

University Education Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2026 at 9.30am, online 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 25-26/260-267)
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)
Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Student Success
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)
Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)
Lucy Ambrose (representing Hull York Medical School)
Iain Brennan (representing the International Pathway College)
Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities)
Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director: Student Services
Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability
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
Aya Haidar, York SU Academic Officer.

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality and Development (Assistant Secretary)
Ruth Penfold-Mounce [UEC.25-26/90]
Amy Muckersie [UEC.25-26/90]

Apologies: Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Education and Students (Social Sciences); Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing.

Standing Items**Welcome**

25-26/247 The Chair welcomed the Committee, and noted the shorter duration of the meeting.

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

25-26/248 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

Conferment of degrees in absentia

25-26/249 The Chair noted there were no conferments for this meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of UEC held 23 April 2026 [UEC.25-26/87]

25-26/250 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

25-26/251 The Chair reminded committee members to review the action log and update the progress of any items assigned to them before the next meeting.

Action: All members

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UEC.25-26/88]

25-26/252 The Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) has taken the following action on behalf of UEC:

1. **Approved** the final sign-off, under the University of York QA framework, to confirm awarding of York degrees at University of York Mumbai for students starting their studies in September 2026. The finalised Mumbai inspection memo will be circulated to UEC members.

Action: Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students

2. **Approved** a recommendation that for 2025/2026, Academic Integrity Tutorial completion will not be enforced as a requirement of progression or graduation, although students will still be encouraged to complete it. Further exploratory work is planned during the 2026/27 academic cycle to establish an effective compliance mechanism.

25-26/253 No actions were reported from the Deputy Chair (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students).

Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/254 The Chair **reported**:

1. NSS 2026 has closed with results due on 8 July 2026.
2. The Joint Education Programme (JEP) with the Chinese Ministry of Education is fully approved and moving forward, and expressed thanks to the Academic Quality and Development team for their work in supporting this process.
3. The University is exploring the establishment of Joint Education Institutes with two Chinese universities (involving PET, Biology, Chemistry, Health Sciences, and Business and Society). Due to tight timelines, an extraordinary UEC meeting will likely be required over the summer to approve programmes.
4. OfS TEF consultation results are due in June; the next TEF exercises are expected in late 2027.
5. The OfS consultation on proposed condition C6 (treating students fairly) is live, targeting autumn 2026 implementation. York will contribute to the Russell Group response.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

25-26/255 The Deputy Chair **reported**:

1. Semester 2 module evaluations have concluded, and staff are currently completing the feedback cycle.
2. The implementation of stage and programme evaluations has been deferred to 2026/27 to allow sufficient time to reflect on the lessons learned this year.

Student Representative's report [oral report]

25-26/256 Amy Creighton, York SU Student Voice and Insight Manager, **reported:**

1. The timeline for YorkSU's representation proposal has been moved; a paper will come to the June UEC.
2. Departmental representative recruitment has been highly successful, despite two positions remaining unfilled (a PGR rep for Physics and an undergraduate rep for Law and Criminology). Psychology and School of Business and Society (SBS) received the highest number of applications.
3. York SU has noted staff concerns regarding decreasing student attendance at timetabled teaching sessions and Student Staff Forums, and confirmed they are expanding their project work to focus on academic engagement and belonging. The Committee **observed** that it would be beneficial to investigate examples of good practice in schools/departments with high attendance, while also examining which disciplines are most affected. Furthermore, it was recommended to integrate York SU's engagement research with the Student Success project strand concerning student-led learning communities.

ACTION: York SU; Student Success

4. York SU is developing an internal AI policy and would like to align with the University's perspective.

ACTION: York SU; AI Working Group

5. The Excellence Awards (held 19 May) were highly successful, with 392 nominations for 302 individuals. Health Sciences and the School of Business and Society (SBS) yielded the highest total nominations. A summary report will be shared with the Committee in due course.

ACTION: York SU

AI update

25-26/257 In his capacity as Chair of the UEC AI Working Group, Steve King **reported:**

1. The working group has not met since the previous UEC meeting.
2. A UEB Think Tank meeting is scheduled in June to discuss an institutional approach to AI.

Update from the NSS Steering Group [UEC.25-26/89]

25-26/258 David Barrett, Chair of the NSS Steering Group, **reported:**

1. The final response rate was 75.5% (1 percentage point higher than 2025). The 50% reporting threshold for the institution as a whole was reached 9 days earlier than in NSS 2025.
2. Interventions such as delivering awareness sessions and allowing students time at the end of lectures to complete the survey appeared to have a positive impact on response rate timing. Some schools/departments noted immediate spikes in response data after giving students the opportunity to complete the survey during lecture time.
3. A communications and analysis plan is set for the results release week.

25-26/259 The Committee questioned the link between high response rates and positivity outcomes, noting broader sector evidence is weak and York's internal data needs deeper analysis. Post-results, Student Information and Analytics (SIA) will use its backend data aggregation capability for a Tableau workbook and additional analysis to correlate response rates with CAH3 groupings and positivity scores. Placement year status will also be reported on.

ACTION: Associate Dean for Education and Students (Sciences)

Programme Approvals/Modifications

BA Social Psychology [UEC.25-26/90]

25-26/260 The Committee considered a proposal for a new BA in Social Psychology, which had been reviewed in advance by Angela Ranson, Amy Muckersie, Sam Hellmuth, Lucy Ambrose and an external assessor. Ruth Penfold-Mounce presented the proposal and **reported:**

1. The programme fills a distinct competitive gap, focusing on behavioural rather than experimental social psychology, notably as a BA where other institutions currently only offer this specific behavioral focus as a BSc at non-Russell Group universities.
2. It is distinct from the existing BA in Sociology with Social Psychology, offering an option for a creative project capstone instead of a traditional dissertation. The reviewers confirmed they felt there is sufficient differentiation.

25-26/261 The external assessor considered the programme on par with the best similar programmes at other research intensive institutions. They praised the design, strong intellectual content, and appropriate balance of modules and assessments. They identified no obvious weaknesses and recommended approval with no key changes to the proposal.

25-26/262 The Committee **observed:**

1. A field should be added to the approval form asking proposers to indicate if a programme is part of a suite, and if so, to provide links to related programme specifications.

Action: Academic Quality team

2. The University's Progression and Award Rules do not currently provide explicit guidance on how marks are calculated when a second-year student steps up to an H-level module; this should be added in the next update.

Action: Chair of SCA

3. Although collaborative shared learning with the Education or Psychology departments may be introduced in the future, it is currently not feasible due to British Psychological Society's accreditation constraints and differing pedagogical approaches.

25-26/263 The Committee **approved** the programme subject to the following recommendations:

1. Ensure the assessment of group work skills within the portfolio is clearly set out within the module catalogue entry.
2. Adjust the wording of Stage 2 core module *Doing Research*, which refers only to dissertations and not also to creative projects.
3. Ensure students are aware that the Stage 2 module *Working in the Criminal Justice System* SOC00056H is H-level, and what this entails.
4. Check the module catalogue for any duplicated or redundant entries.

Section A

Single Placement Year Module [UEC.25-26/91]

25-26/264 Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability, presented the proposal for the adoption of a consolidated Single Placement Year module code, and **reported**:

1. The proposal aims to replace five variations of placement modules with standard descriptors, maintaining faculty specialisms while streamlining administration.
2. This has been driven by a UEB-approved business case to standardise support and supervision of placement years via Careers and Placements.
3. Assessment marking will be completed centrally by Careers and Placements.
4. A key principle is to minimise change from the student and employer perspective.
5. Formal approval of the descriptor has not yet been acquired from the Interdisciplinary Studies Education Committee (ISEC).
6. Hull York Medical School (HYMS) and the Department of Chemistry are explicitly excluded from this model due to their specialised degree structures. Computer Science will retain its fast-track route and specialized assessment options under the SFIA framework.

25-26/265 The Committee **observed**:

1. There are some concerns regarding the governance of implementing this change centrally without prior approval from Boards of Studies or School/Departmental Education Committees, or consultation with students or employers.
2. Clarification is required on how the module fee allocations will work if credit is detached from the host school/department. The financial mechanism for routing fees back to schools/departments needs to be confirmed as viable within the current systems to avoid manual intervention being required.

3. A discrepancy in the paperwork regarding formative assessment word limits (listed variably as 1,200 words and 300 words) must be resolved.
4. The proposal cannot be approved by UEC until approval from ISEC is acquired.

25-26/266 The Committee **agreed** that approval will be granted by Chair's Action once the above issues are resolved.

Section B

No items

Any Other Business

25-26/267 In relation to the Category C item *Review of innovative learning and teaching practices using digital tools* [UEC.25-26/92], the Committee **observed**:

1. There have been recent reports from Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups of students expressing unhappiness at being taught using AI tools.
2. The University currently lacks a policy on whether students can refuse to engage with AI-based learning on ethical grounds, leaving schools/departments to navigate these objections individually.
3. It would be useful if the upcoming UEB think tank could determine an official position on this matter.

Action: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students

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.]

25-26/268 Review of innovative learning and teaching practices using digital tools [UEC.25-26/92]

25-26/269 Bi-annual report on student communications and engagement [UEC.25-26/93]

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality

May 2026