SENATE

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair), Dr I Abrahams, Mrs L Booth, Dr A Carpenter, Mr T Clarke, Mr N Dandy, Prof P Drew, Dr S King, Mr G Osborn (YUSU Representative), Mr T Rajab (GSA Representative), Dr K Selby, Professor L Siciliani, Dr H Smith, Professor C Thompson, Dr R Vann, Dr M White, Professor A Young

In attendance: Dr J Grenville (DVC), Professor C Runciman (for item 8), Mrs L Smith (Director of Careers, for item 11), Ms L Stead (Academic Support Office)

Observer: Mr Richard Gill

Apologies: Prof W Bonefeld, Dr A Kaloski-Naylor, Mr B Saynor (York College)

Category I

12-13/32 Welcome

The Chair welcomed the incoming QA Team Leader (ASO) and future Secretary to the Committee, Mr Richard Gill, to the meeting as an observer.

12-13/33 Minutes

The Committee **approved** the minutes from the meeting held on 15 October 2012 (UTC.12-13/**17**), subject to the following:

(a) correction to Minute 12-13/5 to read "…the University's Code of Practice on Research *Degrees*…"

(b) corrections to Minute M12-13/14:

- removal of the action for the Academic Registrar to explore possible correlations with student destinations and the mixed scores from the Personal Development dimension of the NSS;
- rephrase 'managing student expectations' to 'excellent two way communication' as requested by Senate to avoid any possible misunderstandings concerning the NSS outcomes;
- amend 'was' to 'were' in the penultimate line of the 6th paragraph.

It was **noted** that this minute extract had been reported to Senate on 30ᵗʰ October 2012. The Secretary would confirm the corrections to Dr Evans;

(c) correction to Minute M12-13/10:

- remove Nigel Dandy and include Graeme Osborn in the membership of the working group for the new teaching building. Mr Dandy had been co-opted separately onto the group by the Chair.

12-13/34 Matters arising

The Committee **considered** a report on matters arising from the minutes (UTC.12-13/**18**) and noted that most items had been closed. The following corrections to the report were noted:

- on M12-13/3, update to read '' Registry Services confirmed that the process is in the final stages of development for implementation shortly. Monitoring is not yet underway'';

- on M12-13/5, action to read "2. Consider how to include the University's Code of Practice on Research *Degrees* within its cycle of business";

- deletion of the action against M12-13/14 to explore possible correlations between student destination data and NSS personal development outcomes.

Secretary's note: The Committee will be informed of TAP monitoring in due course.

12-13/35 Oral report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair as follows:

Consultations on a new Teaching Building

It was **noted** that initial consultations on the possible scope of, and objectives for, a new teaching building on Heslington West had taken place in various fora. A range of considerations had been identified, as had related issues such as the opportunities to free space in departments to enhance student learning. A new building would have to compete with other investment priorities and it was likely that the modelling would have to include not only space needs, but also the length of the teaching day. The Chair and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Estates would be presenting a discussion paper to SMG on 7 November, and a progress report would be received by UTC at its next meeting.

UTC strategy meeting on 17 December

The agenda for this meeting was currently being planned. Areas for discussion could include: consideration of departmental responses to the assessment and feedback questions circulated within the PTES memo; an oversight of the structure of teaching within departments; KIS areas such as contact hours and assessment time, and student feedback at module and programme level.

The Chair was keen that the Committee should also explore the appropriate balance between centrally-prescribed and devolved procedures for the above issues and for other aspects of learning and teaching, and the extent to which permissive policies created undue complexity.

12-13/36 Oral report from student representatives

The Committee **received** an oral report from student representatives.

GSA representative

Thesis Advisory Panels: It was reported that the current system for recording TAPs used a single form. This could be embarrassing for a research student if comments were critical of the supervisor. It was suggested that a second form be completed specifically about the Supervisor, which could therefore be handled confidentially. It was **noted** that this was still under discussion.

YUSU representative

Course representative elections: It was **noted** that the elections had been completed. The number of nominations had increased, although voting had decreased from 3,000 last year to approximately 2,500. Outcomes on the positions filled would be reported at the next meeting. Thanks were expressed to all departments for their support.

Review of the academic year: It was reported that student feedback was currently being gathered to feed into this working group.

12-13/37 Start times of lectures

The Committee **considered** a report on the start times of scheduled teaching activities as a result of the Timetable Office Review in September 2012 (UTC.12-13/**19**). It was recommended that teaching activities be scheduled to start on the hour, except for Heslington East where activities begin at half past the hour.

It was **noted** that there was wide ranging support for this proposal from departments. The YUSU representative reported that broad support from students was also apparent. This included staff at Kings Manor (start times for which would align with Heslington West) and travel time of one hour had been factored into the proposal. It was confirmed that an action plan would be drawn up to take into account practical issues such as child care commitments; laboratory setup; bus timetabling; catering provision and HYMS arrangements, and those departments with 90-minute teaching slots such as History of Art. It was confirmed that the proposal was intended to begin in the Autumn Term 2013.

The Committee **approved** the proposal.

12-13/38 Masters by Research and MPhil programmes

At the request of the Committee (M12-13/18 refers), a list of Masters by Research and MPhil programmes was received (UTC.12-13/**20**). The Committee retrospectively **approved** this list as programmes that had been approved in previous years by the Board for Graduate Schools (dissolved 2010). The list incorporated stepping-off awards from PhD programmes.

It was confirmed that some programmes carried two SITS codes: in HYMS, which had codes for both Hull and York, and in cases where differing fees were charged.

It was noted that the coding for the MPhil in Large-Scale Complex IT Systems was unusual in not reflecting the name of the department. This would be checked. **Action: ASO**

12-13/39 Computer Science: MSc in Advanced Computer Science

The Committee **considered** a proposal for an MSc in Advanced Computer Science from the department of Computer Science (UTC.12-13/**21**). Professor Runciman from Computer Science attended for this item.

Mr Clarke and Dr Selby had reviewed the proposal prior to the meeting and had discussed the proposal in detail with Prof Runciman in advance of the meeting. They acknowledged the work undertaken by the Department and reported their view that the proposal was ready for approval. They had discussed some minor issues with the department which included:

   a) the weighting of components within the Individual Study Module (also commented upon by the External Assessor). It was reported that fixed weightings were not assigned to the different components and therefore the overall mark was not a sum of components, but a justified mark from both markers. The Department believed that this approach allowed for a more flexible approach and was beneficial to students;
   b) the timing of feedback on the ISM. This was confirmed as being within the standard six weeks, but with an aim to circulate it earlier via the VLE;
   c) the timing of the circulation of project titles. This was confirmed as Spring term;
   d) the availability of optional modules in the future. It was confirmed that there was a good range of choices but there may be some changes in the future owing to possible timetabling constraints;
   e) clarification of the Equality and Diversity statement and Ethics statement within the programme specification. It was confirmed this was being actioned.

The Committee requested that the nature and timing of formative feedback (confirmed as taking place in Autumn and Spring) should be articulated in the module descriptors along with the word count for the ISM (confirmed as approximately 100 pages).

The Department had confirmed that pre-requisites would be made explicit for each option in its response to the External Assessor's comments.

The External had suggested that some areas of Computer Science seemed under- and others over-represented, and that the Department should broaden the scope of the programme. The Department confirmed that it was considering additional options, but also that it aimed for a broadly based programme, not a fixed syllabus, without claiming comprehensive coverage of all topics.

The Committee **approved** the programme for 2013 entry. The revised documents would be forwarded to the Secretary by Professor Runciman within the next few weeks. **Action: Secretary, Computer Science**

12-13/40 Music: MA in Music Technology and MA in Music

The Committee **considered** the withdrawal of the MA in Music Technology (approved by the Deputy Chair of Planning Committee) and modifications to the MA in Music (UTC.12-13/**22**). Dr White had considered the proposals prior to the meeting.

MA in Music Technology

The Committee **approved** the withdrawal from 2013/14. The Chair agreed to discuss arrangements for current students with Ambrose Field in the Music Department. **Action: Chair**

Modifications to MA in Music

The Committee **noted** that the modification would enable the Department to offer new specialisms in Production and Voice Ensemble Singing.

The Committee **approved** the four new modules for publication to start October 2013: Audio Production Techniques and Aesthetics. Music as Audio, Solo-Voice Ensemble Singing I and II, subject to the following:

- Audio Production Techniques and Aesthetics: strengthening of the statements of aims and learning outcomes, to ensure that these are M-Level and provide sufficient detail;

- Solo-Voice Ensemble Singing I: strengthening the statement of the intended learning outcomes to provide more detail, and also to clarify the arrangements for formative assessment;

- Provision of further detail of the reassessment tasks in SVES I and II.

The Committee **agreed** that the Department must be sure of its capacity to undertake the supervision required by this modification, and not be over-reliant on a single member of staff. The Chair agreed to discuss this matter with the Department. **Action: Chair**

The Department would be asked to provide revised module descriptors to the Secretary within the next few weeks for approval by Chair's Action. **Action: Department, ASO**

It was **noted** during the discussion that it would be valuable to enhance the guidance on the articulation of time spent on assessed work (assessment section within the module descriptor form). **Action: ASO**

12-13/41 Key Information Set

The Committee **considered** a report on the project to implement the Key Information Set (UTC.12-13/**23**). The Head of the ASO gave a brief demonstration of the University's revised programme-level web pages, which incorporated a new template developed as part of the KIS project to present information in a more consistent way, embedding the KIS widget. The opportunities for applicants to compare KIS information through the Unistats website were also illustrated.

The Committee discussed possible next steps in using KIS information to inform reflections on the student experience. The limitations were clearly recognised, including the questionable connections between KIS data and measures of 'quality', and the difficulties in making meaningful comparisons between different programmes and institutions. Nevertheless, applicants and their parents could be expected to attempt comparative judgements.

It was agreed that any further analysis would be most meaningful at departmental or programme level, rather than through aggregated institutional data. It was recognised that a lot of time could be spent conducting speculative analysis, with little benefit. However, it would be helpful for departments to identify any 'outlier' data in comparison with their main competitor institutions, which might influence admissions decisions.

It was agreed that the next step should be to undertake some further analysis centrally, in the light of the above. **Action: ASO and Planning Office**

It was also agreed that it would be valuable to monitor use of the KIS web pages. ASO would explore this with Student Recruitment and Admissions. **Action: ASO and SRA**

It was **noted** that the KIS project team was currently gathering feedback on the first year of the exercise. Departments had generally expressed praise for the support provided by the project team and the achievement of deadlines, but had also highlighted as a key concern the need for HEFCE to ensure consistent compliance across the sector with its rules for constructing KIS data, in particular the definition of 'scheduled learning and teaching'.

12-13/42 Higher Education Achievement Record

The Committee **considered** a proposal from Careers for the development of procedures to enable the production of a Higher Education Achievement Award (HEAR) for taught students (UTC.12-13/**24**).

It was noted that UTC had considered the introduction of a HEAR some years previously when the concept was first mooted. It had decided, in conjunction with YUSU, that the initiative should not be pursued. However, it was timely to revisit this matter for several

reasons, including evidence that a growing number of institutions were now providing such a record, and the need to fulfil the requirements of the Diploma Supplement.

Employer awareness of the HEAR was variable, and it was unclear how influential the record might become. In discussion, it was suggested that the HEAR might have greater utility for smaller employers with less sophisticated recruitment and selection processes than the major graduate recruiters, to identify wider achievements and verify claims on an applicant's CV. The Committee was informed that Tribal was exploring possible software solutions for the effective presentation of the HEAR with a number of large employers.

The Committee recognised the ambitions of enabling students to record evidence of wider achievements (section 6.1 of the HEAR) which might help them to present themselves competitively. Support for the HEAR from both the YUSU and GSA representatives was also noted. However, concerns were raised regarding the equity of access to the benefits of the HEAR, if some students were unable to participate in the type of extra-curricular activities which could be recorded either directly or through the York Award. Further information was also requested on the anticipated resource implications of the proposed scheme, including the cost of expanding the York Award to provide increased opportunities to recognise student activities.

In conclusion, the Committee **agreed** that the proposal required further consideration before a decision could be reached. This would take place at the next meeting, informed by additional information to address the above concerns. **Action: Academic Registrar, Careers**

12-13/43 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

The Committee **considered** a report on the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2012 (UTC.12-13/**25**). It was **noted** that the University had agreed to participate bi-annually in the PTES and this would next take place in 2014. The Committee had received the PTES memo from the Chair as part of the circulation to relevant staff in academic departments in July 2012. The memo had requested information from departments on their assessment and feedback policies and practices, and this would be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

12-13/44 National Student Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

The Committee **considered** the arrangements for the 2013 National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) (UTC.12-13/**26**).

NSS

The Committee **agreed** the following:

- start date: Monday 21 January 2013;
- include additional question banks of B4 (Social Opportunities), 8 (Welfare Resources), 10 (Assessment) and 11 (Learning Community);

- institutional question to remain as last year and no further closed question to be included: "Looking back at your degree course as a whole, what one academic experience has been the most rewarding or useful, and what one change do you think would most improve the course?"

- donation of £1 to the student hardship fund for every response (as last year).

PRES

The Committee **agreed** that the University should participate in PRES in March 2013. It was **agreed** that the institutional question would be:

- ''Looking back at your research degree course as a whole, what one academic experience has been the most rewarding or useful, and what one change do you think would most improve your experience?''

It was **noted** that the University would have the opportunity to feed back to the HEA on the questionnaire. This would include repeating the University's concerns regarding the wording of the reference to disability.

Survey promotion

It was **agreed** that YUSU and the GSA would assist the University in promoting the surveys and that a meeting would shortly be set up to discuss this. It was **noted** that care should be taken in the tone of briefing notes to departments when explaining the Likert scale. **Action: Academic Registrar, YUSU, GSA, Alison Sherratt and ASO**

12-13/45 Biology: Periodic Review

The Committee **considered** and **approved** the periodic review report, the agreed action plan and the external assessors' reports for the department of Biology (UTC.12-13/**27**).
The Chair of the Review confirmed a positive outcome and reported that the single TAP form, as previously reported by the GSA representative *(M12-13/36 refers)* was a cause for concern by research students.

12-13/46 Theatre, Film and Television: Periodic Review

The Committee **considered** and **approved** the periodic review report, the agreed action plan and the external assessors' reports for the department of Theatre, Film and Television (UTC.12-13/**28**).

The Chair of the Review reported that the Department had been disappointed by its first NSS results in 2011 for the BA in Writing, Directing and Performance. These results had significantly improved in 2012 and the Department was fully aware of the improvements required to continue this upward trend. Both External Assessors were positive about the aims of the department.

The other panel members acknowledged that the Department would be much clearer about its communication with students regarding the nature of the programmes in the light of the visit and subsequent report. However it was **noted** that some recommendations from the interim review had been repeated during the Periodic Review (e.g. setting up appropriate committee structures). The Chair confirmed that a Teaching Committee was underway. It was acknowledged that the Department faced particular difficulties in securing suitably experienced staff to deliver a diverse portfolio which blends critical, theoretical and practical skills, and that student numbers had increased significantly. During discussion it was also noted that new departments needed to be thoroughly briefed on all aspects of the University's regulatory frameworks.

It was also noted that both external reviewers had requested sight of student work prior to the visit. It was agreed that this would encroach on the role of the External Examiner and should not be part of the Periodic Review process.

12-13/47 Standing Committee on Assessment, and Changes to Ordinances and Regulations

The Committee **approved** the revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Committee on Assessment subject to the correction of the proposed new item 11, to read "…departmental *Boards of Studies or* Graduate School Boards".

On the membership of the SCA, a verbal recommendation that Dr Sandra Pauletto be appointed to fill the vacancy for a member of academic staff for the period to July 2015 was also **approved**. The membership list was corrected with respect to John Bone, who was in the Department of Economics and Related Studies, not Electronics.

The Committee also received a verbal report from the Chair of SCA. It was noted that the SCA had considered the requirements for progression between stages 2 and 3 on Integrated Masters programmes. Consultation with departments had revealed a range of contradictory opinions , after due consideration the SCA had decided not to recommend any changes to the current assessment rules at the present time. The exercise had, however, illustrated the SCA's willingness to explore issues raised by departments.

The Committee **considered** and **recommended** to Senate the related changes to the Ordinances and Regulations (UTC.12-13/**29**), subject to the following corrections:

- Regulation 5.3(g): new wording amended to read "Recommendations for the award of an aegrotat pass may not be submitted after the SCA has *approved* the relevant assessment results" (not 'met to approve');

- Regulation 6.5: new wording amended to read "to specify programme progression requirements *for approval by UTC*" (not SCA).

The Committee was reminded that a comprehensive review of the Ordinances and Regulations had taken place in 2010. Members could contact the Secretary if they identified any areas of concern.

Category II

12-13/48 QAA Quality Code

The Committee **noted** an update on the implementation of the QAA Quality Code (UTC.12-13/**30**).

12-13/49 Newly Qualified Teacher Survey

The Committee **noted** the results of the Newly Qualified Teacher Survey 2012 (UTC.12-13/**31**).

12-13/50 External Assessors for the Periodic Review of Psychology

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had **approved** the appointment of external assessors for the forthcoming Periodic Review of the Department of Psychology: Dr Stephen Jackson (Nottingham) and Professor Robert J. Snowden (Cardiff).

12-13/51 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **noted** that there was no report of the meeting of the SCA held on 5 October 2012 as there was no business requiring UTC approval.

12-13/52 Taught Masters Special Interest Group

The Committee **noted** the report from the Taught Masters Special Interest Group (UTC.12-13/**32**).

12-13/53 Subject contact for the National Science Learning Centre

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had **approved** Dr Ian Abrahams from the Department of Education as the subject contact for the National Science Learning Centre.

12-13/54 Modifications to, and Withdrawals of, Programmes of Study

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between October and November 2012 (UTC.12-13/33). The Committee **noted** that the Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, had approved modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study as follows (further details are available from the Academic Support Office):

- **Computer Science:** Modifications to module Requirement Engineering (REQE) from an open assessment to 2 hour closed assessment consisting of 2 parts: Part A (40%):combination of definitions, fact-based answers about the requirements

elicitation, negotiation and traceability, interpretation of diagrams and models to demonstration knowledge of syntax and semantics of different modelling languages. Part B (60%):short questions to demonstrate their knowledge of the application of the techniques presented in the module. Learning objectives will remain the same. Also module User Centred Design (UCDE) changes to % of individual contribution to Group Project: Group Project Report (70%)-Individual Contribution (20%). Following the University Guide to Assessment 2011-2012 the department wished to improve the means of assessing individual contribution: Peer Evaluation (practical participation) (8%) using predetermined criteria and Self-evaluation (group project participation) (12%).

12-13/55 Interactions with professional statutory and regulatory bodies

The Committee **received** an updated register of departments' interactions with professional statutory and regulatory bodies (UTC.12-13/**34**).

12-13/56 Distance Learning Programmes

The Committee **received** an updated register of distance learning programmes (UTC/12-13/**35**).

12-13/57 Date of next meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting: Monday 10 December 2012, 2.15pm in HG/15, Heslington Hall.