

University Teaching Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2025, 09:30-12:30, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students (Chair)

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

Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)

Daniel Keith (representing Social Sciences)

Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)

Richard McClary (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

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies: Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships

Section 1: Standing Items

Welcome

24-25/87 The Chair welcomed Michelle Alexander back to her first UTC since returning from parental leave.

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 7 November 2024 [UTC.24-25/39]

24-25/89 The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024 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 actions from the November meeting will be circulated together with those from this meeting.

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UTC.24-25/40]

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

1. Conferred degrees in absentia on students not receiving their degrees in January 2025 graduations.
2. Approved changes to Special Cases policy requested by UTC at its meeting of February 2024. Further minor changes requested post-UTC consideration have also been approved to ensure appeals procedures are relevant to PGR students, to allow case officers to uphold uncontentious appeals (currently restricted to the Special Cases Manager), and to allow for the possibility of repeat study on the basis of a programme relying heavily on group work.
3. Approved incentives for NSS 2025, specifically:
 - a. 4 x Graduation packages (estimated £240 in total)
 - b. 2 x £100 shopping vouchers
 - c. 4 x £50 shopping vouchers
 - d. 8 x £25 shopping vouchers

24-25/92 The Deputy Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor TLS) has taken the following action on behalf of UTC:

1. Approved the following new IPC programmes:
 - a. Two-term Foundation Certificate Programmes for:
 - i. Business, Law, and Social Sciences
 - ii. Sciences and Engineering
 - b. Two-term Pre-Master's Certificate for:
 - i. Business, Law, and Management
 - ii. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
 - iii. Education, Media and Social Sciences
 - c. Three-term Pre-Master's Certificate for Business, Law, and Management

Chair's report [oral report]

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

1. Consideration is currently being given to the appointment of new UTC members to replace Matthew Perry and Lisa O'Malley. It was noted that Hull York Medical School has a new Director of Teaching and Learning, and it would be beneficial to have HYMS representation on UTC.
2. To note, the next UTC meeting will be held in Berrick Saul BS/104 (Treehouse) due to works being undertaken in Heslington Hall.
3. OfS are consulting on a strategy for 2025-2030, which proposes increased quality assurance and visits. Adam Hewitt will be in touch with faculties asking for input, and the Chair encouraged members to engage. A Russell Group consultation will also be taking place.
4. The Teaching and Learning Conference will not be taking place this year, and the role of the Learning and Teaching Forum is being reviewed. Two half-day events, led by Steve King and Jan Ball-Smith, will take place on the themes of AI and Student Success. Further details will be reported in the February UTC meeting.
5. The Chair thanked everyone for their ongoing work on Changing the Work, and noted that the new processes will become standard practice going forward.
6. The Chair noted last week's successful Graduation ceremonies.

Secretary's Postscript: UTC members received an email update on the Assessment and Feedback Project on 26 November 2024. Endorsement of the proposed structure for the

presentation of assessment, standards, marking and feedback documentation going forward was given on the basis of feedback received. A further email sent on 20 December 2024 outlined the process by which new policy/procedure would be written and reviewed.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

24-25/94 The Deputy Chair **reported:**

1. A further update on annual review plans is expected in due course.
2. Funding has been received for an institution-wide module evaluation system. Research into practice at other institutions has been undertaken, and the aim is for the new system to be in place for 25/26. Consideration is currently being given to piloting the system during summer 2025.
3. The Deputy Chair reminded the Committee that the Student Success Project Fund is open and the deadline for applications is 5pm on Tuesday 22 January. The fund is aligned to the new Access and Participation Plan and the interventions should relate to areas of inclusive practice, and/or reducing the risks and closing gaps faced by home undergraduate students.

Student Representative's report [oral report]

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

1. "Keep Your Cool", which gives out care packages to support students during the Common Assessment Period, will be taking place in the library on 29 January.
2. The first few academic committee meetings have taken place, with the main themes being student concerns around AI.
3. York SU will be running a community conference on 19 March. This will include a research sharing session for PGR students to practise presenting their research. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students interested in pursuing a PhD can attend to find out more about PGR study.
4. Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb went on a WonkHE trip around the EU visiting academic communities and investigating ways to improve student involvement in academic extracurricular activities.

NSS update

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

1. The first NSS steering group meeting is taking place on 27 January. The group comprises a mix of UTC and non-UTC members, academic and professional services staff, and student representation.
2. Claire Hughes and the student representative Fenella Johnson will be meeting between the steering group meetings to ensure that the plans are enacted collaboratively between staff and students.
3. Claire Hughes, Academic Quality and Development, York SU and the Communications Office have been meeting regularly to discuss NSS communications, including publicising the incentives.
4. York SU are producing a publicity video to promote the NSS.

Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight

York SU Excellence Awards: update [UTC.24-25/41]

24-25/97 The Committee **received** a report from the York SU Academic Officer. It was **reported** that:

1. Three departments - Archaeology; Environment and Geography and Music - received no nominations in 2023.
2. York SU planned to amend the shortlisting and judging criteria by:
 - a. Removing the sustainability category, and incorporating sustainability into the judging criteria for other categories.
 - b. Incorporating PG representation into the judging process, aligned to the new representation structures.
 - c. Moving the awards online.

24-25/98 The Committee **observed** that low nominations may be due to a lack of awareness of the awards, rather than a lack of excellence in the highlighted departments.

24-25/99 The Committee advised York SU to consider how to improve the promotion of the awards and encourage nominations, and requested they provide UTC with an update. Suggestions included working with the ADs to seek support from FLTGs, and consulting further with course representatives.

Action: York SU

York SU Academic Representation Structure [UTC.24-25/42]

24-25/100 The Committee **received** a report from the York SU Academic Officer. It was **reported** that:

1. There has been a deterioration in nominations for representation roles in departments, although engagement with the training for the role and engagement with role responsibilities seems positive.
2. An action activity log has been introduced, which enhances transparency and accountability within departments. The log allows academic reps to document feedback and track the initiatives funded through the REP grant. It is being widely used by the majority of departments and schools.

24-25/101 The Committee **endorsed** the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen communication and data collection, and standardise guidelines for departmental communication reporting on rep recruitment, deadlines and engagement data.
2. Encourage more Schools and Departments to participate in Rep Grant.
3. Refine recruitment methods, evaluating the effectiveness of tailored recruitment approaches, focusing on those that attract highest engagement.

24-25/102 The Committee further **advised** York SU to:

1. Consider how they engage with student representatives for professional programmes, who may not be able to attend meetings and activities.
2. Evaluate the diverse structures in their recruitment methods, and consider moving to a single method, and provide UTC with an update on their conclusions.

Action: York SU

IPC update

24-25/103 The Committee **received** a verbal presentation by the Chair on the International Pathway College

in which it was **reported** that:

1. Existing provision would be restructured to align with that offered by Kaplan International in partnership with other higher education providers, and international year one (IYO) programmes would be offered.
2. The revision of programmes would reduce the number of foundation certificates and pre-masters degrees offered, and enable students to transfer their progression degree without having to apply for a new visa.
3. A validation event, with delegated authority from UTC, would be held to approve the revisions. It was **noted** that this may serve as a pilot for undertaking approvals in the future.

24-25/104 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Support for students not entering Year 1, including the delivery of an induction package, would need to be put in place.
2. It is important that IPC is considered an integral part of the University community.
3. It would be useful for UTC to see IPC progression data in relation to IPC students progressing to York degrees, and the degree outcomes of such students. This could be included in the Degree Outcomes reporting.

Action: Strategic Insight and Analysis Team

Changing the Name of University Teaching Committee

24-25/105 The Committee **noted** that it had recognised the benefits of changing its name to “University Education Committee” during a discussion in September 2024. In particular, a change would more accurately reflect the Committee’s growing portfolio of different types of provision, and it would also reflect the changes being considered to various role titles (for example, changing the suffix of the PVC, Associate Deans etc from “Teaching, Learning and Students” to “Education and Student Experience”).

24-25/106 The Committee **observed** that any change would require ordinances and regulations to be reviewed and updated and therefore it would be advisable to align changes with the broader review of governance being undertaken for 2025/26.

Action: UTC Secretary

24-25/107 The Committee **approved** the name change, and associated changes to role titles, for 2025/26.

Change to, and extension of, advertised semester dates 2025-2033 [UTC.24-25/43]

24-25/108 The Committee **considered** a report by the Academic Registrar on extending semester dates for two years to 2032/33. It was **reported** that responses to an interim review on truncating refreshers week and starting Semester 2 a week earlier from 25/26 had been mixed, but leaned overall towards the negative. The recommendation is therefore to maintain the status quo rather than cause disruption with more change, and to consider how issues raised might be resolved during the major review due to start in June 2025.

24-25/109 The committee noted that any changes to semester start and end dates need to be reported to UKVI.

24-25/110 UTC **endorsed**:

1. Retaining the current attendance pattern for two further academic years, with a full review to

follow.

2. Semester dates for 2030/31 to 2032/33, to be forwarded to Senate for approval.

Action: Academic Registrar

Generative AI Working Group: update

24-25/111 The Committee **received** a verbal presentation by the Associate PVC TLS on the ongoing work of the Generative AI Working Group. It was **reported** that the Working Group has been looking at a draft statement for students on AI use by staff to ensure transparency, particularly around assessment and marking. This may be useful if student appeals or complaints cite AI use in marking as a concern.

24-25/112 The Committee **observed** that:

1. It would be useful to consider the needs and requirements of various stakeholders when designing policy around AI, including employers and placement providers, and to consider how all students, including those on professional programmes, may use AI in their work.
2. Multiple programmes use AI in a variety of ways, and we have a number of programmes with AI as part of their title.
3. We need to support students to use AI effectively and ethically.
4. A number of PGCAP, SOTL and YPAD projects are currently researching AI in teaching, and it would be useful to collate a central repository of these.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

5. That it would be useful for updates from the AI working group to be a standing item on the UTC agenda.

Action: UTC Secretary

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

No items

Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes

York Computer Science Online: update against action plan [UTC.24-25/44]

24-25/113 The Committee **considered** an updated action plan arising from the 3 year review of online programmes in Computer Science held in July 2022. Simon O'Keefe **reported** that the Department is in the middle of redesigning individual modules, and so reviewing the carousel model will not be appropriate until this is completed.

24-25/114 The Committee **noted** that the date for action A1.1a should read November 2024, not November 2025.

24-25/115 The Committee **observed** that it will be useful to receive further updates on the action plan in due course.

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.]

24-25/116 Computer Science online programmes action plan monitoring [UTC.24-25/45]

24-25/117 Summary of the Standing Committee on Assessment: meeting held 22 November 2024 [UTC.24-25/46]

24-25/118 Faculty Learning and Teaching Group: summary from the following meetings:

- Social Sciences, November 2024 [UTC.24-25/47]
- Sciences, September and November 2024 [UTC.24-25/48 and UTC.24-25/49]

24-25/119 Apprenticeship Unit Monitoring Board: Minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024 [UTC.24-25/50]

24-25/120 CITY Joint Learning and Teaching Strategy Group: Minutes of the meeting held 14 November 2024 [UTC.24-25/51]

24-25/121 Advance HE Annual CPD Report [UTC.24-25/52]

24-25/122 Personal Supervision Project: update [UTC.24-25/53]

24-25/123 Student Support Plans Project: update [UTC.24-25/54]

24-25/124 Staff-Student Partnerships: update [UTC.24-25/55]

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality
January 2025