Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 30th January at 10.00am in CL/A/025 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 Alet Roux	Maths (Sciences) (Deputy Chair)
Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)
Dr Daniel Morgan	Philosophy (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
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
Tom Richens	Deputy Head of Student Administration
Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS

Apologies:

Dr Juliet James	YGRS
Jan Ball-Smith	Head of Student Success
Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)

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m25-26/47 Welcome and apologies for absence
Committee members, and those in attendance, were welcomed and apologies noted.

m25-26/48 Declarations of interest
N/A

m25-26/49 Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 21st November 2025 were confirmed as correct, pending the following amendment.

m25-26/41 UG 2024/25 External Examiners' Reports Summary - 6th bullet point to be amended. Currently states: "It noted that where examiners **mark** modules only there may not be clear oversight of the full programme." External Examiners do not mark modules, therefore this should be updated to "where examiners have oversight of individual modules only…".

m25-26/50 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 - JP noted that the reasonable adjustments policy has changed its name and therefore needs updating.

Completed.

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

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

Completed. AL met with stakeholders 19/01, including Chair SCA and agreed to propose an update to the EC Policy to the 13 March SCA meeting. Progress has been made in clarifying the distinctive uses of the EC policy and procedures and the Reasonable Adjustments ones.

m25-26/26 Any other business - Student rankings in references - The Committee to consider at an upcoming meeting how to meet student requests for ranking information in references

Completed. AL and SK discussed further formal approach to (up until now) ad hoc requests, but consistent response to individual department queries is needed. (Further detail in IDA log)

m25-26/38 Report from Students - AL to ask colleagues to consult with Aya on summative feedback guidance

Completed. AL contacted LTV and NG on 28/11 asking them to contact Aya when they begin

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drafting work on the feedback guidance.

m25-26/39 York SU Academic Misconduct (AM) Report - Signposting to the Academic Skills Team to be added to StAMP training slides for next training session in early February 2026.

Completed.

m25-26/39 York SU Academic Misconduct (AM) Report -AL to update the 25-26 live AM Policy to reflect what should be stated.

Completed. Sections 2.1.3 and 2.2.1.b.v updated.

m25-26/41 UG 2024/25 External Examiners' Reports Summary - AL to review Table of Issues and provide UEC with any additional comment needed.

Completed. A section was added to the report submitted to UEC commenting on departmental responses to issues highlighted. Aim to provide such comments in the PGT report currently being prepared.

m25-26/41 UG 2024/25 External Examiners' Reports Summary - SCA Chair to pass issue re. sufficient time for EEs to review scripts to Tom Banham as part of the semesterisation review

Completed**.**

m25-26/41 UG 2024/25 External Examiners' Reports Summary - AH to share Big Academic Meeting (BAM) report as EE feedback aligns with what students have also been feeding back.

Completed and circulated to SCA members.

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.

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 written the guidance text but needs to format it into a guide, with the plan to do this before the SCA March meeting.

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.

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Ongoing. Update 21/11/25: Drafting in progress, but have not yet sent to SCA Chair

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

Ongoing, to be discussed at this SCA meeting.

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.

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.

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m25-26/51 Chair's Report

SCA **considered** the following items reported by the Chair:
- The Committee received an update from the Chair regarding the revised guidance on 'Managing Student Errors in Electronic Submission of Assessments', updated in January 2026. This guidance supports the implementation of the 2025/26 Assessment Policy (Sept 25), specifically addressing instances where assessments are submitted to the incorrect location, in an incorrect format, or past the deadline due to student error.
- The policy change aims to enhance institutional consistency, ensure transparent practice, and guarantee fairness across all student cohorts.
- The Committee noted that to maintain equity during the current marking cycle, departments may continue to exercise professional judgement for Semester 1 assessments, if a strict change in approach would result in unfairness between students whose work has already been marked and those awaiting results. Effective from this point onwards, all departments are required to adhere to the SCA direction/2025/26 policy.

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- The Committee discussed the intersection of this policy with student disability. If a student cites a disability as the reason for an incorrect submission, the standard policy and SCA direction must still be applied at the departmental level. Any contested outcomes would subsequently be handled via the Appeals process.
- The Committee noted that this guidance must align with ongoing work related to the Abrahart ruling, particularly regarding 'urgent' or 'severe' cases, to ensure the university meets its legal obligations.
- The Committee noted that there is sometimes confusion for neurodivergent students regarding submission rules and discussed the need for departments to provide clearer, more accessible instructions to prevent errors before they occur.

> **ACTION: 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**.

- The Committee received an update from the Chair regarding a review of the current policy for students undertaking a period of study abroad, in particular the LLS exception to the requirement that a student must have a minimum average of 60% in the stage immediately preceding their departure to qualify for study abroad. This exception applies to all programmes involving a language component, rather than being restricted to those specifically owned by LLS.
- The exception applies for the study abroad application cycle in autumn 2025/26 for study abroad in 2026/27. The Committee noted that formal discussions must take place regarding the 2026/27 application cycle (for the 2027/28 study abroad period) to establish a permanent approach for programmes involving a language component and other (non-languages) programmes with a year abroad.

> **ACTION: SCA Secretary to add this to an SCA agenda later this academic year.**

- The Chair reminded the Committee of their intention to stand down at the end of the current academic year, noting that the job description for SCA Chair is currently being reviewed and that recruitment for this position will start before the next SCA meeting in March.

m25-26/52 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that:
- At the start of January, YorkSU held their Academic Leadership Team meeting, where student representatives gave their feedback. It was reported that as of the final week of the Semester 1 teaching term, timetables for in-person exams remained unavailable across several departments. These delays have caused significant challenges for students with

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caring responsibilities and international students, the latter of whom faced difficulties in booking travel and flights due to the uncertainty of exam dates.

- TR confirmed that the Student Education and Experience directorate is aware of these issues. Whilst a deadline for releasing timetables exists, the process is complex and relies on multiple departmental dependencies rather than just the central team.
- The Committee noted that students also gave feedback that sometimes they are unaware of the final deadlines required to qualify for summer graduation, noting that these dates appear to vary by department.

ACTION: TR to find out specific dates for summer graduation deadline and pass these onto AH.

- The Committee noted student feedback on a specific incident where a student suffered a medical emergency during an exam but was not removed from the room, resulting in a disruption of over thirty minutes for the remaining cohort. It was clarified that formal guidance exists for managing such incidents to ensure both the welfare of the affected student and the integrity of the examination environment.

ACTION: AH to pass on further information about this specific case to TR.

- The Committee discussed concerns raised regarding assessment practices within the Computer Science department, specifically highlighting issues with alignment and transparency. Student feedback indicated a lack of clarity regarding how exam content aligns with taught module material.
- The Academic Officer updated the committee about feedback they had received regarding the 3rd Year Computer Science VICO module. Students were told they would not need to memorise formulae for the summative exam; however, the exam subsequently required this knowledge. Also, the formative assessment for this module utilised Multiple Choice Questions which did not adequately prepare students for the rigour or format of the final summative assessment. Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding a significant drop in performance on this module, where students who have consistently achieved First-Class marks received 2:2s.

ACTION: AH to share reports of these cases with the SCA Chair.

- The Committee noted that certain third-year modules are being taught concurrently as H-level (Honours) and M-level (Masters) modules, which may impact the appropriateness of the assessment for different cohorts.
- The Committee discussed the substantial risk to NSS scores if these issues are not addressed promptly and transparently.

ACTION: SCA Chair will inform Associate Dean for Education & Students for the Faculty of Sciences, David Barrett, of the situation to ensure senior oversight.

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- The Committee discussed whether SCA should resume receiving formal "Issues with Exams" reports, a practice that existed previously. The Committee discussed the need for a centralised mechanism to identify these trends across multiple departments rather than treating them as isolated incidents.

ACTION: SCA Chair & TR to discuss this and how to source the information for these reports.

- The PGR Student Representative raised that in cases where a PGR student is also a member of University staff, for a doctorate viva at least two External Examiners are required, raising concerns about the financial liability for the second external examiner. Specifically, inconsistency across departments as to whether the student or the department covers these costs was raised.
- The Committee noted that this is a relatively rare occurrence which falls under historic policy.

ACTION: SCA Chair and PW will investigate this further to ensure a fair and consistent institutional approach.

m25-26/53 Academic Misconduct Report (24-25 Data) (SCA 25-26/17)
The Committee **considered:**

- The Committee noted instances where a prima facie case was identified by the departmental nominee (who decides upon an initial case to answer decision), but no misconduct was subsequently found by the StAMP panel. It was agreed that this is often due to the complexity of false authorship cases, which require detailed discussion with the student to understand.
- It was agreed that this does not justify a further review/calibration exercise with StAMP members, as investigating sending cases which do not result in misconduct being found is considered an acceptable part of the process. The Committee noted that the commitment remains to reduce the risk of students undergoing unnecessary formal proceedings.
- The Committee noted that there is a growing trend of cases becoming more complex, which would benefit from increased panel review and pedagogical responses rather than purely punitive measures.
- The Committee noted that data indicates that whilst international student numbers have increased, cases originating from the IPC have decreased. It was suggested that this might be attributed to the IPC's proactive work on Academic Integrity and AI literacy.
- The Committee suggested that IPC resources be adapted to support international students entering directly at Stages 2 and 3, noting that JW is currently progressing this work.
- The Committee noted that disability data for AM cases is not yet available but remains a priority.

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ACTION: AL will discuss case management and record-keeping improvements with the Exams & Graduation Team.

- The Committee noted that several departments reported zero cases. The Committee discussed whether cases were being logged under the module-owning department rather than the student's home department, leading to recording anomalies.

ACTION: SCA Secretary will investigate whether this is a recording anomaly and also check how we record data - by module/by dept student registered in.

- The Committee discussed how SCA members advising StAMP panels must remain vigilant regarding penalty caps (i.e. marks cap of 59, which is no longer a valid penalty for poor practice) and ensure they are confident to intervene if departments are not fully informed of policy requirements.
- The Committee also noted that there is a concern that departments may be applying other penalties rather than utilising the 'return to marker for poor practice' option. YorkSU noted that they do not see many cases with this outcome and therefore questioned if this aspect of the policy is working properly. The Committee noted that panels may be applying other penalties, which could account for rise in 'no misconduct' outcomes.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to investigate if the 'return to marker for poor practice' data is being captured routinely.

- The Committee reaffirmed that, per policy (2.2.1.b.iii), the departmental nominee who makes the initial "case to answer" decision also serves as the Chair of the StAMP panel.

ACTION: SCA Secretary will review central communications with the AM Team to ensure instructions to Chairs are sufficiently clear.

- The Committee expressed significant concern regarding the resourcing of the Academic Misconduct Team which sits within the Exams & Graduation Team, as the current level of under-resourcing directly impacts student experience, departmental processes and staff effectiveness in managing cases.
- The Committee noted that during peak periods (e.g., Summer CAP), communication delays with AM Team have led to panels acting on their own initiative, which increases the risk of procedural errors.
- The Committee also noted that SCA members advising StAMP panels can have a large number of cases at once and this can be hard to track.

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ACTION: SCA Secretary and TR to explore improved tracking mechanisms for SCA members managing high case volumes.

- The Committee noted that there is a student guide to the StAMP process available and queried whether an equivalent staff-facing guide could be produced or if existing materials require a review to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- The Committee raised concerns regarding whether current case outcomes effectively provide 'learning points' for students, given the continued number of repeat offences. The Committee explored whether the University's recourse to disciplinary action is perhaps too stringent compared to the wider sector; York SU noted that the institution currently appears to be on the "less lenient" side.
- The Committee discussed that there could be more scope for informal warnings and a greater emphasis on pedagogical responses for StAMP outcomes. Future StAMP training and resources will be updated to highlight the value of signposting students toward specific learning opportunities (i.e. Academic Skills Team) rather than focusing solely on punitive measures.
- The Committee reviewed the recommendations in the report and decided upon the following:
    - There is no requirement for a formal review of cases where a 'case to answer' leads to a 'no misconduct' finding, as these outcomes often reflect the necessary investigative depth of the StAMP process.
    - Action will be taken to confirm the status of departments reporting zero cases to ensure data accuracy and identify any potential under-reporting or logging inconsistencies.
    - The Committee committed to prioritising pedagogic responses to misconduct cases, ensuring that outcomes facilitate student learning.
    - The current policy regarding second offences will remain unchanged. However, the Committee emphasised the need for vigilance regarding overlapping offences, specifically the overlap between False Authorship and Fabrication when Generative AI is utilised.
    - A check will be conducted to ensure that marks cap penalties are applied only where explicitly permitted by policy, ensuring clear distinction between formal penalties and outcomes for poor academic practice.

- In relation to Academic Misconduct, SCA Chair proposed that the definition of probationary offences—currently limited to plagiarism and collusion—be extended to include False Authorship with immediate effect. The current scope of the probationary Academic Misconduct category, allows offences in early modules to be handled via a supportive, pedagogical approach rather than formal disciplinary measures.
- The Committee noted that misuse of Generative AI is frequently 'accidental', as plagiarism or collusion also are in the early stages of study. Extending the probationary scope to False

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Authorship allows for a more constructive and educational intervention, giving students the opportunity to learn from misunderstandings regarding AI use.

- The Committee endorsed this extension of the policy.

ACTION: AL & SCA Secretary to re-draft the probationary category in the Academic Misconduct Policy to reflect this change.

m25-26/54 Degree Outcomes Statement (23-24 Data) (SCA 25-26/18)

The Committee **noted** the Degree Outcomes Statement which was approved at UEC on 15th Jan 2026 and at Senate on 27th Jan 2026:

- The Committee noted that the statement highlights existing attainment gaps for Black and Asian students, noting that the observed trends align with wider sector data (especially Asian student data). It was noted, however, that the relatively small population sizes for these cohorts could result in statistical fluctuations between years.
- The Committee noted that these issues are currently embedded within the APP and the ongoing 'No Gaps' institutional work. JP noted that Inclusive Education will be advertising for student interns for these areas next week to develop active, targeted strategies.
- The Committee noted that the statement only covers Level 6 (L6) outcomes (excluding Integrated Masters) and therefore it represents only a specific proportion of the total undergraduate population.

m25-26/55 Any Other Business

- The Committee discussed the **monitoring/recording of the 25-working-day turnaround for marking and feedback**, specifically when this deadline has not been met by departments. The Committee discussed whether this monitoring system should rely on departmental self-reporting or student feedback via the SU.
- The Committee discussed several departmental models which were highlighted as examples of good practice:
  - Economics: The department has implemented a tracker that records the date markers receive work alongside the required return date. The expected release dates for marks are published directly to students.
  - Sociology: The department prioritises proactive communication; if there is any risk of missing a deadline, students are informed.
  - TFTI: Operates on a "23+2" model, allowing 23 days for academic marking and 2 days for administrative processing to ensure the 25-day deadline is met.
- York SU emphasised that students highly value transparency regarding specific dates for receiving feedback.
- Departmental variations and tracking methods will be further discussed at the CBoE Forum on 10 February 2026.

- The Committee discussed **condonement**, specifically a proposal to revise the Progression

and Award rules, moving away from the requirement for 120 credits to be passed at each stage.
- The proposal suggests:
  - 100 credits passed would be sufficient for progression, rather than the current 120. This would result in a requirement of 300 credits for an Ordinary degree and 320 credits for a Bachelor's degree.
  - A minimum of 40% would be required across all modules.
  - Students would still be required to pass all core modules.
- The Committee confirmed that the University holds the necessary data to identify core modules for all specific programmes to facilitate this.
- The Committee discussed that extensive modeling is required before approval. The Committee noted that while this might support the 'No Gaps' initiative, it could potentially advantage all students equally, thereby not closing specific attainment gaps.
- The Committee noted that the change would likely impact Continuation, Completion, and Awarding metrics. Condonement rules primarily support the first two - the University's primary gaps occur at the Awarding stage, which requires holistic consideration.
- The Committee acknowledged that any changes would be targeted for 2027/28 implementation. The Committee noted potential deflationary effects and a potential impact on the volume of resits.
- The Committee also acknowledged that alignment with OfS sector-recognised standards remains a priority.

- SCA Chair reminded academic committee members that they need to reply to GM's email regarding the SCA signing rota by 6th Feb 2026.

CATEGORY II

m25-26/56 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 13th March 2026 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in SLB/002.

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

m25-26/57 Individual Examination Arrangements
It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m25-26/58 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.

m25-26/59 Results Lists
Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.