Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26th June at 10.00am in V/C/026X and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Members:	Prof. Steve King	CS (Sciences) (Chair)
	Dr Nigel Lowe	Chemistry (Sciences)
	Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)
	Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS
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
	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
	Fiona MacDonald	Special Cases
Apologies:	Prof. Ruth Penfold-Mounce	Sociology (Social Sciences)
	Tom Richens	Deputy Head of Student Administration YGRS
	Dr Juliet James	Deputy Head of Inclusive Education
	Jess Penn	Health Sciences (Sciences)
	Dr Sue Faulds	Head of Faculty Operations - History, History of Art, Archaeology & Centre for Medieval Studies
	Sarah Finch	Maths (Sciences) (Deputy Chair)
	Dr Alet Roux	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
	Dr Daniel Morgan	ACT (Arts & Humanities)
	Sanjit Samaddar	Head of Student Success
	Jan Ball-Smith	

m25-26/75 Welcome and apologies for absence

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

m25-26/76 Declarations of interest

N/A

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m25-26/77 Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 13th March 2026 were confirmed as correct.

m25-26/78 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 - 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.

Completed.

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Completed.

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.

Completed, communicated to student representatives in an alternative format.

m25-26/64 Chair's Report - SCA Chair to check with David Barrett to see if there is a student representative on the marking and assessment criteria T&F group.

Completed, there are two student representatives in this group.

m25-26/65 Report from Students - 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.

Completed.

m25-26/69 Guidance for staff on AI-assisted marking and feedback - SCA Chair to discuss with SuFau a possible scenario on AI in moderation and standardisation.

Completed, SCA Chair met with SuFau on 2/4/26

m25-26/70 Any Other Business - SCA Chair to speak to the Dean of YGRS to clarify policy on access to recordings for PGRs.

Completed, JJ confirmed that access to recordings for PGRs only occurs within appeals and complaints cases.

m25-26/70 Any Other Business - 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.

Completed, SaFi update: The only exemptions that can be made are for presentations or practicals. However, the self cert option can be set up to either let the student have a 4 day extension or defer to the summer, so there is a the possibility of setting it up so that short deadline pieces of the work defer to the summer, to act as a deterrent for self cert but this is probably outside the spirit of the policy.

ONGOING

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.

m25-26/52 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.

Ongoing.

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.

Ongoing.

m25-26/68 Proposal for in-year revision to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment - Policy and Procedure 2025/26 - CW and JP to review the RA process document to ensure clarity.

Ongoing, AL 22/06: Note that the in-year change to policy has not been implemented/published. Chair UEC final approval decision outstanding.

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m25-26/79 Chair's Report
SCA **considered** the following items reported by the Chair:

- Following on from a committee member suggestion via email, SCA Chair is to develop a proposal over the summer period regarding extensions for short-duration coursework.

- SCA Chair reported that due to recent institutional changes and shifting educational priorities (including a review of teaching and learning governance), an APVC has been asked to take over the SCA Chair responsibilities on an interim basis, with an official announcement to follow soon.
- SCA Chair noted that the Chair of UEC has approved the changes to the Exceptional Circumstances Policy which SCA recommended to UEC in March 2026, but that as this proposed change came too late for a meaningful in-year change, the revised policy will be rolled into the 26/27 version instead.
- SCA Chair noted that following on from complex queries in the SCA inbox related to student progression after a lateness penalty, the decision has been made that students who fail a module solely due to a lateness penalty will automatically receive a capped resit mark. They will not be required to take a resit in the August resit period unless they need to do so for compensation purposes. This will apply to all courses (except York Online for now).

ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss how this would work for York Online further with ZB.

m25-26/80 Report from Students
York SU **noted** that:

- RA highlighted to the committee that there is currently a significant backlog of academic misconduct cases in the YorkSU Advice Service inbox where students are requesting their support services.
- The Committee noted that final-year student cases are being prioritised due to graduation timeframes, however discussed that the backlog may still potentially impact their ability to graduate on time and manage resits, which in turn may lead to a knock-on effect of student complaints.
- SCA Chair reiterated that this pause in processing academic misconduct cases within the exams and graduation period is not acceptable and he is looking to review/address this issue with colleagues over the summer period.

ACTION: SCA Chair to discuss the pause in processing academic misconduct cases further with senior colleagues.

m25-26/81 Revised PGR Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures
The Committee **endorsed** the following revised policy and procedures, pending the below suggested changes**:**

- The Committee considered summary slides of the revised policy and procedures, noting that this revision was a result of the current policy being hard to navigate, with unclear roles, responsibilities and outcomes. The Committee noted that the current policy is unduly punitive as it does not make sufficient allowance for dealing with poor academic practice compared with academic misconduct.
- The Committee also noted that the current PGR policy is closely based on the current taught policy, which is designed for students taking multiple lower stakes assignments

compared to PGRs' fewer yet higher stakes assignments.

- The Committee considered the new revised, staged approach which is based on the research misconduct procedure (itself based on national good practice). This new 3-staged approach, recognises poor academic practice or minor academic misconduct in a PGR's work but provides a route for this to be handled by remedial education.
- The Committee noted that the revised policy will not rigidly define Level 1 or Level 2 offences, as these vary by discipline and require nuanced academic judgment.
- The Committee debated whether the distinction between offences is appropriate (e.g., minor plagiarism allows for a remedial route, whilst fabrication or commissioning always forces a full investigation). The Committee noted severity exists on a spectrum and discussed whether minor issues (e.g. stemming from limited input by proofreaders) should trigger a full investigation and whether certain fabrication cases should be routed to the research misconduct framework instead.
- The Committee discussed concerns regarding conflicts of interest when a supervisor flags misconduct but the policy expects them to support the student. The Committee agreed that a separate academic contact must be designated within departments, in the case that a student's supervisor submits a referral.
- The Committee noted that key terms require clearer parameters, specifically 'remedial training' and what constitutes 'the department'. The Committee also noted 'catastrophic personal circumstances' is a problematic term to define, but agreed that it provides a streamlined phrasing allowing cases to be considered on a case-by-case basis, thus avoiding student confusion regarding mitigating penalties.
- The Committee discussed that it is important that initial communications to students being investigated continue to explicitly state the extent to which exceptional circumstances are factored into the process. The Committee was reassured that YorkSU Advice Service will play an active role in advising students on submitting suitable evidence.
- The Committee noted that the Research Integrity Tutorial needs to be reviewed to ensure that it covers the newly updated list of offences, specifically the distinction between false authorship and commissioning.
- The Committee noted that the SCA Secretary may not always (if they have limited experience of PGR programmes) be suitably qualified for PGR case management, therefore suggested that the policy text should be updated to allow delegation based on 'suitability of qualifications', not just unavailability or conflict of interest, to avoid procedural appeals.
- The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining a comprehensive log and overview of cases, despite the rarity of PGR cases. The Committee discussed amending policy point 6.25 to specify that *'The SCA Secretary will ensure a strictly anonymised record of allegations and outcomes is kept'*, allowing administrative delegation rather than requiring the Secretary to personally maintain the log.
- The Committee discussed the addition of compulsory interviews for students in line with the Good Practice Framework. The Committee noted that the policy must clearly outline the implications for student non-attendance or non-engagement with such interviews,

suggesting this needs to be made more explicit earlier in the policy and it also needs to be made clear that the YorkSU Advice Service is permitted to attend these interviews to support the student.

- The Committee endorsed this policy to be sent to YGRS Board on 30/06/26, subject to the points that members had raised being addressed in the final version.

m25-26/82 Establishing a new reasonable adjustments review process and escalation panel

The Committee **considered:**

- The Committee received an oral update on the proposal for a new two-stage reasonable adjustments review process and the establishment of a reasonable adjustments review panel.
- The Committee noted that the process will provide a clear institutional mechanism for reviewing cases where there is disagreement over a reasonable adjustment recommendation, concerns about implementation, or urgent or complex circumstances that require institutional oversight.
- The Committee discussed the constitution of the panel and highlighted that it needs to be clear how many academics, members from the referring faculty etc. are on the panel. The Committee also noted that a third party, such as the YorkSU Advice Service, should be added as a potential party that could refer a case to the panel.
- The Committee noted that there would need to be a minimum quoracy and discussed whether the panel would be a pool of people from which the minimum relevant members will form a specific panel for a case or whether the panel would include all members each time.
- CW added that they would ideally prefer for the whole panel to meet for each case to ensure consistency and CW had drafted a Terms of Reference document for this panel.
- The Committee also discussed whether the panel needs a colleague from Student Administration, e.g. Exams and Graduation Manager, to provide central university perspective on reasonableness of a proposed adjustment.

ACTION: CW to speak with TR and Luisa Nanovo regarding Student Administration representation on this panel.

- The Committee discussed whether there are sufficient safeguards in place for students with concerns about the process to be able to voice their concerns. The Committee suggested that Disability Services could work with YorkSU to develop this.
- The Committee discussed, in the context of resourcing/time availability, the possibility of developing a procedure where the panel does not have to meet but there is a procedural documented form where everyone can provide comments etc. The Committee discussed how this could be carried out offline and then escalated to an in person meeting if necessary. The Committee noted that such a process would need to be made very clear in policy to balance efficiency with the risk of complaints.
- The Committee noted that for transparency and ease of referral, this potential document should be signposted to from the Reasonable Adjustment policies and Urgent or Severe Cases Procedure and included on the relevant assessments webpage.
- The Committee discussed whether the formation of such a panel points to systemic inconsistencies across the University in understanding what constitutes a reasonable

adjustment. CW reassured the committee that it would only be under exceptional circumstances that the panel would be required to meet. CW also added that they plan to develop anonymous case studies to be used as an internal resource for staff, so that future cases do not have to be escalated to a panel for consideration.

- The Committee noted that there needs to be further clarification as to what happens to student assessments when this process is ongoing (i.e. opportunities for deferral or resit).
- The Committee discussed whether this process applied to research students, noting that it would need to be extended to cover this provision and would need to be cross-checked with the appendix on reasonable adjustments in the Policy on Research Degrees.

ACTION: CW & JJ to discuss PGR provision in this process further outside of the meeting

m25-26/83 Amendment to Eligibility Policy for Undertaking Study Abroad
The Committee **considered:**

- The Committee considered the proposed amendment to the eligibility policy for undertaking study abroad presented by AL. This paper follows the decision made based on the last round of applications to undertake study abroad, to remove the minimum mark threshold in the preceding stage for all programmes with study abroad in LLS and those 'with a language', following the realisation that departments had not been applying the threshold consistently.
- The Committee noted that LLS argued that the learning outcomes of going abroad on such programmes are enhanced language skill development and cultural immersion, rather than on advancing academic disciplinary knowledge that is central to study abroad on other programmes.
- The Committee noted that LLS also provided data that did not suggest that those with low performance in the preceding stage to their year abroad struggle to complete the year abroad or to do well in later stages, which might otherwise have justified application of the standard eligibility criteria.
- The Committee considered the proposal that LLS and all programmes 'with a language' *are permanently exempt* from the minimum 60 mark threshold requirement, but that a threshold is retained for all other programmes where students study an academic discipline when abroad *(eg BA Sociology with a year abroad).* The Committee noted that the rationale behind this is because some minimum level of achievement ought to be required as an indicator of likely ability to cope with such studies in a different language and/or cultural environment. It is proposed to lower this threshold to 55, with the anticipation that this opens up year abroad opportunities to more students without setting students up to fail.
- The Committee noted that the Portfolio Oversight Group approved a proposal from Global Opportunities in February 2026 by Chair's Action, to reduce the admission criteria for incoming visiting students from 60%/2:1 equivalent to a 2:2 equivalent, to improve visiting student numbers and achieve greater reciprocity in partnerships.
- The Committee discussed reservations about reducing the threshold as they noted that a lot of pastoral support is required for students when they return from study abroad to support their reintegration and a lower threshold may add to this number. The Committee did discuss whether this was a wider symptom for all students returning from study abroad.

ACTION: SCA Chair and AL to lead on discussions with the Global Opportunities team about support for students coming back from study abroad (to mirror the Placement Team's work with those students returning from a year in industry).

- The Committee discussed whether this amendment would apply to all taught courses' study abroad element, as MChem students take research courses abroad and therefore, the preceding year progression rule would not work.
- The Committee noted that the 2nd year credit replacement year abroad model is very different to the study abroad with no credit replacement (3+1) model, specifically in relation to a student being forced to dropout if they fail, whereas a student on the 3+1 model would have an amended degree title (i.e. degree title without study abroad) if they failed their year abroad.
- The Committee noted that there is a potential advantage regarding equity of opportunity with this proposal, as if students are unable to afford the 3+1 model, then this lower threshold would allow more students to be able to take the 2nd year replacement option.
- The Committee noted that the proposal included a sector review of study abroad threshold minimums and due to this proposal suggesting an approach which is at the lower end of this review, SCA should mandate a review of study abroad student outcomes annually to monitor attainment. The Committee noted that SIA and Global Opportunities teams would play a key role in this.
- The Committee also agreed that this policy should be reviewed in three years by SCA.
- The Committee agreed to recommend this policy for final approval and implementation (for Sem1 application to study abroad in 27/28) to UEC, pending the changes suggested.

m25-26/84 Policy and Guidance on AI in Marking and Feedback
The Committee **considered:**

- The proposed policy and accompanying guidance for staff on the use of AI in marking and feedback workflows. It proposes principles which are intended to develop trust between staff and students, and guidelines for the use of AI in this area.
- The Committee noted that the overarching principle of this policy is that the allocation of marks is a human activity that cannot be delegated to AI or other technology.
- The Committee discussed the possibility of whether departments should be given a range of prescriptive options/different levels of engagement with AI that they can choose from, so that their decision is more justifiable than departments creating their own approach. The Committee also noted that AI use needs to be nuanced across departments as expertise/disciplines vary and therefore such options would help structure in-department discussions.
- The Committee noted that the reference made to ethics in AI is relatively broad and suggested narrowing this to make more specific reference to copyright, academic ethics etc.
- The Committee discussed that this policy is not advocating that staff must engage with AI, instead if they do choose to use AI for marking and feedback, this is a good practice guide on how to carry this out.

- The Committee discussed the need to develop an institutional position on those staff and students who do not want to engage with AI for ethical/sustainability reasons.
- The Committee discussed the broader issue of the role GenAI plays in cognitive offloading and how this could impact on the quality of academics in the long term for the HE sector.
- The Committee noted that AQD colleagues are currently drafting guidance on writing summative feedback to be used in conjunction with this policy.
- The Committee noted that this policy does not align with central guidance for doctoral supervisors/students which states that they are not able to use AI for editing purposes, however it was noted that context needs to be taken into consideration, as markers are not being assessed on writing good feedback without the support of AI.
- The Committee discussed that the policy states that students should be made aware in advance/provided with demonstration of how their marker used AI and the Committee questioned how this would look in practice as this may not stand up in complaints cases. The Committee discussed that a video on the VLE may help with this.
- The Committee endorsed this policy and guidance to be sent to UEC for consideration.

m25-26/85 Oral update on UEC Assessment Criteria Working Group

The Committee received an oral update on behalf of Ruth Penfold-Mounce:

- The UEC Assessment Criteria Working Group had their first meeting where they discussed the Terms of Reference for the working group and agreed on the planned outputs which will be developed over the next 12 months.
- The Committee noted that these outputs will be the following:
    - A summary of the evidence base related to assessment criteria usage within higher education
    - Guidance and resources for staff on the use of assessment criteria including (but not restricted to), clarification of terminology, links between specifications and degree classifications, marking to the full scale, stepped marking and supporting student understanding of assessment criteria.
    - Student-facing guidance on understanding assessment criteria and specifications
    - An evaluation framework to establish any impact from the new guidance.
- The Committee also noted that there is a task and finish group folder where the group are:
    - collating literature - key elements from this evidence base will to feed into their discussions
    - filling folders with information about current practice (including a spreadsheet on grading descriptors across the institution)
    - adding to a paper where they will try and agree on a taxonomy/terminology of assessment criteria
- The Committee noted that this group will be meeting again in July.

m25-26/86 Any Other Business

- The Committee thanked the SCA Chair for his work and commitment as SCA Chair over the previous year, as he is stepping down from the Chair role on the 31st August 2026.

CATEGORY II

m25-26/87 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as next academic year, tbc.

RESERVED BUSINESS

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

m25-26/88 Individual Examination Arrangements

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

m25-26/89 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.

m25-26/90 Results Lists

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