

University Teaching Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 February 2025, 09:30-12:30, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students (Acting Chair)

Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development (Secretary)

Jan Ball-Smith, Interim Head of Academic Affairs

Claire Hughes, Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Sciences)

Jill Webb, Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences)

Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)

Tom Banham, Academic Registrar

Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director Student Services

Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, CITY College

Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability

Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)

Daniel Keith (representing Social Sciences)

Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)

Michael Bate (representing Sciences)

Claire Ball-Smith (representing Professional Programmes)

Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services

Fenella Johnson, York SU Academic Officer

Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb, York SU Activities Officer

Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)

Chris Tingay, Head of Student Development and Student Leadership [UTC.24-25/59]

Adrian Lee, Academic Quality Policy Manager [UTC.24-25/60]

Sarah Farrell, Deputy Head of Apprenticeships [UTC.24-25/61]

Apologies: Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students; Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences); Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities)

Section 1: Standing Items

Welcome

24-25/87 The Chair welcomed the Committee.

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

24-25/88 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

Unreserved minutes of the last meeting held on 16 January 2025 [UTC.24-25/56]

24-25/89 The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 as an accurate record.

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

24-25/90 The Chair noted that a number of actions are outstanding, and asked the Assistant Secretary to follow up individual items.

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UTC.24-25/57]

24-25/91 The Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor TLS) has taken the following action on behalf of UTC:

1. **Approved** the following IPC programmes for July 2025:
 - a. On Campus 6-week Pre-sessional (Level 7)
 - b. On Campus 6-week Pre-sessional (Level 6.5)
 - c. On Campus 6-week Pre-sessional (Level 6)

These replace 9 programmes covering equivalent level provision for Arts; Humanities and Education; Social Sciences; and Sciences, Engineering and Maths, and 1 Level 7 programme for Postgraduate Management.

24-25/92 There were no items to report from the Deputy Chair.

Chair's report [oral report]

24-25/93 The Chair **reported:**

1. Peter Bazira (HYMS Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning) will be joining UTC from March 2025.
2. Jill Webb will Chair a UTC Data group to identify what kinds of data the committee needs in order to oversee educational provision at York.
3. Claire Hughes will be stepping down as Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences, as she has been appointed Head of the Department of Environment and Geography from October. The Chair congratulated her on her new role. This position of Associate Dean will be advertised imminently.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

24-25/94 There were no items to report from the Deputy Chair.

Student Representative's report [oral report]

24-25/95 Fenella Johnson, York SU Academic Officer, **reported:**

1. The provisional date for the excellence awards is 29 May and categories for the awards have been approved. The Sustainability Champion category has been removed, but sustainability criteria have been embedded into all the other categories.
2. Provisional dates have been set for academic representation recruitment; opening 31 March and closing 9 May. York SU will be contacting departments to discuss which roles they wish to include.
3. "Run to Roses" launches on Monday 17 February. York SU will be encouraging departments to get involved.

NSS update

24-25/96 Claire Hughes, Interim APVC and Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences, **reported:**

1. The survey has been underway for 10 days, with response rates currently at 19.9%. This compares to 14.4% at the same time last year.
2. York SU have created a promotional video which has been circulated on social media.
3. The first NSS Steering Group meeting took place on 27 January. The group considered factors that may be impacting NSS scores. At the next meeting, the Strategic Insight and Analysis team will present data on how individual department scores impact on institutional scores, plus provide an overview of scores for combined programmes. At the February

meeting the group will also be monitoring the effectiveness of promotion on response rates to date, and prioritising areas for action.

AI update

24-25/97 In his capacity as Chair of the UTC AI Working Group, Steve King, Associate PVC, **reported**:

1. A meeting of the working group took place in January, and considered
 - a. A report from the Department of Education about the new MA in Artificial Intelligence and Technology-Enhanced Learning
 - b. A draft of a paper to be presented to the University Research Committee on responsible use of AI in research.
 - c. An update on the rollout of Google Gemini, which has now been made available to students and staff.
 - d. An update on the training curriculum for staff and students.
 - e. An update from departments, including some who are starting to do their own training / info sessions (SBS, Careers)
2. The Chair attended a meeting at the University of Edinburgh, sponsored by Kortext Live. This included discussion of the option of local LLMs. A further meeting with the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students is to take place, to explore how this could support teaching and learning.
3. The Chair attended a meeting at Queen's University Belfast, showcasing their framework for AI for Education, with open material they are willing to share with other institutions.

24-25/98 The Committee **observed** it would be useful to further explore staff training needs around AI with key teams.

Action: Chair of the UTC AI Working Group and Director of Library, Archives & Learning Services

24-25/99 The Committee **observed** that it would be useful to have an institutional position on AI, with a greater scope than just teaching, and this should be discussed by Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups.

Action: Chair of the UTC AI Working Group

Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight

Preparations for York's Next Quality Assessment [UTC.24-25/58]

24-25/100 The Head of Academic Quality and Development **reported** that OfS is proposing a new Integrated Quality System, and UTC is asked to consider and comment on the implications of this, including:

1. A rolling process rather than a single episodic event for all English institutions.
2. A site visit to align with the requirements of European Standards and Guidelines.
3. An expansion of provision considered to include all levels and all forms of delivery (including online, TNE etc).

24-25/101 Piloting is expected in 2025 with implementation in time for the expiration of current TEF ratings in 2027. However, TEF is still seen as central to the process, and many other institutions are still preparing for another TEF.

24-25/102 Current data indicates we are deteriorating in relation to Student Experience metrics, including being materially below benchmark for Assessment and Feedback. Although Student Outcomes metrics are marginally improving, we may not retain our existing score of gold if the process and categories continue as previously. Current work by the NSS Steering group and the

Access and Participation Plan are directly relevant to TEF metrics.

24-25/103 UTC is asked to **approve** the following recommendations in preparation for York's next Quality Assessment:

1. Education Senior Leaders Group (ESLG) should clarify the themes, including an articulation of educational gain, that define York and upon which the institution's claim to excellence will be made.
2. Consideration should be given to formalising a York Education Strategy to frame our claim to excellence.
3. A Quality Assessment Working Group should be formed to coordinate institutional-level preparations.
4. Faculty groups should be formed to promote and facilitate engagement with, and collection of evidence for, the quality assessment process in schools/departments.
5. Office for Students numerical data should be disseminated and used as an additional lens through which to measure 'excellence'.

24-25/104 The Committee **approved** the above, with the caveat that further consideration be given to whether point 2 is a strategy or an implementation plan.

24-25/105 The Committee **observed**:

1. Institutional projects may take some time to yield positive results, and it would be useful to extract some "quick wins" that could be rolled out in the upcoming months.
2. Ideas for the proposed new Integrated Quality System appear to be similar in some ways to recent Ofsted changes, which are prompting staff to reflect on: our intent around education; what is the implementation that happens as a result of that intent; what is the impact of this implementation; and how is this evidenced. The Committee observed that lessons can be learned from the way the apprenticeships and teacher education teams approach Ofsted reviews.
3. The last REF submission was well-managed. Staff felt engaged and knew exactly what was required of them. It would be useful for a similar approach to be taken when preparing for this new quality system.
4. A number of large change projects have recently been implemented across the institution, and it would be preferable if TEF (or its replacement) preparations draw upon work that is already being undertaken or planned, rather than introducing any new approaches or initiatives.
5. It should be ensured that all provision is covered, including professional programmes which cross faculties.

Board of Studies Task-and-Finish Group [oral update]

24-25/106 On behalf of the PVC, the Associate PVC **reported** that a review of current Board of Studies practice has taken place, which revealed variation across Schools and Departments, and that the differing sizes and staff structures across Schools and Departments means it will be difficult to find a replacement model that works for everyone.

24-25/107 The Committee **observed** that the student voice must be considered when designing a replacement model, and that the strategic lead for teaching (a role that may have different titles in some Schools and Departments) should lead the committee that replaces Boards of Studies.

24-25/108 The Committee **noted** that the current Ordinances and Regulations allow Boards of Studies to delegate authority, and thus it would be permissible for interested Schools or Departments to pilot a replacement model (for instance, a Departmental Education Committee) for 2025/26, in advance of a full proposal coming back to UTC for endorsement, with subsequent approval by Senate.

Future of York Strengths [UTC.24-25/59]

24-25/109 The Committee **received** a presentation from Chris Tingay, Head of Student Development and Student Leadership on the future of York Strengths, for consideration and comment. It was **reported** that:

1. The York Strengths model needs to be adapted to ensure there is capacity to deliver the programme for all students, and this should be a priority for the institution.
2. To address this, it is proposed to replace the current three-hour in-person development workshop with a two-hour introductory session that can be delivered in an interactive lecture format. This will allow a wider reach and address resourcing challenges. The approach will be targeted to UG1 students who don't currently have York Strengths sessions in their programmes.
3. Existing development sessions embedded in the curriculum will be maintained, but the in-person sessions will be replaced by enhancement to the current online programme, alongside in-person sessions to support engagement and learning.
4. A small number of centrally offered development sessions will be retained, plus a limited number of additional development sessions could also be offered to targeted groups (for instance, WP or award/progressions gaps).

24-25/110 The Committee **considered** if the programme should be integrated into summative module assessment, and **observed** that making such programmes compulsory can be problematic, as the implications of students failing to complete or pass then need to be addressed.

24-25/111 The Committee **observed** that FLTGs would be able to support the rollout of the new approach.

24-25/112 The Committee **observed** that the proposed adaptation will allow continued delivery of the programme with reduced resources. There is the potential for some loss of quality of outcomes; however efficient delivery of scale will be achieved, and the core principles of the programme and a positive student experience will be maintained.

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

Assessment and Feedback Policy [UTC.24-25/60]

24-25/113 Adrian Lee, Academic Quality Policy Manager, **reported** a summary of the progress made thus far on updating Assessment and Feedback Policies, and asked the Committee to **approve**:

1. The *Managing and Penalising Late and Overlength Assessments Policy* section, including:
 - a. The appropriateness of the focus on policy and minor procedural points where this aids understanding of policy.
 - b. The removal of the option to use either an overlength work penalty or marking limit in favour of the latter.
 - c. The suggested revised penalty for late submission (up to 30 minutes) of online examinations to 5% of the total available component mark, to align with other assessment type late submission penalties.

- d. The new section 'Managing the Impact of Penalties on Capstone Project Modules'.
 2. The *External Examiners for Taught Provision Policy and Procedures* section.
 3. The process outline for reviewing areas of procedure, including the revised membership of the review group and timelines for updating procedure documents.
- 24-25/114 The Committee was also asked to **note** the initial draft of the *Assessing Students on Study Abroad Programmes Policy* as an example of a document focusing on policy only with signposts to separate procedure and guidance. The Committee agreed this was a useful format.
- 24-25/115 The Committee **observed**:
1. The two proposals for approval have had SCA and UTC member input as well as approval by an ESLG member prior to being submitted for final approval.
 2. The intention is to publish in a more dynamic, web-based way, supplemented by documents in traditional format.
 3. Relating to penalties,
 - a. the proposal is to continue largely with the existing scale of late penalties after a small-scale sector review suggested alignment with existing policy, and to balance alignment with assessment principles. The penalty for late submission of online exams is a change from 5 marks to 5% of component marks.
 - b. for overlength work, discretion is removed, and the policy is now to stop marking, rather than to penalise.
 - c. for capstone modules, the policy addresses an identified ambiguity around the treatment of project reports.
 4. Relating to External Examiners, the policy separates but co-locates policy and procedure for ease of reference, and the level of detail is reduced. There are no other significant changes.
 5. Priority has been given to policies where change is needed. There are several other policies where further discussion with ESLG is required before drafting can take place.
 6. The rewriting of procedure and guidance will begin after March UTC.
 7. Discussions are currently taking place on how the revised policies, procedures and guidance will be presented on the website and associated timescales for their presentation.
- 24-25/116 The Committee **approved** the policies and offered to share some minor recommendations and suggestions with the Working Group.

Action: ESLG reviewer

Extraordinary Congregation for Awards

- 24-25/117 The Committee enacted an extraordinary, private Congregation to confer awards on all eligible candidates. The Chair acted as the Presiding Officer.

Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes

Apprenticeships Programmes: annual update (presentation) [UTC.24-25/61]

- 24-25/118 The Committee **received** for consideration and comment a presentation from Sarah Farrell, Deputy Head of Apprenticeships, summarising the University's self-assessment report to the Office for Students (see UTC.24-25/62 for full report). It was **reported**:
1. This is a voluntary exercise to demonstrate good practice in approaching quality assurance.

2. Apprenticeships align with our strategies for access and participation and to be a university for public good, as they provide diverse routes into education.
3. A new apprenticeships management system is yielding administrative efficiencies and thus freeing staff to focus on other tasks.
4. We have assessed ourselves as 'good' overall. The data underpinning this judgement included: NSS statistics; nationally reported key performance indicators; the results of undertaking quality assurance approaches; feedback from learners, employers, and staff; data from focused audits; and actual performance against 2023-24 objectives.
5. A lack of consistency in quality assurance approaches is preventing us from self-assessing as 'outstanding'. It is also useful to note that the framework is largely designed for Further Education provision; accordingly some of the criteria for 'outstanding' are less applicable to Higher Education, and thus harder to achieve.

24-25/119 The Committee **observed** the strengths in apprenticeship provision, including a strong student and stakeholder voice, high attendance, completion and achievement rates, robust safeguarding arrangements and integrated support for learners with additional needs.

24-25/120 The Committee **observed** areas for development, including improving communication around widening participation, improving consistency in quality assurance processes, and providing more specific careers guidance.

24-25/121 The Committee **endorsed** the aim for 'outstanding' within the Behaviours and Attitudes criterion for 2024-25.

Section 5: Sub-committee Summaries and Meeting-related information

No Items

Section 6: Category 2 Items

Items for Information

[Secretary's Note: With regard to its Category II agenda, UTC was provided with the following Category 2 Agenda Items which were provided for: [a] information only, where UTC discussion is not required or anticipated, unless a request is made to escalate an item is from Category II to Category I for consideration OR as [b] supplementary information and data for items on the Category I agenda.]

24-25/122 Apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report [UTC.24-25/62]

24-25/123 Summary of the Standing Committee on Assessment: meeting held 31 January [UTC.24-25/63]

24-25/12 Faculty Learning and Teaching Group: summary from the following meetings:

- Arts & Humanities, 11 November 2024 [UTC.24-25/64]

24-25/125 IPC Pathway Management Board; minutes from the following meetings

- 18 September 2024 [UTC.24-25/65]
- 11 December 2024 [UTC.24-25/66]

24-25/126 Joint York Online Quality Review Group and York-HEP Joint Monitoring Board; update from

- 18 October and 15 November 2024 [UTC.24-25/67]

24-25/127 Undergraduate External Examiner Reports: Table of Issues [UTC.24-25/68]

Open

UTC.24-25/69

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality
February 2025