Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 21st November 2025 at 10.00am in CL/A/023 and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Members:

Prof. Steve King	CS (Sciences) (Chair)
Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
Sanjit Samaddar	ACT (Arts & Humanities)
Prof. Ruth Penfold-Mounce	Sociology (Social Sciences)
Dr Nigel Lowe	Chemistry (Sciences)
Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
Dr Alet Roux	Maths (Sciences) (Deputy Chair)
Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)

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
Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
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
Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences

Apologies:

Dr Daniel Morgan	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS
Dr Juliet James	YGRS
Jan Ball-Smith	Head of Student Success
Tom Richens	Deputy Head of Student Administration
Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager

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m25-26/33 Welcome and apologies for absence
Committee members, and those in attendance, were welcomed and apologies noted.
m25-26/34 Declarations of interest
N/A

m25-26/35 Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 17th October were confirmed as correct.

m25-26/36 Matters arising from the previous minutes
Members noted items listed on the Matters arising log

CLOSED

From last academic year:
m24-25/77 SCA Priority Group - Academic Integrity Tutorial- Oral update - EZ & YorkSU to work together to go through the various AITs & identify areas for change etc.

Completed by EZ & YorkSU, this has been passed onto Cecilia Lowe.

m24-25/103 SCA Priority Group - Policy on Acceptable Assistance in Assessment - Oral update - PW to review Appendix 10 of the PORD.

JJ has confirmed this has been reviewed and updated accordingly.

m24-25/121 Revised Policy on Acceptable Assistance in Assessment - SCA Secretary to send briefing to BoEs re. this revised policy, post-UTC approval.

Completed.

From this academic year:

m25-26/23 PGR Policies - AL to update website links with JJ.

Completed.

m25-26/25 Comparable adjustments arising from Student Wellbeing Officers evidence - AL is to consult with SSMs in departments and meet with PGR student rep, TO'N

AL met with stakeholders on 13/11/25.

ONGOING

From last academic year:
m24-25/99 SCA Priority Group - Academic Integrity Tutorial- Oral update - A revised tutorial needs to be incorporated into programmes, links to departmental contexts

To be reviewed in 25/26 academic year

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m24-25/105 PGT External Examiners (EE) report - SCA is to strengthen policy on the content of marking criteria to encourage more standardised and consistent application across all schools and departments.

SCA is to develop guidance on how markers can align marks with qualitative descriptors and incorporate comments into feedback which are aligned with mark bands.
Both to be reviewed in the 25/26 academic year.

m24-25/106 Academic Misconduct Data Analysis Report 2023/24 (SCA 24-25/34) - SCA is to further investigate overseas student academic misconduct data for the academic year 2024/25 as a priority for the next report, in order to identify degrees/departments that are of concern, to identify potential areas for targeted intervention and support, and to examine the influence of factors such as curriculum design, assessment methods, and the level of academic support provided within these programmes.

For the 24-25 data analysis of academic misconduct, SCA is to closely monitor the number of cases that are unsubstantiated at the end of investigations against the previous years' data, as a result of the update to the initial 'case to answer' process.

To both be included in AM report coming to SCA Jan 26

m24-25/121 Revised Policy on Acceptable Assistance in Assessment - SCA Chair to edit the policy to incorporate professional and non-standard provision.

SCA Chair to look into this in the 25-26 academic year.

m24-25/125 SCA Priority Group - FREPEAT - Oral update- JA to contact SK and JW about incorporating FREPEAT data into the "no gaps" section of the Annual Programme Review (APR)

Ongoing, currently with Duncan Jackson.

m24-25/126 SCA Priority Group - Exceptional Circumstances Policy- Oral update - SCA to decide on the process and requirements for verification of circumstances, with input from Student Advisors.

To be reviewed in the 25/26 academic year.

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

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 - JP noted that

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the reasonable adjustments policy has changed its name and therefore needs updating

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.

ZB to use PGT guide as a template and write a student guide for online students. ZB & SK to discuss further.
Update 17/10/25: Still on ZB's to-do list; have not yet sent a draft to SK

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

m25-26/23 PGR Policies - Dean of YGRS to take this feedback back to JJ and incorporate it into policies.

m25-26/24 SCA Priorities 25-26 - SCA Chair to identify people for different groups w/c 27th October.

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

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m25-26/37 Chair's Report
SCA **considered** the following items reported by the Chair.
- SCA Chair updated the committee that a paper had been recently published by OfS on [Bachelors' degree classification algorithms](). The paper reports that the number of 2:1s and firsts are increasing across the sector and suggests that degree algorithms are playing a role in this.
- SCA Chair noted that the OfS claims that two specific practices are inflationary within this context - the use of multiple degree algorithms in calculating UG degree classification and the discounting of a student's lowest mark in calculations. He noted that York's award rules do not involve discounting of marks.
- The Committee considered whether UoY's borderline classification rules could be classed as multiple algorithms. Discussion with Russell Group colleagues had shown a general view that borderline treatments were not regarded as multiple algorithms. SCA Chair also highlighted that UoY's borderline algorithm, based on alternate stage weightings, is different from all other Russell Group institutions', which use a 'preponderance of marks' approach. This has been uncovered through the work that David Gent (Inclusive Education) has undertaken reviewing algorithms across the sector.
- SCA Chair highlighted to the Committee that any institutions still using multiple algorithms or discounting after September 2026 will need to report this to the OfS by July 2026.
- The Committee noted that York Online are still using multiple algorithms as they still have some students falling under Covid period rules.
- The Committee discussed whether there is anything available for PGT students with regards to borderlines between pass/merit/distinction and decided that this is for future consideration.
- SCA Chair highlighted to the Committee that if institutions want to change their algorithms/award rules to improve the number of 2:1s and firsts, then they would have to

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carry out independent modelling and calibration exercises to provide evidential support for justification to OfS.

m25-26/38 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that:

- The Academic Officer had recently hosted the Big Academic Meeting (BAM), where students (across UG, PGT and PGR) gave feedback on the theme of assessment and feedback, among other areas. It was reported that students want more smaller sized assignments in their first year as opposed to a smaller number of larger sized assignments; want individual feedback even in group assessments; and would like to see formative assessment formats being more closely aligned with the format of their summative assessment.
- The Committee noted that colleagues in Inclusive Education & Academic Practice are working together to develop guidance on summative feedback, therefore AL is to suggest consultation with YorkSU in its development.

> **ACTION: AL to ask colleagues to consult with Aya on summative feedback guidance**

- The Committee considered feedback regarding assessment bunching on combined programmes and also student feedback that there is insufficient support for students on combined programmes.
- SCA Chair clarified that there should be an identified contact person for every combined programme, acknowledging that this may not always be well signposted to students.

> **ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss identified contacts for combined programmes with TL.**

- The Committee considered that students want further clarification of the policy on calculators. The Committee noted that departments were informed through the assessment admin slack channel, with Exams & Graduation currently finalising the communications to be sent out to students by the end of November 2025.

m25-26/39 York SU Academic Misconduct (AM) Report ([SCA 25-26/13](#))

The Committee **considered**

- RA presented the paper which had been written by himself alongside YorkSU Advice Service colleagues, with this paper showing the trends/themes that have been seen so far this academic year at the advice service. Positive steps have been taken over this year but there are still areas for development
- The Committee noted that the paper was written based on only a small sample size of cases however YorkSU Advice Service still thought the information within the report was pertinent for SCA to consider.
- The Committee noted that international students dominate the number of cases, with PGT dissertations being the most common form of assessment involved in cases for which students request support for AM cases.

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- The Committee noted that there are still a number of students who enter and leave the StAMP academic misconduct process confused. They struggle to understand what the issues with their work are, how to respond to a panel's allegations, how case outcomes are reached and how they avoid repeating such issues moving forward.
- The Committee discussed whether the StAMP academic misconduct process is working as an educational tool for students alongside noting that a number of students are referred back to complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial, but that is not fully fit for purpose at present. It was agreed that signposting to the Academic Skills Team may need to be made clearer to StAMPs as a recommendation.

> **ACTION: SCA Secretary to add signposting to the Academic Skills Team to StAMP training slides for next training session in early February 2026.**

- The Committee discussed that a number of revisions have been made to the Academic Integrity Tutorial through Cecilia Lowe. SCA Chair recommends that this should become compulsory again.
- The Committee noted that the YorkSU Advice Team would value the continuation of regular meetings with the SCA Secretary to report issues/give feedback on academic misconduct.
- The Committee discussed concerns that some markers are pre-judging that a student's work has elements of academic misconduct, particularly of false authorship, and they are writing this into student's feedback. The Committee discussed that this suggests that academics perhaps do not trust the StAMP process fully and therefore academics may need to be further reassured about the process StAMPs follow when making decisions.
- The Committee discussed that markers/module leaders should get feedback on the outcome of a case that has been raised.

> **ACTION: SCA Secretary to add to all academic misconduct template letters that the marker/module leader should be copied into correspondence.**

- The Committee noted that some SCA members advising StAMP panels have seen the majority of decision-making taking place via email correspondence. SCA Chair reiterated that there is a template document for case notes to be written into by a StAMP chair so there is a record of decisions made.
- The Committee noted YorkSU's feedback that there seems to be frequent lack of reference/acknowledgement to a student's written response to the panel in their outcome email.
- The Committee noted that there was a small section of the AM Policy which contains old wording regarding withholding marks.

> **ACTION: AL to update the 25-26 live AM Policy to reflect what should be stated.**

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- The Committee discussed policy point 2.3.6.g in the AM policy which states where no misconduct is found, work is returned to the examiner to determine the mark. The Committee questioned whether policy implies work is re-marked, albeit by the original examiner who may be somewhat biased. It was clarified that markers should be revising their comments when re-marking the work and also reviewing the mark awarded (and revising where appropriate).
- The Committee also discussed that at the marking stage, when an examiner is suspicious that there are elements of misconduct in a student's work, whether they should mark and award a mark as though there is misconduct present or not. AL noted that a briefing was sent out in March 2025 which explained that it was discretionary whether marks and feedback or marks only are sent out to students in suspected cases of misconduct.

> **ACTION: To be reflected in both the AM Policy and the Summative Feedback Policy.**

- The Committee discussed how sufficient information needs to be given to students when they receive a final 'no misconduct found' outcome, so that they can understand why their work was originally flagged for future learning purposes.

m25-26/40 Academic Misconduct Policy on past misconduct (SCA 25-26/14)

The Committee **considered** the proposed revisions to sections of the Academic Misconduct Policy:

- SCA Chair presented proposed revisions made to the policy based on the following situation: what happens if there is a suspicion of academic misconduct which has been found after the mark has been returned to the student (ratified by BoE), but before a degree is awarded?
  There is a contradiction between policy points 1.3.6 and 1.3.16 regarding this.
- SCA Chair noted that since drafting these revisions, he has looked at the PGR equivalent policy which offers more appropriate wording and is therefore to re-draft taking this into account.
- The Committee discussed that there needs to be clarification on the intention of policy point 1.3.6.a - where marks and feedback have been returned to the student, is this referring to *provisional* or *confirmed by BoE* marks, as 1.3.16 is the latter.
- The Committee discussed timeframes for when a case can be retrospectively brought forward for investigation.
- The Committee discussed concerns that sometimes students use the phrasing 'this is how I always do this in my assignments' as an open and honest explanation in their response to an academic misconduct panel and whether this could open up a 'can of worms' for investigation into past work.

> **ACTION: SCA Chair to re-draft sections taking into account above feedback.**

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m25-26/41 UG 2024/25 External Examiners' Reports Summary (SCA 25-26/15)

The Committee **considered:**

- SCA Secretary presented the UG External Examiners' Reports summary for the 24/25 academic year, noting that GenAI had been used in the drafting process with the outputs carefully checked for accuracy.
- The Committee discussed that under point 2.2 in the report, reference is made to examiners not being sent exam scripts in sufficient time and therefore, this needs to be passed onto Tom Banham to be incorporated into the ongoing semesterisation review.

ACTION: SCA Chair to pass this onto Tom Banham

- The Committee considered two questions posed by a committee member based on the data presented: Why is UoY suffering from grade deflation if standards are comparable with that of other UK Institutions, as confirmed by all EEs in this report? Also, why do we score so poorly on assessment and feedback in the NSS when examiners praise these areas? The Committee therefore discussed whether preparation of students for assessment and grade deflation need to be looked at together.
- The Committee also discussed the importance of considering the validity of the comments from single examiners, which are then used to build a narrative surrounding an issue, where this might be based on only a single narrative (possibly based on a misunderstanding by the examiner).
- The Committee were reassured by colleagues in Academic Quality (AQ) that the EE reports process is due to be reviewed this academic year and this feedback will be taken into account. Also, before the report is sent to UEC in January 2026, colleagues in AQ will check the Table of Issues spreadsheet to see if any departments disagree with what their examiner has said and then check the validity of comments made.

ACTION: AL to review Table of Issues and provide UEC with any additional comment needed.

- The Committee discussed the focus of EEs on marks given at module level, and whether they have an understanding of how this plays into programme level marks. It noted that where examiners have oversight of individual modules only, there may not be clear oversight of the full programme.
- The Committee discussed that diversity of assessment was raised as an area of improvement by EEs across various departments. The lack of diversity was partly attributed to changes made as a result of Changing the Academic Work (CAW).
- Committee members who led on CAW reminded the Committee of the CAW policy (since incorporated into Programme Design and Assessment and Feedback policies) and suggested that the Educational Development Group considers publicising the potential for variety in assessment to ensure academics understand how they can still fulfil diversity of assessment in their module design.

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ACTION: AH to share Big Academic Meeting (BAM) report as EE feedback aligns with what students have also been feeding back.

m25-26/42 Any Other Business
N/A

CATEGORY II

m25-26/43 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 30th January 2026 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person tbc.

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

m25-26/44 Individual Examination Arrangements
It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m25-26/45 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.

m25-26/46 Results Lists
Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.