

University Teaching Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 November 2024, 10:00-12:30, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
 Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (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, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Sciences)
 Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences)
 Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)
 Fenella Johnson, York SU Academic Officer
 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
 Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships
 Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)
 Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)
 Daniel Keith (representing Social Sciences)
 Claire Ball-Smith (representing Professional Programmes)

In attendance:

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies: Kirsty Lingstadt (Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services); Lisa O'Malley (representing Social Sciences); Michael Bate (representing Sciences); Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities) and Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb (York SU Activities Officer).

Section 1: Standing Items

Welcome

24-25/36 The Chair welcomed Sally O'Connor as the new Assistant Secretary.

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

24-25/37 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 26 September 2024 [UTC.24-25/20]

24-25/38 The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024 as an accurate record.

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

24-25/39 The Chair thanked Committee members for completing actions, and noted some are ongoing. The Committee noted that the change of name for UTC has been postponed, and will be added to the agenda for a UTC meeting early 2025.

24-25/40 It was reported that the following actions had been completed:

1. To check that the Department of Education do not have an issue regarding the proposed name change for UTC (M24-25/5/3 refers)
2. To review the action log to ensure actions align with relevant minutes, and can be closed once sufficiently progressed (M24-25/8 refers)
3. To contact Chairs of Boards of Examiners regarding graduation dates and associated deadlines (M24-25/10/7 refers)
4. To integrate consideration of NSS and TEF impact into teaching and learning processes and procedures (M24-25/15/5 refers)
5. To combine reporting of B conditions for taught and research programmes into a single report from 2025/26 (M24-25/18/1 refers)
6. Submit future B condition assurance reports at a time to allow integration of external examiner and annual review outcomes (M24-25/18/2 refers)

Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UTC.24-25/21]

24-25/41 The Chair (Pro-Vice-Chancellor TLS) has taken the following action on behalf of UTC:

1. Approved an extension to UTC's Terms of Reference to include the authority to approve the appointment of the institutional external examiner.
2. Approved the extension of Rebecca Huxley-Binns as the Institutional External Examiner for the 2024/25 academic year.

24-25/42 The Deputy Chair (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor TLS) has taken the following action on behalf of UTC:

1. Approved the appointment of seven teaching staff at CITY College.

Chair's report [oral report]

24-25/43 The Chair **reported**:

1. The appointment of Vikki Goddard as Chief Academic Support Officer from 3 March 2025, and that Tom Banham is now confirmed as the Academic Registrar on a permanent basis.
2. Matthew Perry has left UTC and the University. UTC membership is being reviewed.
3. Confirmation of re-accreditation of York programmes and schemes by Advance HE against the new Professional Standards Framework 2023, and the successful application of Richard Walker and Lorraine Farrelly for HEA Principal Fellowship through the YPAD scheme. The Chair thanked Duncan Jackson for supporting this, and noted that other staff should be encouraged and supported to apply.
4. The launch of the NTFS and CATE schemes. The Chair thanked Duncan Jackson, Claire Hughes, Jill Webb and Sam Hellmuth for cascading these schemes. Heads of Department/Schools, Chairs of Boards of Studies, Deans and Associate Deans have been contacted, and details have been included in the Consolidation Week staff digest.
5. The first undergraduate graduation ceremonies at CITY College since our collaboration began will take place on 23 November 2024.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

24-25/44 The Deputy Chair **reported**:

1. Successful annual review and monitoring meetings have taken place with CITY College departments.

Student Representative's report [oral report]

24-25/45 Fenella Johnson, York SU Academic Officer, **reported:**

1. The Academic and Equalities Committees have been elected, and a successful first summit meeting was held earlier in the week. Further updates will follow in future meetings.
2. Following the merger, some members had concerns around the postgraduate student voice being heard. York SU is extending resources to ensure sufficient postgraduate representation in their committees.
3. York SU is monitoring student concerns relating to recent reductions in staff numbers, but no issues have yet been reported.
4. It was noted that it would be useful for York SU to liaise with the Academic Practice team in Academic Quality and Development about Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

NSS update

24-25/46 Claire Hughes, Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences, **reported:**

1. The recovery plan presented at September's meeting of UTC is underway. The toolkit was circulated at the start of October, which stimulated lots of discussion.
2. All but one department is taking action on Assessment and Feedback; 14 departments are taking action on Learning Opportunities and 16 on Student Voice. Departments as a whole are taking action on at least 2 of the 7 reflection points.
3. The NSS Steering Group to coordinate long-term improvement to the NSS has been approved by senior leaders, and invitations to join the group will be sent soon to members of UTC, student representatives, other academic staff and PSS colleagues.
4. There are two phases to the long-term improvement plan - phase one being to prioritise areas for action and define actions in each area, and phase two being the monitoring and amending of such. Phase one is to be undertaken by June 2025, to bring about improvements for NSS 2025/26.
5. The Associate Deans and York SU are all working on NSS plans for the upcoming year, and these should be coordinated.

Action: Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences

6. This work of the NSS Steering Group will be reported to UTC for endorsement on a regular basis.

Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight

Arrangements for participation in NSS 2024/25 [UTC.24-25/22]

24-25/47 Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development, **reported** a number of points for UTC to consider and approve, which need to be confirmed to Ipsos by 29 November.

24-25/48 The Committee **approved:**

1. The launch of the NSS in the week commencing 3rd February 2025.

2. That optional question banks not be included.
3. That provider-specific questions not be included.
4. That the same 'Provider Supportive Text' as previous years be used, with one minor amendment to include a reference to "Schools" as well as "Departments".

24-25/49 The Committee **approved** that the NSS Steering Group monitors response rates and coordinates promotional activity within and across Faculties.

24-25/50 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Having the NSS Steering Group involved will be beneficial, as it can take an institutional overview.
2. FLTGs should take a role in disseminating best practice relating to promotion and support between and across Schools, Departments and Faculties.
3. The NSS Steering Group should liaise with the University Communications Office to coordinate student communications and information shared on campus.

Action: Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences (items 2 and 3)

24-25/51 The Committee **considered** whether to approve the use of a prize draw or charitable donation incentives and **observed** that it would be useful to:

1. Investigate what other Russell Group institutions do in this area.

Action: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS)

2. Take more time to research the use of incentives, and return to this issue in December or January, providing the university is not bound by the 29 November deadline to advise Ipsos of plans in this area.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

24-25/52 The Committee **considered** changing the second optional field in NSS results breakdown from 'Route Code' to 'Lead Department' and observed that our data infrastructure, and therefore such terminology, differs from other universities. Student Services should discuss this with the Strategic Insight and Analysis Team before a decision is made.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

Employability Advisory Group: annual report [UTC.24-25/23]

24-25/53 Claire Hughes, Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences, **reported** on the Group's activity in 23/24, outlining its focus on gathering external insight to inform employability work at York. Future plans currently consist of a series of themed meetings, which it is proposed will be led by key institutional leads.

24-25/54 The Committee **noted** EAG activities undertaken in 23/24 and **observed** that the trends and recruitment practices identified will provide good insights that can inform our work.

24-25/55 The Committee **observed** that the data gathered should be disseminated widely to be of most benefit, and should be focussed around key institutional topics and strategy.

24-25/56 The Committee **noted** that Faculty Employability Managers attend meetings of the group, and should be disseminating information from the group to their faculties.

24-25/57 The Committee **endorsed** the proposed discussion points listed in the paper, and offered the following recommendations for further consideration by the group:

1. Look at public services in the region and how we can encourage students on professional programmes to consider careers in these areas.
2. Extend group membership to include more key staff, particularly around professional programmes.
3. Organise events on campus focussing on our contribution to the local economy and regional development.
4. Research what our industrial partners, public services and other employers require, and consider how these needs may be supported, for example through further development of diverse routes of study such as apprenticeships, online programmes and micro-credentials.
5. Discuss with the UTC Secretary an appropriate time to submit a category 2 summary report for the Committee of actions undertaken.
6. Consider, and where appropriate provide recommendations, in relation to the challenges and opportunities engendered by Changing the Academic Work, particularly around embedding employability in the curriculum.

Action: Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences (all items)

Careers and Placements: priorities for 2024/25 [UTC.24-25/24]

- 24-25/58 Louise Thurston, Associate Director, Careers and Employability, **reported** that key priority areas for 2024/25 are:
1. Ensuring core services are addressing the needs of all students, including widening participation groups and students studying online and on apprenticeship programmes.
 2. Ensuring effective career support for international students, and that this is being promoted to all current and prospective students.
 3. Ensuring that the Careers and Placement service is inclusive.
 4. Expanding work-related learning, including supporting the development of a work-related learning framework.
- 24-25/59 The Committee **noted** that the Student Life Committee and the Employability Advisory Group have had input into these priorities.
- 24-25/60 Louise Thurston **reported** that:
1. A three pronged approach is utilised for careers provision - central services and events that are open to students of any discipline; careers education delivered in a bespoke way at faculty or departmental level, and integrated course-linked, skills focused work-related learning.
 2. Resourcing challenges are being faced by Careers and Placements as a result of vacancy deletion, voluntary severance, fixed-term staff contracts ending and funding only being in place until July 2025. As part of the implementation plan, Careers and Placements will be mapping how best to use remaining resources to deliver against the priority areas.
- 24-25/61 The Committee **noted** that a paper requesting an extension to funding is due to go to the University Partnerships, Enterprise and Engagement Committee (UPEC) in January 2025, and that Tracy Lightfoot, Claire Hughes and Tom Banham should review this before it is submitted.

Action: Associate Director, Careers and Employability

- 24-25/62 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Community engaged learning provides good opportunities that are not available elsewhere.
2. It would be useful to benchmark against what other institutions do regarding employability support for international students.

Action: Associate Director, Career and Employability

3. Student data should be separated into undergraduate and postgraduate, and also disaggregated by department and faculty.
4. "Module for credit" work is about to commence, which will involve consideration of community engaged learning, and work-related learning more broadly, and that this is an area of strategic importance.
5. Work-based learning can take many forms, and care should be taken to ensure that policies and practices are inclusive of different kinds of programmes and areas of provision.
6. A task-and-finish group is being created to promote work that is already occurring around work-based learning, and to develop an aspirational framework to ensure all students have the opportunity to engage with work-related learning. School/Departmental input will be sought via FLTG meetings.

Action: Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences

24-25/63 The Committee **endorsed** the proposed priority areas for Careers and Placements in 2024/25.

Semesterisation review (attendance pattern) scoping document [UTC.24-25/25]

24-25/64 Tom Banham, Academic Registrar, **reported** that:

1. Following the completion of the first year under the semestered system, concerns have been raised regarding workload and the time between teaching ending in semester 1 and starting in semester 2. It was noted that the volume of online assessments was not taken into consideration when the teaching pattern was first approved.
2. The University is required to set semester dates five years in advance to facilitate the issuance of Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) letters to new Student Visa holders on five-year programmes. Proposed dates need to be approved by UTC and Senate on 16th and 28th January 2025 respectively.

24-25/65 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The review group should consider a range of views, either through membership or consultation, including those of research-focused staff, Heads of Faculty Operations, Commercial Services, representatives from professional programmes, student-facing Professional Support staff, the Standing Committee on Assessment and York SU Sabbatical Officers. It will further be important to include sufficient representation from all faculties, ensuring consideration is given to those with exam-heavy programmes, field trips and other work that takes place outside of the semester pattern.

Action: Academic Registrar

2. There are dependencies in relation to the work undertaken by this group and the Review of Communications about Consolidation and Refresher weeks (see UTC.24-25/26).

24-25/66 The Committee **endorsed** the group undertaking a brief review of the semester pattern in advance of the January deadline for Senate approval, which will cover an additional two years, with a more detailed consultation and review to take place following this.

Report on review of communications about Consolidation and Refresher Weeks
[UTC.24-25/26]

- 24-25/67 Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean (TLS) for Arts and Humanities **reported** the conclusions of a short-term working group that reviewed guidance and messaging relating to Consolidation and Refresher Week, notably that:
1. Consolidation Week guidance for staff was felt to be adequate, but should be supplemented by additional communications relating to independent and international students
 2. Consolidation Week guidance for students was felt to be inadequate, and should be replaced by new messaging: "*Time to pause and rest; time to catch up; time to reflect and plan.*"
 3. The issues around Refresher Week included students feeling unsure of the purpose of the week, and that the teaching gap was too long for some and too short for others.
 4. A Statement of Purpose for Refreshers Week should be formulated, in the context of planned wider review of the student experience of semesterisation and the new attendance pattern.
- 24-25/68 The Committee **observed** that:
1. The titles given to Consolidation and Refreshers weeks need to be meaningful, clear, and inclusive of, and relevant to, all students, including international students and those on professional programmes.
 2. York SU should be consulted on any proposed new titles for these weeks.
- Action:** Associate Dean (TLS) for Arts and Humanities
3. Communications to students should be part of the Committee's annual cycle of business. It may be useful to share UTC minutes with staff from the Communications Office, and to invite them to attend relevant UTC meetings.
- Action:** UTC Secretary
- 24-25/69 The Committee **approved** the wording of an updated statement for the student-facing webpage relating to Consolidation week, and emphasised the need to ensure it is clear that there is no compulsory work for students during this time.
- 24-25/70 The Committee **endorsed** the continuation of work to review the purpose of, and wording relating to these weeks, linked to wider review work on assessment and feedback, and semesterisation.

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

Elective approvals policy: wording change proposal [UTC.24-25/27]

- 24-25/71 Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean (TLS) for Arts and Humanities **reported** on a paper investigating how to capture, rationalise and make more efficient the workloads between academic and PS staff in relation to curated electives.
- 24-25/72 The authors proposed:
1. that the term 'curated electives' be replaced with 'tailored electives', and 'general electives' be used in relation to all other elective modules. This will bring terminology in line with that used in student-facing documentation.
 2. Improvements to processes for elective choice including updates to e:Vision and SITS which will save PS staff time.

24-25/73 The Committee **observed:**

1. It is not in the remit of UTC to approve a new division of labour between academic staff and professional support staff. A meeting should be arranged with the paper authors, the PVC (TLS) and the Heads of Faculty Operations to discuss this.
2. The need to ensure processes for monitoring and withdrawing modules are undertaken in a timely way, considering annual business cycles and systems requirements.
3. The need for greater clarity regarding pre-requisites, ensuring that appropriate stage/ levels are mandated, and equivalencies (for instance, for international students) are considered.
4. The need to ensure the project aligns with other work such as the Assessment and Feedback project.
5. The need for further detail on the themes referenced in the paper, and how these have been arrived upon.
6. Proposed adjustments to terminology and programme design policies should be discussed with the Academic Quality Team.

Action: Associate Dean (TLS) for Arts and Humanities (items 1, 5 and 6)

24-25/74 The Committee **endorsed** proceeding with the updates to SITS and e:Vision, and recommended that further review of the content and timings of the project, and the guidance that will be provided to Schools and Departments, should follow.

Degree Outcomes Statement - 2022/23 data [UTC.24-25/28]

24-25/75 Steve King, Chair of SCA **reported** an update to the Degree Outcomes Statement, to include 2022/23 data (included in Category 2 papers), which UTC was asked to endorse for subsequent consideration and endorsement by Senate, before consideration and approval by Council. It was further reported that an internal paper analysing our 2023/24 degree outcomes will be coming to UTC in February 2025.

24-25/76 The Committee **observed:**

1. York's figures show a further decrease in the number of good degrees awarded 2022/23 since a pandemic high of 86.8%. We are now below the pre-pandemic level and significantly below the Russell Group average, but slightly above the sector average.
2. Degree award gaps for Black students remain significant, as have results for IMD quintile 1 students, as highlighted in the APP report at September UTC. The next largest awarding gap is for students from Other ethnic groups (those not classified as Asian, Black, Mixed or White); there are no historical trends as 2022/23 is the first year in which Other ethnic groups have had a gap calculated.
3. Outcomes by assessment and marking type may indicate if these results are driven by a particular kind of assessment, for instance, closed exams.
4. It would be useful to benchmark departments against similar departments in other institutions.
5. This is level 6 data, and thus excludes integrated masters and postgraduate programmes.
6. FLTGs should be consulted about what data would help them to ensure that analysis is meaningful to support marking practice and student outcomes.

Action: Associate Deans (TLS)

7. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS), Chair of SCA, Head of Academic Quality and the Associate Deans (TLS) should meet with the Strategic Insight and Analysis team before the end of the

calendar year, to discuss what is required from the analysis, ahead of the paper due to be presented to UTC in February.

Action: Head of Academic Quality and Development

8. The Head of the Strategic Insight and Analysis team should be invited to the December UTC meeting for further discussion.

Action: UTC Secretary

24-25/77 The Committee **endorsed** the update to the Degree Outcomes Statement for 2022/23, for recommendation to Senate (and onward to Council).

Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes No Items

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.]

24-25/78 Approved CITY teaching staff [UTC.24-25/29]

24-25/79 NSS Option Question Bank used by York in 2024 and 2023 [UTC.24-25/30]

24-25/80 Standing Committee on Assessment: Summary of the meeting held 25 October 2024 [UTC.24-25/31]

24-25/81 Faculty Learning and Teaching Group: notes from the following meetings: Arts and Humanities, September 2024; Social Sciences, 25 September 2024 [UTC.24-25/32]

24-25/82 Degree Outcomes 2022/23: Sector Analysis [UTC.24-25/33]

24-25/83 City College LLB Greek Law with Common Law Validation Decision [UTC.24-25/34]

24-25/84 Academic Quality Registers: 2024/25 Collaborative Provision Register; 2024/25 PSRB Register [UTC.24-25/35]

24-25/85 International Student Barometer 2023 Results [UTC.24-25/36]

24-25/86 International Student Barometer Slides [UTC.24-25/37]

Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality
November 2024