



SENATE

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 October 2013

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair), Professor W Bonefeld, Mr T Clarke, Mr N Dandy, Ms C Dantec, Mrs K Dodd, Dr J Hardman, Dr S King, Dr M Roodhouse, Dr K Selby, Dr A Shiel, Professor C Thompson, Dr J Thijssen, Dr R Vann, Dr R Waites, Mr D Whitmore (YUSU Representative), Dr C van Wyhe, Ms X Yang (GSA Representative), Professor A Young

In attendance: Mr D Clarke (ASO), Professor B Fulton (Academic Co-ordinator, Sciences), Mr J Meacock (Estates and Campus Services, for M13-14/34), Dr A Parsons (Chemistry, for M13-14/37) Ms L Stead (ASO), Professor A Webster (Academic Co-ordinator, Social Sciences)

Apologies: Mrs L Booth, Dr J Grenville, Professor M Ormrod (Academic Co-ordinator, Arts and Humanities), Mr B Saynor (York College)

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

13-14/32 Welcome

13-14/33 Minutes

The Committee **approved** the minutes from the meeting held on 30 September 2013 (UTC.13-14/23).

13-14/34 Matters arising

The Committee **considered** the matters arising from the minutes as follows:

The Committee **considered** the action log (UTC.13-14/23 Appendix 1) and noted that the majority of actions were now **closed**. Of the five on going actions it was reported as follows:

Social Policy and Social Work: Major modifications to the BA and MA in Social Work

- Modifications would be finalised in December 2013 and reported at a future meeting. (M12/13/167)

E-learning vision statement and Virtual Learning Environment Tender for Renewal

- (M12-13/170) The Chair invited members to attend demonstration sessions with the preferred bidder for the VLE re-tender, which would be held on 7 November.
(Secretary's note: Invitation to be circulated to all members)

(M13-14/9) Sociology: MA in Criminology and Social Research

- The two-year part-time route for the MA Criminology and Social Research (M.13-14/9) had been revised and the Committee **approved** the proposal subject to:
 - applicants being made fully aware of the heavy workload in two of the terms (40 credits) and confirmation that this would not be an issue;
 - applicants and students are made fully aware of the 'jeopardy' of starting the dissertation before the end of the taught element (i.e., the work on the dissertation will be disregarded if taught elements are failed);
 - student progress would be closely monitored and an Exam Board should be held as soon as all the results from the taught element are available;
 - the Chair and the Secretary of the Standing Committee on Assessment would discuss how reassessments would be handled (in particular for students failing in the potentially compensatable band (40-49) with the Department.

It was **noted** that these points would also apply to the proposal for the MA in Culture Society and Globalization (UTC.13-14/27), and that consideration of guidance for part time routes in postgraduate programmes would take place in the working group on programme development.

(M13-14/10) National Science Learning Centre: PG Cert in Understanding and Leading Early Years Science

- The Committee **noted** that the PG Certificate in Understanding and Leading Early Years Science had been **approved at** a meeting of Senate on 22 October. This item was now **closed**.

(M13-14/11) Learning and Teaching Strategy

- It was **noted** that progress was being made on a Performance Excellence project through a steering group and working group organised by Human Resources.

(M.13-14/12) Potential Pedagogic Developments

- It was **noted** that work to identify members of the working group was underway.

(M13-14/14) Student Evaluation

- The Committee **noted** that a proposal would be brought to a future meeting next term.

Annual Cycle of Business

- The Committee **received** and **approved** the annual cycle of business for 2013-14 (UTC.13-14/23 Appendix 2)

Director of Estates and Campus Services: Update on space and timetabling

- The Committee **received** an oral report from the Director of Estates and Campus Services, Jon Meacock, on timetabling and campus space. There had been a higher intake of students for the 2013/14 academic year than planned, largely due to admissions through clearing and an unexpectedly high take-up of insurance offers, and Timetabling had been working hard to accommodate this. The challenge of finding teaching space had been alleviated by increasing the capacity of rooms through installation of more furniture, and in some cases running lectures twice. It was **noted** that finding space for small teaching and seminar groups was proving the most difficult. Use of space on campus was up to 90%, resulting in very limited flexibility and teaching sessions being moved away from the usual departmental areas. The high degree of choice (due to optional modules) also added a level of complexity and presented further restraints. Increases in student numbers (currently 15,000) would continue to pressurise space requirements.

Members appreciated the efforts of Timetabling in resolving the issues, and suggested some possible solutions for next year. These included increasing the number of teaching hours by extending the teaching day, and the possibility of more teaching on Wednesday afternoons. It was however **noted** that some staff may be reluctant to teach during this time and many students took part in sporting activities. It was anticipated that the plans currently in place should ensure that issues were resolved for the remainder of 2013/14, and work was on-going to plan for 2014/15. A series of meetings in preparation for the next Timetabling process would take place. It was **noted** that the Academic Coordinator for Sciences was leading a project to explore how the science departments could share practices and ease pressures on their timetables.

MSc in Advanced Mathematical Biology

- The Committee **considered** and **approved** the resubmitted proposal for an MSc in Advanced Mathematical Biology (UTC.13-14/23 Appendix 3) to start in October 2014. The revised proposal had been reviewed in advance of the meeting by Roddy Vann and Tim Clarke who were supportive and all actions noted at the previous meeting had been addressed.

Academic Misconduct Policy

- The Committee **received** the revised Academic Misconduct Policy (UTC.13-14/23 Appendix 4) and **noted** the summary of amendments and comprehensive list of revisions made in response to UTC discussions in June. The Committee thanked Linda Perriton, Steve King and the working party on Academic Misconduct for their response, and for the amount of work that had gone in to producing the policy.

The policy was **approved** subject to minor amendments as Senate had recently approved amendments to University Regulation 7 concerning the devolution of powers in dealing with academic misconduct offences, from the VC to the DVC and PVC. The Academic Misconduct Policy would need to be amended to reflect this:

“S.13-14/9 Regulation 7: Student Discipline

Senate considered a report from the Academic Registrar proposing changes to University Regulation 7 in respect of student discipline (S.13-14/6).

The Academic Registrar reminded Senate that it had approved a range of amendments to the regulation in question in 2012 (M11-12/38 refers), but no amendments had been made at that time to the role played by the Vice-Chancellor. It was now felt that, in order to respond to specific incidents in a timely manner, it had become necessary to extend the range of officers authorised to take actions such as suspending students or hearing appeals, hence the amendments being proposed.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- (a) The amendment of ‘Provost’ to ‘Head of College’ reflected the current pilot of new management arrangements in Colleges and also sought to introduce a generic title/descriptor that would remain appropriate regardless of future developments in college arrangements and nomenclature.*
- (b) It was suggested that clause 7.2.2(c)(iii) should clarify that the appeals panel of three SMG members should not include any officers previously involved with the case in question.*
- (c) A query was raised as to why earlier references to ‘the Deputy or a Pro-Vice-Chancellor’ were not repeated in clause 7.2.4(a), which only made reference to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor.*
- (d) It was suggested that the regulation should be consistent in its use of definite and indefinite articles when referring to the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.*

Subject to the above comments and any further suggested textual amendments which members wished to convey to the Academic Registrar, Senate approved the amendments to Regulation 7 for implementation from the next (2014/15) academic year”

ACTION: Linda Perriton

Evaluation of University Teaching Committee

- The Committee **considered** a paper that outlined possible strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of UTC (UTC.13-14/23 Appendix 5) and included the following options:
 1. Commission an internal or external audit of the working methods, decisions and actions of UTC and the short, medium and long term impacts,
 2. Specify a spot-checking process by an external or internal person to trace classes of decisions from particular meetings,
 3. Organise, run and reflect on all or most aspects of activity, establishing strengths and weaknesses and devising improvements by the full committee,
 4. Establish a sub-committee or working group to complete a “UTC effectiveness review”

There was support from members for a review and the YUSU representative expressed an interest in publicising any results to the student body. It was **agreed** that the Chair would ask a member to undertake a light-touch review on behalf of the Committee, to trace the effects of actions and decisions from previous meetings and report on the impact.

ACTION: Chair

13-14/35 Oral Report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair on the University’s invitation to participate in a HEFCE-commissioned review of the National Student Survey. The review would consider whether the NSS has kept up with changes in the sector during the last 10 years, and what the future role of a national survey of students in an evolving Higher Education landscape would look like. Members were invited to feed comments to the Academic Support Office, who would co-ordinate the response, by 4 November 2013. YUSU and the GSA agreed to inform the Committee if they compiled a response.

ACTION: UTC, ASO

13-14/36 Oral Report from Student Representatives

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

YUSU

Elections for Course Representatives had taken place and YUSU expressed thanks to departments for their co-operation. It was hoped that all positions would be filled by the end of the current term and recruitment for Departmental Representatives was also underway. Additionally, YUSU had held focus groups to gather qualitative information from students

on issues not covered by the NSS. Students had been offered incentives to attend the focus groups and this had proved an effective way of encouraging participation.

GSA

The GSA had contacted departments in August and September to determine how Course Representatives were being recruited, and three departments had requested the GSA's support in the process. The GSA intended to run problem-solving workshops for Course Representatives twice a term, and information from Course Representatives would be made available online for Distance Learning students. The GSA was also working alongside the Department of Social Policy and Social Work in order to support their January 2014 intake of students.

13-14/37 Natural Sciences

Andy Parsons attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report from the sub-committee meeting on 15 October 2013 on the proposed Natural Sciences programmes, and **considered** for approval the portfolio of programme specifications (UTC.13-14/24) for October 2015 start. The Programme Director outlined the rationale and demand for such a programme noting the interest from prospective students in the interface between disciplines, the opportunity to study such a variety of fields and the choice to delay specialisms at the outset of a degree. A report from Sir John Holman received by the Committee in March 2012 (UTC.11-12/73) had concluded that the market for a Natural Sciences programme was strong.

A Natural Sciences Development Group, chaired by the Programme Director and consisting of Course Leaders from the nine contributing Departments had been established to set up clearly defined pathways, with the aim of identifying synergies, suitable module combinations and pre requisites and considered the required skills and how to best establish a sound cohort identity. The Committee **noted** that supportive comments had been received from the external assessors.

Outcomes from the sub-committee were noted and during discussion issues were highlighted around the following areas:

- the character of the programme and whether it is truly interdisciplinary;
- the governance of the programme and required administrative infrastructure;
- the implications of future changes to programmes and modules from contributing departments, and the impact this would have on Natural Sciences;
- the structure of the programmes with regard to workload balance, the large number of modules studied simultaneously in some stages, the number of 10 credit modules, and the subsequent number of assessments (and reassessments);
- the challenge of creating a strong cohort identity for Natural Sciences students;
- the feasibility of the large assessment schedule;

- the impact Natural Sciences would have on existing programmes;
- the amount of skills teaching within the programme.

The Programme Director responded as follows:

- the interdisciplinary nature of the pathways had been carefully considered in the light of utilising appropriate existing modules, introducing some bespoke modules (e.g. Maths) and revising current modules. The number of 10 credit modules was required to ensure all necessary pre-requisites were met but the Programme Director anticipated that opportunities for the introduction of bespoke cross-taught modules would be explored further and the subsequent unification of assessment. Work would begin to merge suitable modules;
- the Programme Director agreed that the governance structure required more consideration to ensure all contributing departments were clear on lines of reporting and their responsibilities, including programme changes. In cases of disagreement the Academic Co-ordinators and the PVC for Learning and Teaching would arbitrate. Administrative support, due to start in September 2014 would be re-considered ;
- cohort identity would be fostered in a number of ways. Six of the eight pathways would contain bespoke Natural Sciences modules, tutorial groups would be exclusively composed of Natural Sciences students, and Natural Science students would have access to dedicated flexible learning space in the new Biology building. The Natural Science 'hour' would also bring students together ;
- in response to the feasibility of assessment schedules, it was noted that Natural Sciences students would take assessments at the same time as their single-subject counterparts. The tabled paper from the Assistant Registrar for Student Progress raised questions about the feasibility of the timetabling of exams and UTC would expect the Development Group to work closely with the Exams Office to resolve this;
- Natural Sciences would recruit high achieving students, keeping impact on existing programmes minimal by 'fishing from a different pool'. However departments would potentially benefit in terms of expansion, stability and financial gain;
- the Development Group had carefully considered the question of skills teaching, noting that some skills were implicit within science modules but the required pre-requisites had limited this somewhat. Therefore the 'Natural Sciences hour' would include academic and practical skills, library sessions and employability events.

The Committee **noted** that further consideration should be given to the official titles of the Natural Sciences degrees. For marketing purposes, there was a need for clarity on whether the degrees would bear the title of Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Natural Sciences, as this would appear on degree certificates and in the prospectus.

The Committee **approved** the proposal and **agreed** that option 2; recommend that the sub group reconvenes with delegated authority to consider progress on the issues noted above,

should take place over the coming months. A detailed action plan, taking into account issues raised by the Committee, the ASO, and Boards of Studies and a timescale for addressing them would be set out by the Programme Director Natural Sciences Development Group.

ACTION: Roddy Vann

The sub-group would reconvene and meet periodically over the coming months to check progress, and would report to UTC next term.

ACTION: Secretary

13-14/38 English: MA in Poetry and Poetics

The Committee **considered** a proposal for an MA in Poetry and Poetics from the Department of English and Related Literature (UTC.13-14/25) to start in October 2014. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Andy Young and Aine Sheil and issues highlighted by them had been addressed by the proposers prior to the meeting. Both reviewers supported the proposal as did the external assessor.

It was noted that the timing of the Progression Board fitted with current practice across the Department's postgraduate programmes and that students were made aware that work undertaken on the ISM prior to the board may be undertaken needlessly if they failed. The part time two year route required further mapping out, including the timing of assessments and reassessments.

The Committee **approved** the full time route and requested that the Part Time route should be forwarded (via a diagrammatic model) to the UTC reviewers and Secretary for consideration and to be approved by the Chair.

ACTION: Department, UTC Reviewers and Secretary

13-14/39 Centre for Lifelong Learning: Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Writing

The Committee **considered** a proposal for a PGDip in Creative Writing from the Centre for Lifelong Learning (UTC.13-14/26) to start in October 2014. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Mark Roodhouse and Cordula van Wyhe and had their support and that of the external assessor. As the programme would be delivered via distance learning, additional comments had been received from the E-Learning Development Team which was also supportive.

During the discussion it was **noted** that the issue remained concerning the timing of re-assessment and it was agreed that the most pragmatic way would be for re-assessment to be taken immediately, 'at risk' and disregarded if necessary. It was also **noted** that more detail

should be provided in Section 8a) of the pro forma to demonstrate the learning outcomes at level 7.

The Committee **approved** the programme subject to:

- Section 8a) of the UTC pro forma is completed to demonstrate how the programme LOs meet level 7 as set out in the FHEQ
- Confirmation that students will be informed at the start of the programme that they may have to take any reassessments 'at risk' (i.e. before compensation is applied) and that by doing this their results may be disregarded once compensation is applied
- Confirmation that support will be available to students for the module: Critical Approaches to Creative Practice to identify and support those struggling with the essay structure 'first element' of the summative assessment to ensure that this is completed prior to the critical essay.

It was **noted** that an interim review of the programme in the second or third year of its operation.

ACTION: CLL

13-14/40 Sociology: MA in Culture, Society and Globalization

The Committee **considered** a proposal for an MA in Culture, Society and Globalization from the department of Sociology (UTC.13-14/27) to start in October 2014. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Jan Hardman and Jacco Thijssen, and had their support and that of the external assessor.

The Committee **noted** the proposal would have strong international links and made good use of technology. Discussion had taken place on the timings of progression and re-assessment and these issues had been addressed. The Committee accepted that the programme would include a significant overlap of the ISM/dissertation and the taught element of the programme. Members **noted** potential issues with Part Time two and three year routes which had similarly been highlighted in the proposal for the MA in Criminology and Research (M13-14/9 and M13-14/34 refers) and noted that the department was aware .

The Committee **approved** the Full Time, Part Time two year, and Part Time three year routes of the programme on the understanding that:

- applicants and students would be made fully aware that work on the dissertation before the end of the taught element may be disregarded if the student failed;
- students' progress would be closely monitored and considered at the Exam Board at the end of year one and two to ensure they are progressing and any issues can be followed up;

- the Chair and the Secretary of the Standing Committee on Assessment would talk to the Department about how re-assessments would be handled (in particular for students failing in the potentially compensatable band (40-49)).

It was also **agreed** that in light of increased numbers of proposals for Part Time programmes, the Committee should produce a summary of where exceptions have been made for Part Time programmes to help inform future decisions.

ACTION: Secretary

13-14/41 National Student Survey and Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey 2013

The Committee **considered** the results of the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2013 (UTC.13-14/28). Due to Committee timings, the results had been **received** by Senate prior to UTC and the proposed actions endorsed.

The Chair **reported** that the NSS results showed diversity amongst Departments, highlighting mostly excellent teaching. Some areas of poor teaching had been highlighted and addressing these would be a priority. The Committee **noted** improvements in overall satisfaction and academic support, though a slight drop from 2012 in assessment and feedback and organisation and management had been disappointing.

The Committee **noted** that the PRES outcomes varied by department. The Committee also **noted** a need to support as well as manage the expectations of future research students, regarding opportunities to network within and beyond their own Department.

13-14/42 National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2014

The Committee **considered** the arrangements for the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey in 2014 (UTC.13-14/29).

NSS

The start date for the NSS 2014 would be 20th January, in Week 3 of Spring Term. The Committee agreed to ask additional questions from five banks, which were:

- B1. Careers
- B2. Course content and structure
- B5. Course delivery
- B6. Feedback from students
- B10. Assessment

It was **agreed** that the University would continue to ask the additional institutional question which had been used in the previous three years: "Looking back at your degree course as a

whole, what one academic experience has been most rewarding or useful, and what one change do you think would most improve the course?"

The Committee also discussed the possibility of incentivising survey participation through a prize draw initiated by Ipsos MORI. A prize draw could not be administered via YUSU due to anonymity of students participating in the survey. It was **agreed** that the University would instead continue to fund a £1 contribution to the hardship fund for each completed survey.

PTES

The Committee **agreed** the University should take part in PTES in 2014. Members would be canvassed by email on the inclusion of institutional questions at a later date, when the content of the final questionnaire was published.

13-14/43 Periodic Review: Department of Psychology

The Committee **considered** and **approved** the report, external examiners' reports and agreed action plan arising from the periodic review of the Department of Psychology (UTC.13-14/15). The Chair of the review confirmed that the panel had been extremely impressed with the department's clear vision, which was supported in meetings with the Head of Department through to first year undergraduate students.

13-14/44 Periodic Review: Department of Politics

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

13-14/45 Three Year Review: EngD

The Committee **considered** and **approved** a report arising from the Three-year Review of the EngD in Large-Scale Complex IT Systems, Department of Computer Science (UTC.13-14/17).

13-14/46 Triennial Review: York International Foundation Programme

The Committee **considered** and **approved** a report, external assessor report and action plan arising from the triennial review of the York International Foundation Programme (UTC.13-14/19). The Committee **noted** that the review panel had been very positive about the programme.

13-14/46 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **approved** the revised terms of reference and membership for the Standing Committee on Assessment (UTC.13-14/30). The following new members had been appointed:

Dr. Geoff Cubit, History

Dr. Philip Quinlan, Psychology

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

13-14/47 QAA Quality Code

The Committee **received** and **noted** an update on the QAA Quality Code and a summary of the University's response to the consultations on Part A and Chapters B1, B2, B6 and B8 (UTC.13-14/31)

13-14/48 Academic Study Leave Policy

The Committee **noted** that the Academic Study Leave Policy (UTC.13-14/32) had been **considered** by Senate but the decision had been taken not to approve it at that meeting. The policy would come back to UTC as Category I business at a future meeting.

13-14/49 Modifications and Withdrawals of Programmes

The Committee **received** and **noted** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between September and October 2013 (UTC.13-14/33).

13-14/50 Exchange Agreements

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had **approved** the following exchange agreements:

- between the York Law School and the University of Hong Kong;
- between the Department of History of Art and the University of Bologna, Leiden University and the University of Cologne;
- between the Department of English and Related Literature and the Radboud University, Nijmegen.

13-14/51 Department of Archaeology: MA in Conservation Studies (Historic Buildings)

The Committee **noted** that the Department of Archaeology's MA in Conservation Studies (Historic Buildings) had been accredited by the Institute for Historic Buildings Conservation. Successful completion of this programme would reduce the requirement for relevant experience for those seeking full membership of the IHBC from five years to two years. Accreditation would be open-ended as long as there were no substantive changes to the programme.

13-14/52 External Assessors and Review Panels

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved Professor Adam Dinham (Goldsmith's, University of London) as External Assessor for the Periodic Review of Social and Political Sciences in Spring Term 2014.

13-14/53 Dates of next meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of the next meetings (all at 1.00pm in HG15, Heslington Hall unless otherwise stated):

- Monday 2 December 2013
- Tuesday 10 December 2013 (2.00pm)
- Monday 3 February 2014
- Monday 3 March 2014
- Monday 19 May 2014
- Monday 23 June 2014