

Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 13th March at 10.00am in SLB/002 and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Members:	Prof. Steve King	CS (Sciences) (Chair)
	Prof. Ruth Penfold-Mounce	Sociology (Social Sciences)
	Dr Nigel Lowe	Chemistry (Sciences)
	Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
	Dr Alet Roux	Maths (Sciences) (Deputy Chair)
	Dr Daniel Morgan	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
	Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
In attendance :	Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality
	Aimée Yeoman	SCA Secretary & Policy Officer
	Aya Haidar	YorkSU, Academic Officer
	Tom O'Neill	PGR student representative
	Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
	Jess Penn	Deputy Head of Inclusive Education
	Sarah Finch	Head of Faculty Operations - History, History of Art, Archaeology & Centre for Medieval Studies
	Richard Andrew	YorkSU, Advice & Support Manager
	Diane Atkinson	Student Services Manager, School for Business & Society
	Assoc. Prof. Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
Apologies:	Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
	Sanjit Samaddar	ACT (Arts & Humanities)
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)
	Tom Richens	Deputy Head of Student Administration
	Dr Juliet James	YGRS
	Jan Ball-Smith	Head of Student Success

m25-26/60 Welcome and apologies for absence

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

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m25-26/61 Declarations of interest

N/A

m25-26/62 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 30th January 2026 were confirmed as correct.

m25-26/63 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters arising [log](#)

CLOSED

m25-26/9 Assessment & Feedback project - significant policy changes for 25-26 - ZB to use PGT guide as a template and write a student guide for online students. ZB & SK to discuss further.

Completed, copy of this student guide sent by ZB to SCA on 06/02/26

m25-26/11 Any Other Business - SCA Chair to change policy to include False Authorship (in particular GenAI use) under probationary offences

Completed, update briefing sent out by AL on 20/02/26

m25-26/51 Chair's Report - SCA Secretary to add the exception to the minimum average of 60% study abroad to an SCA agenda later this academic year.

Completed, added to May SCA agenda

m25-26/52 Report from Students - TR to find out specific dates for summer graduation deadline and pass these onto AH.

Completed, departments need to submit their results lists 25th June 2026.

m25-26/52 Report from Students - SCA Chair and PW will investigate this further to ensure a fair and consistent institutional approach - in cases where a PGR student is also a member of University staff, for a doctorate viva at least two External Examiners are required.

Completed, TO'N has had conversation with PW, and a plan has been put in place to tighten up the wording in policy.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - AL will discuss case management and record-keeping improvements with the Equality & Governance Team.

Completed, meeting took place with AL & Exams & Graduation team on 24/02/26.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - SCA Secretary will investigate whether this is a recording anomaly and also check how we record data - by module/by dept student registered in.

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Completed, meeting took place with AL & Exams & Graduation team on 24/02/26 where it was clarified that it is the module that the case is registered to which could lead to anomalies. Improvements have been discussed for next year's recording.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - SCA Secretary to investigate if the 'return to marker for poor practice' data is being captured routinely.

Completed, meeting took place with AL & Exams & Graduation team on 24/02/26, improvements have been discussed for next year's recording

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - SCA Secretary will review central communications with the AM Team to ensure instructions to Chairs are sufficiently clear.

Completed, meeting took place with AL & Exams & Graduation team on 24/02/26. A gentle reminder was sent out to the specific departments that are not following the correct process re. who becomes the StAMP panel Chair etc.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - AL & SCA Secretary to re-draft the probationary category in the Academic Misconduct Policy to reflect inclusion of false authorship in this section.

Completed, draft written by SCA Secretary, approved by TL and published by AL, who also sent out an update briefing to SCA, CBoEs, SSMs, York SU, Special Cases, Exams and Graduation on 20/02/26.

ONGOING

m25-26/4 Chair's Report - Members to let SCA Chair know if they are interested in joining the CITY Operations Group next semester.

Ongoing, SCA chair to contact Amy Middleton in AQD to see if SCA representation is needed.

m25-26/5 Report from Students - SK and AH to find out as much information as they can about why coursework is handed in on the same day across first, second and third years and to work on it together.

m25-26/9 Assessment & Feedback project - significant policy changes for 25-26 - AH to make sure the student guide to A&F policies that she is drafting is updated. AH to compile a mini presentation for reps to use.

Ongoing, AH has finished the A&F guide and is currently making presentation versions of it. The guide needs updating to make electronic submission guidance explicitly clear (will be complete by Welcome Back Week) and the slides for reps will be prepared by the next ALT meeting on the 10th February to be used by Academic Representatives to also share with students.

m25-26/25 Comparable adjustments arising from Student Wellbeing Officers evidence - CW and JP to look into creating a Flowchart.

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Ongoing, due to come to the May SCA meeting. Need for a flowchart is also referenced in the OIA report on exceptional circumstances and good practice.

m25-26/38 Report from Students - SCA Chair to discuss identified contacts for combined programmes with TL.

Ongoing, AQ has prepared an update to Policy on Combined Degrees that will refocus it on the management of such programmes. The draft of these updates is currently with the PVC: Education & Students for consideration. If UEC approves, publishing the new policy is an opportunity to reiterate the need for effective leadership and staff-student liaison.

m25-26/39 York SU Academic Misconduct (AM) Report - Needs to be reflected in both the AM Policy and the Summative Feedback Policy that it is discretionary whether marks and feedback or marks only are sent out to students in suspected cases of misconduct.

Ongoing, AL 26/01: proposal is to include a new section in the 'How to Mark Policy' that adds policy relating to the earlier SCA briefing about release of marks and feedback/marks only in suspected misconduct cases. SK direction awaited.

m25-26/51 Chair's Report - AH to update the Assessment & Feedback Guide for Students to ensure the rules regarding electronic submission errors are explicit and clearly communicated to the student body.

m25-26/52 Report from Students - AH to pass on further information about this specific case to TR.

m25-26/52 Report from Students - AH to share reports of these cases with the SCA Chair.

m25-26/52 Report from Students - SCA Chair will inform Associate Dean for Education & Students for the Faculty of Sciences, David Barrett, of the situation to ensure senior oversight.

m25-26/52 Report from Students - SCA Chair & TR to discuss whether to resume receiving formal "Issues with Exams" reports and how to source the information for these reports.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) - SCA Secretary and TR to explore improved tracking mechanisms for SCA members managing high case volumes.

m25-26/64 Chair's Report

SCA **considered** the following items reported by the Chair:

- SCA Chair reported that a Task and Finish group has been set up to focus on marking and assessment criteria, with the draft Terms of Reference for this group being sent to Associate Deans for review. SCA Chair noted that he has suggested there is SCA and Students' Union representation on this group. If any SCA member is interested, they should contact the SCA Chair before 5pm on the 18th March. RP-M volunteered.

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ACTION: SCA Chair to check with David Barrett to see if there is a student representative on the marking and assessment criteria T&F group.

m25-26/65 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that:

- The Academic Officer had received feedback that language used in marking matrices across some departments are not accessible, particularly for international and neurodivergent students.

ACTION: SCA Chair will pass feedback to the T&F group for marking and assessment criteria that language used in marking matrices across some departments are not accessible.

- The Committee noted that there had been an improvement in academic misconduct communications with students by StAMP panels, due to the ongoing review of StAMP letter templates and SCA briefing messages reinforcing procedure/policy. SCA Chair thanked SCA Secretary for leading on this work.

m25-26/66 PGT External Examiners report (24-25 data)

The Committee **considered**:

- The Committee noted that all examiners confirmed that academic standards remain appropriate and comparable to other UK institutions.
- The Committee noted that examiner reports highlight examples of excellent practice, particularly in authentic, industry-aligned assessment alongside developments in inclusive teaching practice.
- The Committee noted that examiner reports suggested that more work needs to be done around 'AI-resistant' assessment design to safeguard the authenticity of student work.
- The Committee acknowledged the value of incorporating departmental responses to the issues raised by examiners to this report, ensuring a transparent 'feedback loop,' allowing SCA to see how departments are addressing examiner concerns.
- The Committee agreed that recommendation 1 should feed into the Task and Finish group for marking and assessment criteria.
- The Committee discussed, in reference to recommendation 2, that the policy position on marking, which moved away from second marking (except temporarily for CPMs) to single marking with moderation for the 25-26 academic year, needs to be clearer. SCA Chair also noted that a decision needs to be made on the current exemption to this rule for CPMs for the next academic year.
- The Committee discussed examiners in ACT and SBS noting that 100% written summative coursework is highly vulnerable to inappropriate use of AI. The Committee discussed whether there could be more scope for formative assessment opportunities to promote appropriate AI use and whether there needs to be better training available to students. It was noted that this is particularly important for PGT students who are studying full-time for

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- a one-year degree.
- The Committee endorsed this report to be sent to UEC for consideration on the 26th March 2026.

m25-26/67 Update on Student Support Plan (SSP) Project (Oral)

The Committee **considered**:

- The Committee received an oral update on the SSP project, specifically the transition from a pre-approval model to a two-stage escalation pathway for reasonable adjustments in assessment. This aligns the University's approach with the new SSP framework and ensures compliance with EHRC advice following the Abrahart judgement.
- This framework was developed in collaboration with Steve King, Jill Webb, Jess Penn and Jan Ball-Smith.
- The Committee noted that about a year ago, the list of assessment adjustments was reviewed and restructured into Level 1 and Level 2 adjustments. Level 1 will be standard reasonable adjustments implemented directly via the SSP and Level 2 Adjustments will involve modification to the form of assessment (e.g., alternative formats). Historically, these adjustments have required approval from two academic members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, however the aim will now be for a local resolution.
- The Committee noted that there are two stages to the new escalation pathway, encouraging local dialogue before central intervention. Stage 1 (Local Resolution) is where departments, students, or Disability Services may refer a recommended adjustment for review if there are concerns regarding its reasonableness or practicability. Stage 2 (Central Escalation Panel) is where a Stage 1 case is unresolved and a central panel of senior academic and professional services colleagues will review the case.
- The Committee discussed that the escalation panel will include representation from across all three faculties and where specific subject knowledge is required (e.g., Health Sciences with PSRBs etc.), the panel has the remit to co-opt or consult relevant specialists to ensure requirements are met.
- The Committee discussed a concern raised regarding the intersections of SSPs and the use of Artificial Intelligence. CW confirmed that Generative AI is not included as a reasonable adjustment but did highlight that some assistive software funded through Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) utilises AI-linked mechanisms, which could lead to students thinking they are allowed to use AI in ways that are not permitted by the University.
- The Committee discussed that this must be distinguished from the inappropriate use of generative tools and that there is a need for joined-up thinking between departments and Disability Services to ensure clear interpretation of 'acceptable use' within SSPs.
- This oral update will be developed into a formal paper for the next SCA meeting on May 1st 2026.

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m25-26/68 Proposal for in-year revision to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment - Policy and Procedure 2025/26

The Committee **considered**:

- The Committee received a proposal for an in-year update to the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Policy. The review originated from a request to evaluate the role of Student Wellbeing Officer (SWO) evidence, which subsequently identified a broader need to clearly distinguish between ECs and the Policy on Reasonable Adjustments.
- The drafting process led by AL, supported by CW, JP and Anna Jones incorporated:
 - Substantial procedural changes detailed in the accompanying amendments log.
 - Recent feedback from an engagement meeting with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
 - Systems updates following the e:Vision EC form upgrade.
- The justification for an in-year update is to:
 - Ensure policies reflect current system efficiencies and departmental processing methods to reduce student confusion.
 - Mitigate the risk of disabled students inappropriately using the EC process when reasonable adjustments (RAs) would be more protective and anticipatory.
 - Streamline evidence requirements and self-certification to support effective claim management.
- The Committee noted OIA feedback regarding the potential "tactical" use of the system by students to avoid assessment bunching. It was clarified that this terminology originated from the OIA.
- The Committee discussed whether the distinction between ECs and RAs was sufficiently clear in the Reasonable Adjustments policy itself.

ACTION: CW and JP to review the RA process document to ensure clarity.

- The Committee discussed the in-year nature of the change and from a Special Cases perspective it was noted that this is a defensible, positive change offering clearer protections for students.
- The Committee acknowledged the extensive work undertaken with the Student Wellbeing Team in developing these changes.
- The Committee noted that future versions of this policy must focus on accessibility and alignment with recently updated assessment policies.
- The Committee endorsed the proposal and recommended the changes be sent to UEC for formal approval. Upon approval, the updated policy and amendments log will be published on the assessment webpages, supported by staff and student briefings.

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m25-26/69 Guidance for staff on AI-assisted marking and feedback

The Committee **considered**:

- The Committee received a first draft of a policy regarding staff use of AI in marking and feedback, the primary objectives of which are to provide clear guidance on ethical and appropriate use of these tools, and to promote transparency for students on staff use of AI.
- The draft of this policy had been received earlier in the week by the UEC AI Working Group who provided feedback.
- The Committee discussed the importance of marks being allocated by humans, as current AI capabilities do not warrant the level of trust required for allocating marks.
- The Committee noted that a clear statement affirming human-led marking must appear at the start of the document, in the form of a 'Purpose and Scope' section to align with standard university policy formatting.
- The Committee discussed that certain phrasing within the policy is currently vague with some terms such as "safely," "securely," and "ethically" being currently undefined. The Committee agreed that the policy needs to be more prescriptive, providing staff with a framework for what these terms mean in practice.
- The Committee discussed that a thorough review of "must" vs. "should" is required throughout the policy to ensure its enforceability and clarity.
- The Committee discussed that Scenario A may encourage staff to write minimal initial feedback and rely on AI to generate the bulk of the feedback.
- The Committee discussed that Scenario D needed revising as formative feedback and appeals should be decoupled as these do not relate to one another.
- The Committee discussed that the feasibility of individual department policies should be discussed, however raised concerns regarding "culture clashes" between AI-embracing and AI-resistant departments and that students on combined or interdisciplinary programmes may face conflicting rules.
- The Committee noted that if students are prohibited from using AI in specific assessments, it would be unfair for staff to use AI for marking those same assessments. Also, there is a risk of sending mixed messages if students are told certain AI use is "cheating" for them but an "enhancement" for staff.
- The Committee also discussed the importance of aligning with OfS regulatory requirements, specifically that the University must assess students' English technical proficiency and that if students use AI to mask these skills, it creates a regulatory issue.
- The Committee noted that the policy must consider whether AI tools could serve as a reasonable adjustment for staff with specific accessibility needs during the marking process.
- The Committee noted that the policy is currently too individualistic and needs to account for modules with multiple markers.
- The Committee discussed that the use of AI may have significant potential for moderation and standardisation processes.

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ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss with SuFau a possible scenario on AI in moderation and standardisation.

- The Committee discussed that it needs to be made clear in the policy principles that staff are transparent with students on using AI in marking & feedback, alongside extending this transparency to stakeholders such as External Examiners, PSRBs etc.
- The Committee decided that following updates being made by the SCA Chair, the revised draft will be circulated to SCA members before final submission to UEC.

m25-26/70 Any Other Business

- **Self-certification for short duration coursework assessments:** Prior to this SCA meeting, JA raised concerns regarding the current application of self-certification (SC) for short-duration assessments (e.g., coursework tasks with a 24-hour window), highlighting that an automatic extension of 4 days could be granted via self-certification without the requirement for formal evidence, which did not seem proportionate to the assessment timings.
- The Committee discussed whether students might use the 4-day SC extension "tactically" to manage workload rather than genuine illness.
- The Committee noted that if a student is legitimately ill, they retain the right to **defer** the assessment, which may be more appropriate for severe cases.
- The Committee discussed that deferral of assessment in the YorkOnline carousel model is problematic, as deferrals can lead to "progression at risk" status. For these students, a few extra days extension is preferable to a full deferral to a later study window.

ACTION: SaFi to look into the existing Self-Certification Policy to determine if there are existing "exception" clauses that allow for flexibility in how extensions are applied to specific types of coursework.

- **Student access to assessment recordings:** David Barrett (Assoc. Dean E&S for Faculty of Sciences) had queried whether students should be given access to recordings of their assessments (i.e. OSCEs).
- The Committee discussed that access to recordings would be useful for students, particularly in the case that a student has failed and would also be useful for staff members if a potential appeal was raised by a student regarding an oral assessment.
- The Committee discussed that the School of ACT currently allows access to recordings of performances, but in Health Sciences access to recordings is currently not permitted.
- The Committee raised concerns surrounding GDPR when other people are in the recording and also discussed whether students currently have the right to access recordings through a Subject Access Request.
- The Committee also highlighted the OfS requirement for assessment related resources to be retained for 5 years after a student's graduation and acknowledged that the University policy on this needs to be clearer.
- The Committee discussed that PGRs are not permitted to access a recording of their viva assessment.

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ACTION: SCA Chair to speak to the Dean of YGRS to clarify policy on access to recordings for PGRs.

CATEGORY II

m25-26/71 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 1st May 2026 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in D/L/116.

RESERVED BUSINESS

To note, all of the following have been approved by individual members' signoff on behalf of SCA since the previous meeting.

m25-26/72 Individual Examination Arrangements

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

m25-26/73 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.

m25-26/74 Results Lists

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