaiting formal confirmation from other institutions or organisations. Special Cases cannot permit students to 'Progress at Risk' on the basis of outstanding resits or 'sits as if for the first time' from the previous stage, irrespective of how compelling the student's circumstances may be.
- The priority group discussed potential scope of progression at risk in the future as the following:
  - Students with Exceptional circumstances (pending sit as if for first time / resit after SAIFFT)
  - Specifically for students without access to compensation / condonement (Nursing, Law…)
  - Nursing degree - Professional accreditation does not allow compensation.
  - Limited to 20 credits per year

- The Committee noted that with professional programmes, there needs to be more than a one size fits all policy, as there currently is the possibility for professional programme students to move onto non-accredited versions of their degrees.

- The following actions were agreed by the priority group:
  - Collect preliminary data: number of forced LOAs due to exceptional circumstances (SAIFT) + Nursing degrees due to 20 credits fail / deferral / SAIFT
  - Conduct a sector review of progression at risk
  - Consult Special Cases team and YorkSU on their view

m24-25/81 Policy Priority Group Update (Oral)

The Committee **noted** the report:
- The priority group discussed the support available for visiting students which has influenced the latest amendments to A&F policy project work.
- The priority group mainly discussed the release of Turnitin Feedback Studio (TFS) marks where academic misconduct is suspected. The priority group agreed text for this in discussion with YorkSU and the SCA Chair, after discussion with Richard Walker that confirmed that TFS will remain in use as UoY's primary tool for assessment submission and marking, for the next 1-2 academic years at least.
- It is proposed that marks continue to be released to all students, when they are ready, and schools/departments asked to use the text which will be included in the 24/25 Academic Misconduct (AM) Policy and Progression and Award Rules 3.3.

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- Revision will also be made to the sections of the AM Policy that refer to withholding marks so policy aligns with practice. This will be communicated to academics and PSS in schools/departments.

m24-25/82 Update on Calculator Policy (Oral)

The Committee **noted** the report:

- JM updated the committee on feedback that the Exams & Graduation team had received from invigilators regarding calculators.
- The Committee noted that invigilators are able to manage calculator checks in smaller venues, but this becomes difficult in larger venues. If SCA are considering expanding the list of approved calculators this will likely make larger venues more challenging to invigilate.
- There is a general consensus that there needs to be a quicker way to verify that the calculators brought into exams are from the permitted list. The Exams team proposes that departments are provided with UoY tamper proof stickers that they affix to student calculators on the permitted list prior to their first exam.
- The Committee noted that the Exams & Graduation team would need to undertake a costing exercise detailing how sticker costs compare to additional invigilator costs or the cost of funding calculators for loan during the exam period. Clarification on where the funds would come from would be required if any of these options are adopted.
- Invigilators and examinations staff are concerned that not loaning calculators in the next assessment period will result in negative exchanges and potential disruption in the venues. It was generally felt by the team that until a suitable process could be identified that calculators should continue to be loaned out for Summer and Late Summer assessment periods.
- The Committee was presented with data detailing the number of modules involving calculators from Sem1 and a forecasted set of data for Sem2 exams. The Committee agreed that it was feasible for calculators to continue to be loaned out during Sem2.

> **ACTION: Exams & graduation to continue to loan calculators for Sem 2**

- The Committee noted that they are waiting on departments to respond with their views on the feasibility of A-Level calculator models to be added to the permitted list.

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m24-25/83 A&F project update (Oral)

The Committee **noted** the report:

- The Committee noted that work has continued on policy development, following the process outlined at the last meeting.
- Between 7 and 10 draft policies will go to UTC on the 27th March for approval and 2 further documents for consideration - one proposing revised definitions of types of exam and coursework - and one the revised template to be used to log word count/ coursework lengths and assessment durations, which has been substantially revised to account for SCA and other feedback, eg at the A&H FLTG.
- UTC feedback on the two items for consideration will assist in drafting proposals for approval at May's UTC, incorporating reviewers and consultees.
- 2 Policies (penalties & EE) UTC approved in January have been included as Cat II papers for this SCA meeting, and future policies approved by UTC will be reported to SCA in this way.
- The definitions document will be developed into a fuller 'glossary' of key assessment related vocabulary covering categories, such as 'exam' and 'coursework' and common assessment types within those categories, eg 'open book', 'essay', 'professional conversation'. This will aid drafting further policies that are reliant on defining key activities.
- Ahead of UTC and after it, the Working Group will take stock of progress made and needed, focusing on what's most essential to sort for 2025/26 in terms of policy, to allow attention to turn to crucial procedural development. This will also be a collaborative endeavour, drawing on relevant expertise and remit interest.
- AL thanked SCA members that have contributed already and in advance for the further timely and insightful feedback they will give. SCA Chair also thanked the AQ writing team for their work on the project.

m24-25/84 UG External Examiners (EE) report (SCA 24-25/29)

The Committee **noted** the report:

- The report was prepared by Becky Lloyd-Jones who takes credit.
- The report is later than ideal due to other priorities taking precedence in AQD. The aim in the future is to review UG reports in semester 1 for SCA and UTC to consider much earlier.
- The Academic Quality and Development team reviewed all 126 UG EE reports (including CITY College).
- The Committee noted that broadly all EEs agree that standards are appropriately maintained, but 4 were less convinced when thinking about proportionate allocation of

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marks to questions, inconsistent use of the full marks scale, and scaling (PET/ Chemistry - 1 EE each).

- The Committee noted lots of positives about programmes, teaching standards, quality of student work, varied assessments, admin (though tight turnarounds) and feedback. This suggests that as CAW is implemented and therefore efficiencies are being looked at, positive aspects of feedback need to be maintained.

- The Committee noted that a question on feedback was specifically added to the EE form for this cycle of reports and to help to address a mismatch between external examiners' comments on feedback and NSS results.

- The Committee noted one of the lower scoring results for the last two years is about *whether students found that their feedback helped them to improve their work*. Twelve examiners across different subjects highlighted feed-forward feedback as an area in need of improvement, including ensuring that students who have achieved 70s and higher marks are informed about what could have been improved.

- The Committee noted that EEs from a range of subject areas mentioned AI, which is useful for SCA and the UTC AI Working Group to consider the concerns and suggestions in developing policy and guidance.

- From the suggestions/issues examiners raised, the suggestion is that SCA:

  - Reminds all departments of the University's scaling procedure and guidance- currently in the Additional Guidance document.

  - Reminds all departments about the full use of the marking scale - some comments about not using the top end or bottom end and of matching marks with comments. Revisions to A&F Policy will help highlight this too.

  - SCA may want to work with the NSS Steering Group to reflect on the EE feedback around feedback to students, particularly feed-forward feedback, and propose appropriate actions based on these External Examiner comments.

ACTION: SCA Chair to speak to Claire Hughes about joining up with NSS steering group

- The Committee discussed whether SCA should be contacting departments for a more robust account of action that they are taking to address issues raised.

ACTION: JW/SK to flag a more robust approach to actions that depts are taking to address issues with FLTGs.

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- The Committee noted that issues raised regarding quality and consistency of feedback could be due to the first year of using Turnitin Feedback Studio, semesterisation and the subsequent smaller window for feedback turnaround time and also system issues that PSS staff are dealing with.

m24-25/85 Any other Business

N/A

CATEGORY II

The Committee noted the following Cat II papers:

m24-25/86 Copy of allowable penalties in assessment policy (SCA 24-25/30)

m24-25/87 Copy of External examiners policy (SCA 24-25/31)

m23-24/88 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 2nd May 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in tbc.

RESERVED BUSINESS

m24-25/89 Individual Examination Arrangements
It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m24-25/90 Appointment of External Examiners
It was **noted** that various new appointments (or extension to appointments) of external examiners (UG and PGT) have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m24-25/91 Results Lists
Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

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