

University Education Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 April 2026 at 10.00am in Heslington Hall, H/G21 and via Zoom.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students (Chair)
Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students (Deputy Chair; Acting Chair for items 25-26/226-231)
Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development (Secretary)
David Barrett, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Sciences)
Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Arts and Humanities)
Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Social Sciences)
Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Student Success
Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing
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)
Lucy Ambrose (representing Hull York Medical School)
Iain Brennan (representing the International Pathway College)
Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director: Student Services
Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability (UEC.25-26/80 only)
Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships
Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, University of York Europe Campus, CITY U.L.E
Amy Creighton, York SU Student Voice and Insight Manager

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality and Development (Assistant Secretary)
Andy Higginbotham [UEC.25-26/78]
Mohammad Nasr Esfahani [UEC.25-26/78]
Amy Muckersie [UEC.25-26/78]
Anna Bramwell-Dicks [UEC.25-26/79]
Angela Ranson [UEC.25-26/79]
Kathryn Asbury [UEC.25-26/80]
Vanita Sundaram [UEC.25-26/80]
Jenny Brotherton [UEC.25-26/80]

Apologies: Paul Bishop (representing Sciences); Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities); Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities); Aya Haidar, York SU Academic Officer.

Standing Items

Welcome

- 25-26/213 The Chair welcomed the Committee, and in particular Amy Creighton (YorkSU Student Voice and Insight Manager) in her new role. A new standing item, "Congregation of awards in absentia," was added to the agenda for use as necessary. The Chair also noted that Kirsty Lingstadt is leaving the University and thanked her for her contributions.

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

- 25-26/214 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

Congregation of awards in absentia

- 25-26/215 The Chair noted there were no conferments for this meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of UEC held 26 March 2026 [UEC.25-26/75]

- 25-26/216 The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record.

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

- 25-26/217 The Secretary has reviewed the action log and non-live actions will be moved to the "completed" tab. All members must review and update their assigned actions by Wednesday 13 May to ensure an accurate circulation for the next UEC meeting.

Action: All members

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UEC.25-26/76]

- 25-26/218 The Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) has taken the following action on behalf of UEC:
1. **Approved** a proposal for a new programme - BSc/MChem Chemistry with Digital Methods - following satisfactory resolution of conditions set at the February UEC.
 2. **Approved** a new variant of the PGCE Primary programme ('PGCE Primary (3-7) with QTS'), starting September 2027. This level 7 award includes two exit awards previously approved in March 2026 as modifications to the PGCE Primary and Secondary programmes (Professional Graduate Certificate in Education with QTS (level 6) and Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies (level 7)).
 3. **Approved** the following changes to the Department of Education's PGCE Primary and Secondary programme, effective September 2026:
 - a. Moving from four pass/fail modules to three.
 - b. Introducing a threshold at the end of PGCE Placement 1 so that a student must have a maximum of 3 ITTECF areas listed as 'emerging', all other ITTECF areas listed as 'developing' or better, and no concerns with PPC, in order to progress into Placement 2.
 - c. Introducing a new level 6 exit award: Professional Graduate Certificate with QTS for students (the award title has been approved by Senate).

- d. Adding additional MFL languages to the PGCE Secondary: Italian (with either German, French or Spanish) and Mandarin (with EAL) from September 2026.

4. **Approved** an addition to UEC's Terms of Reference, as advised by the Governance Office:
To have particular regard to the University's obligation to secure academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

25-26/219 The Deputy Chair (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) has taken the following action on behalf of UEC:

1. **Approved** a list of teaching staff for University of York Europe Campus.

Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/220 The Chair **reported**:

1. The strategy refresh and Teaching Efficiency Initiative are ongoing.
2. The OfS is consulting on student protection and free speech. An update on the TEF consultation is expected over the summer.
3. The University is planning a senior leaders meeting on CPD and apprenticeships, and drop-in sessions for Heads of Departments regarding international activities.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/221 The Deputy Chair **reported**:

1. Semester 2 module evaluation surveys went live this week, with broader stage and programme level surveys to launch after the assessment period. The Committee queried when Associate Deans and Heads of Schools/Departments will have access to dashboard results.

Action: Deputy Chair

Student Representative's report [oral report]

25-26/222 Amy Creighton, York SU Student Voice and Insight Manager, **reported**:

1. 209 Excellence Award nominations have been received to date (with Chemistry, Health Sciences, and Politics leading); nominations close on Monday 27 April.
2. Recruitment is underway for representative roles; 76% of roles have applicants, with 54% contested.
3. Online Student Staff Forums (SSFs) have seen reduced attendance, attributed to online events no longer appearing on timetables.
4. Research is underway to address inconsistent email and mailing list permissions for representatives across schools/departments, with the aim of standardising communication processes.
5. The next Big Academic Meeting (BAM) is pending, and will focus on the representation review. Insights will be shared at the next UEC.

6. The team is attending school/ departmental PGR conferences and welcome further invitations.
7. Following the Essex Student Union's 'Pay the Placement' campaign, a survey on nursing student experiences is underway. The Committee advised York SU to seek the support of the Department of Health Sciences in publicising this.

AI update

25-26/223 In his capacity as Chair of the UEC AI Working Group, Steve King **reported**:

1. The working group is continuing to develop AI literacy training for students and staff, and a policy on AI use by staff in assessment and feedback.
2. A wider university consultation to develop a cohesive AI strategy will take place in due course.

Update from the NSS Steering Group

25-26/224 David Barrett, Chair of the NSS Steering Group, **reported**:

1. The NSS response rate is currently 73%, with all departments meeting reporting thresholds.
2. A communications and analysis plan is in place for Results Day, and an NSS leaders meeting is scheduled for 12 May to reflect on the fieldwork period.

Section A

Report on Mumbai Inspection [UEC.25-26/77]

25-26/225 Steve King, Associate PVC (Education & Students), presented a report on the QA inspection of the University of York Mumbai campus. As students have not yet started, the inspection focused on documentation and policy alignment ahead of an impending University Grants Commission (UGC) inspection. The panel categorised policies into three groups: instant adoption, minor edits, and significant rewrites.

25-26/226 The Committee **observed**:

1. The "gender sensitisation" terminology is a specific Indian requirement; the Mumbai campus will also adopt broader University Equality and Diversity policies.
2. A physical inspection in Autumn 2026 will focus on practical operations once staff and students are in residence.
3. Under the partnership model, Mumbai programmes must maintain core modules and Programme Learning Outcomes identical to the York programme, though option modules may diverge.
4. Programme and module evaluations should use the same questions as York, however in practice it may become apparent that additional, Mumbai-specific questions would be useful.
5. The Collaborative Provision Committee will oversee ongoing work integrating policies and frameworks.

6. Confirmation that the resolution of conditions and recommendations will be undertaken in priority order should be included when the paper is forwarded to Senate.

Action: Associate PVC (Education & Students)

7. Mumbai must be consulted when proposing programme modifications.

Action: Academic Quality Team

25-26/227 The Committee **endorsed** the report for onward consideration by Senate, and **approved** the proposal to delegate authority to sign off conditions to the Chair of UEC.

25-26/228 The Chair expressed thanks to Adrian Lee, AQ&D Policy Manager, for his work on the project.

Programme Approvals/Modifications

Joint Education Programme (JEP) in Engineering between the University of York and the University of Science and Technology Beijing USTB [UEC.25-26/78]

25-26/229 The Committee considered a complex Joint Education Programme (JEP) with the University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB), which had been reviewed in advance by David Barrett, Petros Kefalas, Adrian Lee, Amy Muckersie, and an external assessor. Andy Higginbotham and Mohammad Nasr Esfah presented the proposal and **reported**:

1. The model is based upon a successful existing programme at the University of Dundee. Curriculum mapping between the existing USTB and York programmes has taken place.
2. Admissions are handled by USTB using the Gaokao (China's National College Entrance Examination), but further screening will occur on arrival to facilitate streamed teaching of the Academic English modules.
3. The programme features an atypical 500-credit structure (including 5- and 10-credit modules and 250 credits in Stage 1) and intensive block teaching, necessary to meet complex regulatory requirements from York, USTB, the Chinese Ministry of Education, and the IET.
4. The programme has been designed to take into account logical sequencing of content from semester to semester, as well as to build up towards a greater number of York modules in Stages 2 and 3 respectively. The teaching model in Stages 1-2 will comprise the following features:
 - a. York modules will be delivered via intensive block teaching of 3-4 weeks;
 - b. Not more than one York module will be taught in parallel (barring one exception);
 - c. English language teaching would be delivered in parallel via 'long thin' modules;
 - d. Each module will be assessed via exam or portfolio, as specified in the programme approval form. Assessment dates will be scheduled to provide sufficient revision time while avoiding excessive delays following the teaching periods. An extraordinary assessment period may be implemented to facilitate this balance.

5. Stages 1 and 2 modules will be non-compensatable to align with USTB's progression approaches, reserving the 30-credit compensation allowance for Stage 3 in York.
 - i. However, a proposal (to be submitted for UEC approval in due course, as part of the proposed Progression and Award Rules) will be to allow the Board of Examiners to grant up to 10 credits of compensation at the end of Stage 2. This exception would apply only to marginal fails preventing progression to Stage 3, and must remain within IET-mandated compensation limits for the overall programme.
6. Staff based in Beijing will be hired on York contracts to deliver the English language modules, as the Four One-Thirds rule requires a certain amount of provision to be delivered by York staff.
7. The intention is to apply for accreditation in due course, and the IET has experience in international accreditation.
8. Marking and feedback systems are still a work in progress, with Gradescope being explored to facilitate digital marking of exams.
9. Supporting students with English language, familiarisation with York systems such as the VLE, and their transition to York self-directed learning is built into the programme, with plans for remote mentoring as well as additional support planned for when students join in Welcome Week.
10. A Joint Academic Board will oversee development. York modules will have a co-lead from USTB to ensure alignment with USTB structures and assist with technical language translation.

25-26/230 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The programme presents logistical challenges regarding intensive block teaching, synchronisation, and a heavy student workload.
2. Additional contact hours replace standard independent learning, and this balance will require close monitoring.
3. Exceptionally, due to the complexity of the programme and partnership, the project board should work on resolving conditions in parallel with programme set-up and other necessary preparation to prevent delaying Ministry of Education sign-off (expected by early May).

25-26/231 The Committee **approved** the programme subject to the following conditions:

1. Update the programme approval form to provide further details regarding:
 - i. Exit Award credit requirements;
 - ii. Alternative awards if accreditation requirements are not met;
 - iii. When known, the specific timing and sequencing of the USTB modules (and to list these as separate lines in the programme structure section);
 - iv. The delivery of the Academic English modules;

- v. The use of the terms 'Common Assessment Period' and 'end of teaching block';
 - vi. In the sections on 'partner organisations' and 'reference points' to make clear that the approved York programme specification refers to the single UoY award; to provide further detail on JEP stipulations.
 - 2. Provide a written statement clearly explaining the way that Stages 1-2 module teaching, assessments, marking and feedback will be delivered through the year, including an illustrative diagram calendar.
 - 3. Consider removing the Astrobiology module option from the BEng Biomedical Engineering programme in line with a recent major modification to remove this as an option from all Engineering programmes.
 - 4. Consider removing the Product Design module to avoid the accreditation complications of stepping up to Level 7 credit.
 - 5. Update the prerequisites for Stage 3 option modules to reflect the new JEP module titles and codes.
 - 6. Address all outstanding AQ comments on module descriptors, particularly regarding formative assessments and special assessment rules.
 - 7. Check with Student Services (via the Deputy Director) regarding the use of the term 'credit transfer' in the programme specifications, and update this terminology if required.
- 25-26/232 The Committee also **endorsed** a number of recommendations made by the initial review panel, noting that work on many of them is already underway.
- 25-26/233 The Committee commended and expressed thanks to colleagues from the School of PET and the Academic Quality and Development team for the amount of work that has been done to get the programme development and approval to this point.

BSc Interactive Media with Games [UEC.25-26/79]

- 25-26/234 The Committee considered a proposal for a new BSc in Interactive Media with Games, which had been reviewed in advance by Dan Keith, Claire Ball-Smith, Angela Ranson, and an external assessor. Anna Bramwell-Dicks presented the proposal and **reported**:
- 1. The proposal is for a new games-focused specialism of the existing Interactive Media programme, designed to improve recruitment visibility in a market where only one other Russell Group university offers a similar degree.
 - 2. The programme emphasises practical skills in creating games and content across various media formats, combined with critical thinking about how games and formats relate to social processes.
- 25-26/235 The Committee **observed**:
- 1. Strengths of the programme include its multidisciplinary approach and diverse assessments.
 - 2. Clarity is needed regarding module allocations and alignment with the parent programme's ongoing major modifications.

25-26/236 The Committee **approved** the programme, subject to the following conditions, to be resolved before the programme is marketed:

1. Review the Statement of Purpose to ensure claims regarding resources and equipment are sustainable.
2. Review the PLOs (acknowledging these are linked to the parent programme) to ensure they do not contain overlaps or excessive clauses.
3. Check the 11,000-word dissertation limit to clarify if it refers to a 1,000-word summary and a 10,000-word dissertation.
4. Ensure the programme's approval is aligned with the major modifications simultaneously occurring on the parent Interactive Media programme.
5. Ensure applicants are informed about the two different coding routes (based on prior A-level experience) at the point of application and work with MRAO to include this in acceptance communications.
6. Ensure appropriate use of AI is clearly communicated to students.

25-26/237 The Committee also **endorsed** a number of recommendations made by the initial review panel (mainly to enhance documentation clarity) and recommended the panel and proposer address these in due course.

BA Childhood Studies [UEC.25-26/80]

25-26/238 The Committee considered a proposal for a new BA in Childhood Studies, which had been reviewed in advance by Michael Bate, Louise Thurston, Jenny Brotherton, and an external assessor. Kathryn Asbury and Vanita Sundaram presented the proposal and **reported**:

1. The proposal is for a new programme that draws upon interdisciplinary expertise in education, sociology, psychology, and linguistics.
2. Although presented as focusing on educational settings, proposers are keen to explore further opportunities in multi-agency working and different contexts for childhood. They are looking at expertise within and across departments (potentially adding modules and guest lectures from SPSW, History, Economics, and others) to enhance the breadth of the programme and distinguish it from the existing BA in Education.

25-26/239 The Committee **observed**:

1. It is important to ensure that specific skills mentioned in PLOs are covered in assessments. As the proposal form and module catalogue only allow "Essay/coursework" to be listed, further information on assessment types is essential, particularly given the potential diversity in the programme that is not apparent from the documentation.

Action: Academic Quality Team

2. The PLOs could place more emphasis on external contexts and issues such as safeguarding principles, which will enhance employability. This may also feed into NSS questions around careers.

3. The form is unclear on the inclusion and assessment of Years Abroad/in Industry/with Placement. This should be rectified, although upcoming changes to these additional years may affect this.

25-26/240 The Committee **approved** the programme subject to the following conditions:

1. Provide details of how each module is assessed and check that the assessment strategy is inclusive and fully supports the PLOs.
2. Consider the external's comments regarding developing the new modules to look at contexts other than education.

25-26/241 Following approval by the Board of Studies, details of the assessments must be submitted to the initial UEC review panel. The panel, with input from the Chair of SCA and the Head of Inclusive Education, will consider final approval.

25-26/242 The Committee **approved** that marketing of the programme may commence in advance of the conditions being resolved.

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.]

25-26/243 Faculty Learning & Teaching Group Minutes from 16 February 2026

- a. Social Sciences [UEC.25-26/81]
- b. Arts & Humanities [UEC.25-26/82]
- c. Sciences [UEC.25-26/83]

25-26/244 Apprenticeship Monitoring Board minutes

- a. 11 December 2025 [UEC.25-26/84]

25-26/245 Professional Programmes Forum: annual report [UEC.25-26/85]

25-26/246 Approved list of CITY teaching staff [UEC.25-26/86]

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality

April 2026