

University Education Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2025, 09:30-12:30, in BS/104, Berrick Saul and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students (Chair)
 Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students; Chair of SCA (Deputy Chair)
 Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development (Secretary)
 David Barrett, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Sciences)
 Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Social Sciences)
 Louise Cook, Interim Associate Dean for Education and Students (Arts and Humanities)
 Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing
 Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability
 Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Student Success
 Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director: Student Services
 Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, University of York Europe Campus, CITY U.L.E
 Tom Banham, Academic Registrar; Director of Student Education and Experience
 Claire Ball-Smith (representing Social Sciences)
 Daniel Keith (representing Social Sciences)
 Michael Bate (representing Sciences)
 Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)
 Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities)
 Iain Brennan (representing the International Pathway College)
 Aya Haidar, York SU Academic Officer
 Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb, York SU Activities Officer

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)
 David Brown, Faculty Library, Archives and Learning Services Engagement Manager, Sciences [UEC.25-26/7]
 Rebecca Harrington, Head of Admissions and Applicant Experience [UEC.25-26/8]
 Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Arts and Humanities) [UEC.25-26/10]

Apologies: Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships; Lucy Ambrose (representing Hull York Medical School); Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)

Standing Items

Welcome

25-26/1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and noted:

1. New members for the 2025/26 academic year will be:
 - David Barrett as the new Associate Dean for Education and Students (Sciences);
 - Louise Cooke (Archaeology) as the Interim Associate Dean for Education and Students (Arts and Humanities) until January 2026;
 - Iain Brennan (IPC) as a co-opted member;

- Lucy Ambrose (Hull York Medical School) as a co-opted member;
 - Aya Haidar as the new York SU Academic Officer.
2. One vacancy for a co-opted member remains to be filled.
 3. The December UEC meeting will be moved due to difficulties securing a suitable room.

Declarations of interest in items on the agenda [oral report]

25-26/2 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

25-26/3 Members were reminded to complete their annual declaration of interest forms (to be circulated) by 31 October 2025.

Action: UEC Secretary

Unreserved minutes of the last meeting held on 10 July 2025 [UEC.25-26/1]

25-26/4 The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 as an accurate record.

Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

25-26/5 No updates were noted.

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UEC.25-26/2]

25-26/6 The Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) has **approved** the following on behalf of UEC:

1. Minor adjustments to the Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy for 2025/26.
2. Student exchange agreements with Queensland University of Technology and Nagaoka University of Technology, with the exchanges commencing 2026/27 for an initial period of five years.
3. The Programme and Module Evaluation and Assessment and Feedback policies brought to UTC in 2024/25.
4. Ten University of York programmes for marketing for delivery at University of York Mumbai.

25-26/7 The Deputy Chair (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) has **approved** the following on behalf of UEC:

1. Major modifications to the following IPC modules:
 - a. IPC00052F - Language & Study Skills II (Science) (for Foundation Certificate (Science))
 - b. IPC00053F - Language & Study Skills II (General) (for Foundation Certificate (General))
 - c. IPC00061H - Language & Study Skills (for pre-Masters Certificate).

2. The modifications comprise:
 - a. Applying the same wording to each module learning outcome, with an additional outcome added to IPC00061H to reflect the higher level of study;
 - b. Adopting a single common aim for all three modules;
 - c. Removing all summative assessments, and adopting a single common formative assessment format across all three modules, in Term One, with IPC00061H having an additional formative assessment to reflect the higher level of study.

Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/8 The Chair **reported**:

1. The University's new governance agenda format has been adopted, with an additional section for programme approvals in light of UEC's new remit. The format will be monitored and feedback provided to the Governance Office.
2. The Office for Students (OfS) has released a consultation on *the future approach to quality regulation* (Teaching Excellence Framework), with focus on student experience and outcomes. Assessment will be cyclical, and initial focus will be on undergraduate provision, with a new PGT survey to be piloted in 2026/27. Ratings will be Gold, Silver, Bronze and Requires Improvement, with Bronze defined as only meeting minimum standards. Gold status will be linked to eligibility for strategic funding and a longer review cycle, while Bronze providers will face heavy scrutiny and may have student recruitment growth restricted. The University's current performance indicates a likely rating of Bronze for student experience (based on NSS) and Silver for outcomes. The University will provide a response to the consultation directly and through the Russell Group.
3. The quality framework for the Mumbai campus has been approved. Interviews for the Provost and CASO have taken place, and a successful employability workshop was held with Mumbai colleagues.
4. Annual Review is being replaced by an Education Quality Enhancement Cycle (EQEC), a new, iterative, and data-driven process. Schools/departments will receive a curated data pack to reflect upon and will submit and update action plans throughout the year.
5. Senior Leadership away days have recently taken place, with discussions focused on teaching effectiveness, and assessment and feedback. The Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) will take forward work on condonement and repeat study. There was a consensus that the University's timetable needs to be improved to address issues of staff constraints and module optionality.
6. The Chair reminded members that UEC is a working committee and expressed concern about the low level of feedback on policies circulated for comment. All members were requested to respond to items, even if only to state they have no comments.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/9 The Deputy Chair **reported**:

1. The official licence for the establishment of the University of York Europe Campus, CITY ULE, a non-state, not-for-profit university in Thessaloniki, was granted in August. The campus will begin taking undergraduate students from the 2025/26 academic year.

Programme accreditation is in progress, with four of the six undergraduate programmes having had their accreditation visits, with hopes for completion by 15 October. PGT programmes will continue under the CITY College banner for the current academic year.

2. A supplier has been appointed for a new university-wide module evaluation system. The system will be implemented in the current semester, opening to students in Week 9 for a two-week period.
 - a. The Committee **discussed** the decision to procure an external system. It was noted that while some schools/departments already have effective systems, an institutional system will provide consistency, allow for better oversight, and be part of the response to declining NSS scores. Communications around this should address the rationale for the investment.
 - b. The Committee **suggested** that the system could be used to pilot a PGT survey in advance of the planned PGT TEF.

Action: Deputy Chair (a. and b.)

Student Representative's report [oral report]

25-26/10 Aya Haidar, York SU Academic Officer, **reported:**

1. York SU's main academic priorities are to review assessment timetabling to address assessment bunching and clashes between coursework and exams, and to review capstone project modules to identify and share good practice.
2. Department Representative training is complete, and faculty-based Course Representative training sessions are being run over the next two months.
3. The Excellence Awards were successful, with good engagement from postgraduate students following the merger of YUSU and the GSA.
 - a. The Committee confirmed it is useful to continue to receive a paper on the awards.

University Education Committee Terms of Reference and Membership 2025/26 [UEC.25-26/3]

25-26/11 The Chair introduced the revised Terms of Reference for UEC, noting the addition of UEC's role in approving new programmes and major modifications.

25-26/12 The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference for UEC, subject to the addition of a missing sub-heading.

Action: UEC Secretary

Standing Committee on Assessment Terms of Reference, Membership and Priorities 2025/26 [UEC.25-26/4]

25-26/13 The Chair of SCA introduced the revised Terms of Reference for SCA, noting the expanded academic membership and reference to roles rather than named individuals.

25-26/14 A paper on SCA priorities will be brought to the November UEC meeting, with key areas to include condonement, repeating Year 2 study, grade outcomes and 'deflation', and the assessment of technical proficiency in English.

Action: Chair of SCA

25-26/15 The Committee **approved** the SCA Terms of Reference.

AI update

25-26/16 In his capacity as Chair of the UEC AI Working Group, Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, **reported:**

1. The web team is designing new AI webpages.
2. A half-day conference on *Education in a World with Gen AI* is being held on 15 October, on campus and online. It will showcase our institutional approach to AI and share practice on how AI can support students.

Update from the NSS Steering Group

25-26/17 David Barrett, Associate Dean (Education and Students) for Sciences and Chair of the NSS Steering Group, **reported:**

1. The NSS Steering Group's first meeting of the year is next week.
2. The new EQEC embeds NSS data, reflection, and action planning to support engagement.
3. A meeting has been held for newly identified school/departmental NSS Leads, with a follow-up planned for early 2026.

Section A

NSS 2025 Results Summary [UEC.25-26/5]

25-26/18 The Chair **reported** on the institutional position regarding the NSS, noting:

1. There is significant concern at UEB and Council about the University's NSS scores, which are impacting league table positions and pose a risk in relation to TEF. A new UEB-level group is being established to provide oversight.
2. Although the overall response rate and some scores increased last year, the University's sector ranking continues to decline.
3. The University's performance in the 'Assessment and Feedback', 'Student Voice', and 'Learning opportunities' themes is materially below OfS benchmark. It was noted that 'Assessment and Feedback' and 'Student Voice' are already featured in TEF, but that current OfS proposals are to add 'Learning Opportunities' as a new metric.
4. A key priority is to visit and support schools/departments with long-term poor performance, while also learning from high-performing schools/departments.

25-26/19 The Committee **discussed** some key actions to be taken forward, including the adoption of a coordinated, institutional approach to the promotion of the NSS during the survey's fieldwork window, and reinstating a 'You Said, We Did' campaign to close the feedback loop to students.

Action: Chair, NSS Steering Group

25-26/20 The Committee **observed** a potential risk to rolling out the new module evaluation system to final-year students shortly before the NSS window. It was **suggested** that a pilot could be run

with first-year students only, or with IPC students, though it was also noted that it may be positive to show final-year students that investments are being made relating to student voice.

Action: Deputy Chair

- 25-26/21 To support analysis of combined programmes, the Committee **suggested** the NSS Steering Group should link with the Combined Programmes Task and Finish Group to ensure a consistent list of combined programmes is used.

Action: Chair, NSS Steering Group

Assurance Report on Alignment with OfS B Conditions [UEC.25-26/6]

- 25-26/22 Duncan Jackson (Head of Academic Quality and Development) introduced the report and noted:

1. Taught and PGR programmes are now combined into a single report that focuses on the evidence of alignment.
2. The new Education Quality and Enhancement Cycle, and the new central system for programme and module evaluation, will provide lead indicators of performance in future rounds of the NSS.
3. For NSS-derived metrics, the University is materially below benchmark for B1 (Learning Opportunities), B2 (Student Voice), and B4 (Assessment and Feedback). The NSS Steering Group should prioritise work on these themes.

Action: Chair, NSS Steering Group

4. For B3 (Student Outcomes), performance is generally compliant, with the exception of continuation rates for part-time PGT students, which are below the OfS's minimum threshold. This issue seems to be primarily driven by online programmes (possibly in part because the data does not accurately account for the 'pay-as-you-go' carousel model). It would be useful to develop an action plan with Computer Science, HEP and York Online to address student retention.

Action: Head of Online Programmes

5. Although it does not yet do so, the OfS has indicated it may look to monitor B3 in relation to transnational provision in the future. Work to secure usable data from CITY College ULE is ongoing, and it is recommended that mechanisms are in place to collect appropriate data from new partnership arrangements, including Mumbai, from the outset.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

- 25-26/23 The Committee **observed:**

1. The OfS definition of 'Other Postgraduate' students (in relation to below-threshold continuation data in History and Archaeology) requires clarification.
2. It would be useful to establish whether underperformance against split indicators relating to part-time PGT Masters continuation is driven by Computer Science.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development (items 1-2)

3. In relation to below-threshold performance in the PGCE against specific continuation and

completion split indicators, it was noted that PGCE students who fail the PSRB standard to acquire QTS are ineligible for award. The Professional Programmes team is investigating the introduction of an exit award at Level 6, and a Level 7 award without QTS, to address this.

25-26/24 The Committee **approved** the report and its recommendations.

Policy on Citation and Referencing Practice [UEC.25-26/7]

25-26/25 David Brown, Faculty Library, Archives and Learning Services Engagement Manager, Sciences, introduced the proposed policy, and **reported** that its rationale is to provide clarity and consistency for taught students by requiring each school/department to adopt a single referencing style.

25-26/26 The Committee **observed** that there are challenges for students on combined programmes where each school/department uses a different system. Additionally, multi-disciplinary schools may need flexibility if different subject areas have different industry standards.

25-26/27 The Committee **suggested**:

1. Local guidance should be provided where professional programmes have additional referencing requirements.
2. In relation to collaborative provision, collaborative partners should be required to adopt the referencing style of the relevant York home school/department.
3. The introduction of the proposed policy could be disseminated to students via a 'You Said, We Did' communications item as part of the NSS campaign.

25-26/28 The Committee **approved** the policy and its associated procedures, to be implemented from the 2026/27 academic year.

Recruitment, Selections and Admissions Policy for 2026 Entry [UEC.25-26/8]

25-26/29 Rebecca Harrington, Head of Admissions and Applicant Experience, introduced the annual update to the Admissions Policy, noting:

1. Comments received from UEC members by circulation have been addressed. Otherwise, key changes include explicitly noting that international partnerships are in scope, adding legal updates regarding freedom of speech, introducing a scheme for commuter students, and reverting the English language test validity period to two years.
2. A priority for the coming year is to review how the University manages admissions for domestic partnership/progression agreements, and to report back to UEC on this matter.

Action: Head of Admissions and Applicant Experience

25-26/30 The Committee **noted** that MOOCs will continue to be used as part of the contextual offer scheme, as the partnership with FutureLearn is continuing.

25-26/31 The Committee **approved** the Policy for 2026/27.

Establishment of a Collaborative Provision Committee [UEC.25-26/9]

25-26/32 The Chair introduced a paper proposing the formation of a Collaborative Provision Committee as a sub-committee of UEC, as recommended by the recent PwC audit. This

committee will support academic quality controls to safeguard reputation, compliance and student outcomes as the volume and complexity of collaborations increase.

25-26/33 The Committee **suggested**:

1. It will be necessary to clarify what is included under 'collaborative provision' in relation to the committee's remit, for example, whether the committee should oversee provision delivered in collaboration with Initial Teacher Training lead partners.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

2. Membership, including the potential inclusion of student and school/departmental representation, should be discussed with the Directors of Faculty Operations.

Action: PVC for Education and Students

25-26/34 The Committee **approved** the establishment of the committee and its Terms of Reference.

Section B

Interim Update from Combined Programmes Task and Finish Group (2024/25) [UEC.25-26/10]

25-26/35 Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean, Arts and Humanities introduced the paper and **reported** that the group met in July and identified a need for significant further work, particularly to consider the introduction of a combined programmes network; review the Policy on Combined Programmes; explore how combined programmes can be visible in routine reports and systems, and improve how they are marketed.

25-26/36 The Committee **observed**:

1. A mechanism for collecting details on combined programmes is included in the EQEC process, which may alleviate the need to produce an additional list. Details of combined programmes should be cross-referenced with NSS reporting for parity.

Action: Chair, NSS Steering Group

25-26/37 The Committee **suggested**:

1. Additional questions could be included on the New Programmes Proposal form to confirm if a programme is combined, and if so, which school/department is to lead.

Action: Academic Quality Manager

2. Membership of the task and finish group could be expanded to include representation from Marketing, the Academic Quality and Development team, and Heads of Faculty Marketing and Recruitment.

Action: Associate Dean, Arts and Humanities

25-26/38 The Committee **approved** the task and finish group continuing for a further six months, beginning in Semester 2.

Any Other Business

25-26/39 The Committee was informed that a Student Success Symposium will take place on 8 October.

Section C

[Secretary's Note: With regard to its Section C agenda, UEC was provided with the following agenda Items which were provided for: [a] information only, where UEC discussion is not required or anticipated, unless a request is made to escalate an item is from Section C to Section A or B for consideration OR as [b] supplementary information and data for items on the Section A or B agenda.]

25-26/40 Standing Committee on Assessment: Summary of the meeting held on 12 September 2025 [UEC.25-26/11]

25-26/41 Faculty Learning and Teaching Group minutes:

1. Arts & Humanities (28 May 2025; 17 July 2025) [UEC.25-26/12a-b]
2. Sciences (28 May 2025) [UEC.25-26/13]
3. Social Sciences (16 July 2025) [UEC.25-26/14]

25-26/42 York SU Excellence Awards 2025 [UEC.25-26/15]

25-26/43 IPC Pathway Management Board minutes (25 June 2025) [UEC.25-26/16]

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality

September 2025