SENATE

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Ms B Akua-Sakyiwah (GSA Representative), Dr H Altink, Dr TT Arvind, Prof W Bonefeld, Mrs L Booth, Mr N Dandy, Prof P Drew, Dr S King, Mr G Osborn (YUSU Representative), Dr A Parsons, Ms E Roberts, Prof L Siciliani, Dr H Smith, Prof C Thompson, Dr R Vann, Dr R Waites, Dr M White

In attendance: Prof A Higson (department of Theatre, Film and Television for M11-12/74 and M11-12/79) Ms C Moore (Secretary), Dr P Roberts (Centre for English Language Teaching for M11-12/73), Prof J Robinson, Dr R Walker and Mr S Davis (E-Learning Development Team for M11-12/69) , Dr Z Devlin

Apologies: Mrs K Dodd, Ms C Lowe, Mr B Saynor

11-12/61 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011 were approved.

11-12/61 The UTC action log was **considered** and it was **noted** that a number of ongoing actions needed to be followed up urgently:
- the investigation of the perceived internal barriers to transferring between programmes. **Action Secretary**
- to remind departments to start planning activities for weeks 8-10 of the summer term. **Action Chair, secretary, Project leader LE team, YUSU and the Academic Registrar**
- to look at data on students seeking support form GSA and see if any themes emerge. **Action GSA**

The following actions were noted as closed:
- to ask the Mathematics department to monitor the effect on coursework submission rates and attendance at seminars, following their decision to make all coursework formative. This now forms part of their Periodic Review action plan
- a computer room has been reserved for several weeks during the NSS survey period to encourage History Department students to complete the NSS survey. Completion rates will be monitored
- external Examiners reports have been received from the NSLC.

11-12/62 History: MA in History and Politics (re-titled MA in Contemporary History and International Politics)

Further to M10-11/175 the Committee **received** an oral report from the secretary that the matters raised by the Committee have been addressed by the department to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval had been granted:

   a. Work has been done on the Learning outcomes of both the Core Module and Programme specs.
   b. A new version of the programme specification has been provided
   c. After discussion with Politics, the Department of History have decided to offer four 2-hour interdisciplinary research workshops in the summer term to support the dissertation. This will form part of the credit weighting of the ISM/long essay and will be convened by staff in Politics and in History.

11-12/63 Centre for Women's Studies: Master in European Gender and Equality Studies (EGALE)

Further to M10-11/210 it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee are still to be addressed. The department is not now moving towards an Erasmus Mundus joint award model, but is still hoping to offer the programme jointly with international partner. A series of actions has been agreed with Professor Gabrielle Griffin, progress on which will be reported at the January meeting of UTC.

11-12/64 Mathematics: PhD Programme in Mathematics (with Foundation Phase)

Further to M11-12/19 it was **noted** that the matters raised by the Committee have been addressed by the department to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

11-12/65 Politics: Politics Mundus MAPP (Erasmus Mundus Programme)

Further to M11-12/20 it was **noted** that this programme was submitted to the meeting of Senate on 1 November 2011, having been given conditional final approval by UTC. The Committee also **noted** that the conditions of the approval are still to be addressed although progress has been made:

   a. Module descriptions for all the new modules have been agreed by the Politics BoS
   b. The Chair of UTC has held a meeting with heads of service to produce an action plan
   c. Assessment rules have been drafted.

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Secretary noting that there was concern from an accrediting body in the Netherlands regarding the amount of public policy content within the programme. The Department of Politics are working to address this issue.

11-12/66 Oral Report from the Chair

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

- The documentation for QAA Institutional Review, the Self Evaluation Document, was submitted to the QAA along with the Student Written Submission on 18 November. The document had gone through significant editing since it was presented to UTC in October and hard copies will be sent to all members shortly. The Chair thanked members of the ASO, YUSU and the GSA for their work on the documentation for the QAA visit.
    - On 3 and 4 January 2012: there will be a First Team Visit by the full review team. This will include a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, and meetings with student representatives, senior staff members, the Institutional Facilitator and the Lead Student Representatives.
    - In the week beginning 13 February 2012: there will be a five day review visit. This will include meetings with a wide range of students and staff from across the University. More details of who they want to meet will be provided after the First Team Visit.
- The QAA is launching the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education on 15th December to replace the Academic Infrastructure. It will set out the expectations which providers of higher education must meet. A report on the new code will be provided for the January meeting of UTC.
- In its December meeting, the Senior Management Group approved the allocation of the full £2 million package of measures aimed at further enhancing the student experience. As well as the measures announced at the November meeting, money will be allocated to:
    - digital recording of lectures
    - additional spend on refurbishing teaching spaces
    - increased spending on student internships to support employability
    - the abolition of charges for participation in college sport
    - additional spend on coaching sports clubs through York sport
    - improvements to welfare provision in Colleges and Student Support Services
    - funding an International Study Centre for York students
    - enhanced IT technical services support.

11-12/67 Oral Report from the Student Representatives
The Committee **received** an oral report from the student representatives, as follows:

The YUSU representative noted that:
- YUSU are one of 16 students' unions who will be participating in a joint NUS/QAA project, 'Developing Quality Engagement', which will provide bespoke training in developing YUSU's engagement with the quality agenda. YUSU have three specific goals: engaging with postgraduates; developing and improving student engagement over a semi-autonomous environment; and, student engagement in the

APR process. The majority of the visits will occur around February and YUSU will work with the ASO and academics as part of the process.

The GSA representative noted that:

- The GSA has been involved in the election of 146 student course reps. Departments employ a variety of methods to elect course reps, including using the YUSU system and organising elections themselves.
  ACTION: Chair to meet with GSA and YUSU to review the election of course reps.
- There are approximately 574 Postgraduates Who Teach within the University this academic year.
- The project within the York Management School using Postgraduates Who Teach as academic writing tutors on the first-year "Understanding Arguments in Management" module has had a successful first year and the GSA would recommend extending this type of provision to other departments.
  ACTION: GSA and ASO to discuss evaluation of this project, in order to identify the most appropriate departments to target in future.

11-12/68 Student Written Submission (GSA/YUSU documentation submitted to QAA for Institutional Review)

The Committee **considered** the Student Written Submission. The Committee **noted** that overall the SWS, which was jointly written by YUSU and GSA is very balanced. The students comment positively on the relationship between the SUs and the University and the way the student voice is listened to.

Several issues commented on in SWS are being addressed:

- variation between departments, especially with regards to teaching quality, contact hours, supervision, assessment and feedback
- concerns about opportunities to take elective courses under NMS
- employability, with review ongoing as to whether the measures put in place would address all issues
- the effectiveness of information provided to new first year UGs, with Mrs Dodd leading a project to look at the variety of the information being sent, its accuracy and from where it is coming.

The Committee also noted concerns in the following areas:

- the quality of published information in general
- the management structure of the University, especially with regard to the implementation of policy (a concern for YUSU but not the GSA)
- the comments that the prospectus overstates the opportunities to study abroad

- the availability of books to postgraduate students over the summer vacation. The Committee agreed that the Library and Archives should be asked to clarify their policy on borrowing during the summer vacation
Secretary's note: books may be requested at any time during the vacations and if the item is not returned, students are entitled to a free inter-library loan
- variations in quality of the Thesis Advisory Panel, with some students not having sufficient time in the TAP and some not having them early enough to identify and address any issues
- problems experienced by a few PhD students regarding regular supervisory meetings
- the length of time taken in some cases to make arrangements for the viva. The Committee agreed that more specific information is required on this issue
ACTION: GSA to investigate and report back with information on which departments or clusters of departments are experiencing problems.
- international students sometimes struggle to understand the assessment information provided to them. The Committee agreed that details of this should be passed on to the Academic Registrar to follow-up.
ACTION: GSA
- that some module descriptors do not reflect the full extent of required background knowledge on a subject, e.g. an understanding of the UK political or economic system, and that some international students do less well as a consequence. The Committee agreed that further information is needed for action to be taken.
ACTION: YUSU/GSA to provide specific examples

11-12/69 Annual Report on the University's Virtual Learning Environment
Dr R Walker and Mr S Davis attended for this item. The Committee **considered** the annual report on the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

The Committee **noted** the E-Learning Development Team's continuing success in the embedding of the VLE across the University as well as the successful upgrade to Blackboard 9.1 and associated updated support resources. The number of VLE sites and level of student engagement is increasing and a number of departments have developed clear objectives for the use of the VLE within their programmes. Future priorities for the ELDT include working with departments to develop more advanced pedagogic objectives in the use of the VLE and processes to assure the quality of VLE resources. The main objectives for the coming year are to continue to develop support and guidance for departments and to work towards greater integration with other online university services, such as the Student Portal.

The ELDT team would like the opportunity to work with departments during the design of new programmes with the aim of making the use of the VLE part of the programme design rather than an addition. The team facilitates termly 'Show and Tell' workshops to share

good practice and the annual student survey provides good examples of how the VLE builds upon the classroom experience to the benefit of students.

The Committee congratulated the team on its impact within the University and welcomed the move towards integration of online university systems. It was **noted** that there are some ongoing issues with allowing students registered on CPD programmes access to the VLE and that work was being done on the Associates' database to aid with identifying different groups of people, which should be of some help with this.

11-12/70 Undergraduate Course Representative Elections
The Committee **considered** a report on the Undergraduate Course Representative Elections from YUSU. It was **noted** that rather than lots of emails to departments, a flowchart would be produced for departments for next year's elections setting out timings and responsibilities.

The Committee **agreed** that:
  a. YUSU should apply again for money from central funds to help run the Course Rep elections in 2012/13.
  b. YUSU should produce guidance for departments on the information required to run the elections to ensure that departments review their internal communications, establish clear responsibilities and resolve their Course Rep positions before the next elections.
      ACTION: YUSU/GSA

11-12/71 Module/Programme evaluation at University level
The report on Module/Programme evaluation at University level was **deferred** until the January Committee meeting.

11-12/72 Key Information Set (KIS)
The Committee **received** an update on the KIS

The Committee **noted** that progress had been made with the KIS pilot but that there is still a significant amount of work to do. The timing of the KIS may have implications for the production of departmental commentaries on the National Student Survey data, with commentaries ideally being available in time for the publication of KISs in September, although it might be possible to include a note indicating that a commentary would follow.
The level of disaggregation of data varies between departments, and not all programmes would have a unique KIS. Written statements describing where the data derives from will be produced. No combined degrees have been included in the initial stage of the pilot as

HEFCE have yet to provide full guidance on this; when the guidance is published, combined programmes would be added to the pilot.

It was **noted** that resources would be needed to roll out the KIs to all departments including central support to help departments to update their web pages with contextual information. The KIS Working Group was pursuing this issue, informed by the pilot exercise.

The Committee expressed its concern about the lack of accuracy and contextual information displayed by the widget, e.g. it does not state that the 'Average Graduate Salary' data is collected at 6 months after graduation. Contextual information was also missing from the full data, with the information on accommodation not indicating how many weeks it covered or whether the university charges included catering and/or bills. It was noted that the format of the report were based on the mock-up provided by HEFCE and there may be some changes in the final version. There would be opportunities to provide some explanatory information through URLs embedded in the KIS as well as on the "host" web pages, as above. Nevertheless, the Committee requested that its concerns be raised with HEFCE.

ACTION: Nigel Dandy

11-12/73 CELT, Department of Education: Proposal for approval of a Graduate Diploma in Academic Communication (Pre-Masters)

Dr P Roberts attended for this item. The Committee **considered** the proposal for approval of a Graduate Diploma in Academic Communication (Pre-Masters) from the Centre for English Language. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Ms L Booth and Prof P Drew.

The Committee **noted** that this was an ambitious programme that would be run in conjunction with five other academic departments, in the first instance. Departments will provide reading material, suggest suitable lectures for the students to attend, provide project titles and assist with the marking the projects. Each department had identified a member of staff to act as liaison with CELT.

The IELTS entry requirement is 5.5 and the programme will aim to bring a student up to the equivalent of IELTS 6.5. The intention was not to retest the students but to bring their language level up to a standard at which they would be ready for Postgraduate study in the department. The Committee was informed that based on what CELT achieve during the summer this was a reasonable entry level for the programme and a reasonable expectation for improvement in language skills. Based on CELT's pre-sessional courses, it is expected that fails and drop-outs will be very low but CELT will work to identify struggling students and support them as well as managing their expectations where necessary. It was noted that

an exit award of Graduate certificate would be available to any student who passed all the term one modules and at least two of the term two modules.

The Committee **approved** the new programme.

11-12/74 Theatre, Film and Television: Proposal for BSc in Interactive Media TFTV
Prof A Higson attended for this item. The Committee **considered** a proposal for 'in principle' approval of a BSc in Interactive Media TFTV from the department of Theatre, Film and Television. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr H Smith.

The Committee **noted** that the department were requesting 'in principle' approval to enable an entry to be made in the prospectus for 2013-14. This would exceptionally be considered as the department is new and still developing its programme provision. The appointment of five new members of staff had been approved by Planning to enable the programme to be developed and taught, and it was noted that interviews for the Chair would take place in March 2012.

The Committee identified the following areas of concern:
- the timetable for appointing the staff, in particular the first lecturer, seemed to be too close to the start of the programme, creating issues if suitable candidates could not be found;
- the level and extent of collaboration between TFTV and other departments had not yet been fully agreed, although it was noted that discussions had taken place and that there are existing modules offered by Computer Science, among others, that might be used;
- the stated entry requirements were rather too vague.

The Committee **agreed** that the department could include an entry for BSc in Interactive Media in the prospectus for 2013-14 on condition that:
- the department produces a clear timetable for producing the programme specification and moves forward the appointment of the first lecturer, currently scheduled for September 2013;
- the entry requirements are clarified, specifying in particular whether Maths or a Science subject would be required at A or AS level;
- Theatre, Film and Television continue their dialogue with other departments, in order to consider how the degree might make use of modules and expertise from other departments.

11-12/75 Mathematics: Proposal for an MSc in Statistics and Computational Finance

The Committee **considered** a proposal for approval of an MSc in Statistics and Computational Finance from the Department of Mathematics. The Committee **noted** that this was a positive proposal that had the potential to be attractive to international students. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr A Parsons and Prof L Siciliani.

The Committee **approved** the programme subject to:
- the department considering whether the programme contains enough Finance to justify the title. In addition, if the programme is to be marketed, as indicated, at students wishing to pursue careers in other areas of statistics, such as sociology, health science, medical science, biology, the department should consider whether the title of the degree, as proposed, was appropriate and would not discourage wider applications.
- provision of the exact date of approval by the Mathematics Board of Studies
- all reassessments are scheduled to take place during the summer vacation, meaning that students could begin their projects before they have passed the taught part of the programme. The department should consider holding a progression board for the taught part of the programme during the Summer term, and giving earlier reassessment opportunities for at least some of the modules. The timings of the progression and reassessment boards need to be clearly indicated on the diagram on pages 7 and 8 of the programme specification.
- clarification of the admissions criteria. They state that : applicants must at least have studied first year Probability and Statistics modules, but then state that a pre-requisite for the module "Advanced Regression Analysis" is "Statistics II
- information about monitoring and review (question 28) being provided on the new programme pro-forma.

11-12/76 Computer Science: Proposal for MSc in Large Scale Complex IT Systems

The Committee **considered** a proposal for approval of an MSc in Large Scale Complex IT Systems from the department of Computer Science (UTC.11-12/42). The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr R Waites and Dr M White.

The external assessor had expressed concern about the small number of staff teaching on the programme. The Committee **noted** the department's response that there was an additional member of staff within the department who could also teach on the programme if required.

The Committee **approved** the programme subject to the following points being addressed:
- although the programme had been approved by the Chair of Board of Studies, the department is asked to clarify whether all Board members had seen it;

- The proposed exit route for students who complete 60 credits of taught modules is a PG Certificate in Large Scale Complex IT Systems. An award with the same name already exists as an exit route from the EngD programme which involves students passing different modules. This needs to be addressed, either by aligning the modules or by changing the name of the exit route from this programme.
- Clarification of the date of the progression board to consider the summer term taught modules.

11-12/77 Computer Science: Proposal for MSc in Cybersecurity

The Committee **considered** a proposal for approval of an MSc in Cybersecurity from the department of Computer Science (UTC.11-12/43). The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr R Vann and Prof C Thompson.

The Committee **noted** that all the external assessors were very positive about the programme which was commended for its engagement with industry and its teaching and research links. The Committee was informed that the programme has to be considered by the Physical Sciences Ethics Committee.

The proposal was **approved** subject to:
- Clarification in the programme specification that students who fail the 100 credit ISM can rework it as a 40 credit diploma project for the exit award of diploma.
- Rewriting the assessment table to take this into account, and making the structural diagrams clearer.
- Rewriting module learning outcomes as discussed with Dr Vann, including the learning outcomes of the Cyber-security Research Skills module in order to relate them more clearly to the assessment tasks.
- Inserting the reassessment tasks that will be required for all modules on the module descriptors.
- Clarification of how the allocation of the projects and supervisors will be managed.
- The department making sure that the marking policy on Open assessments and the importance of academic integrity is emphasised to students.

11-12/78 Biology: Proposal for BSc in Biomedical Sciences

The Committee considered a proposal for 'in principle' approval of a BSc in Biomedical Sciences from the department of Biology (UTC.11-12/44). The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Ms E Roberts and Dr TT Arvind. The Committee was informed that the 'in principle' approval was needed for this programmes, which was due to start in 2013, so that it could be included in the prospectus.

The Committee was of the opinion that this was a very strong proposal for a potentially attractive degree programme and **approved** the proposal subject to:

- The department considering introducing some form of interim assessment into the year long modules
- Distinguishing the intended learning outcomes for the year in industry variant of the degree
- Provision of more details on the management of placements for the year in industry variant of the degree

Secretary's note: Planning committee have informed Teaching Committee that there is uncertainty about whether this programme can start in 2013 or 2014 due to the need to invest heavily in expanding teaching lab facilities, about which a decision will be made in January 2012.

11-12/79 Theatre, Film and Television: Exceptional modification to the BSc in Film and Television Production

Prof A Higson attended for this item. The Committee considered a proposal for approval of an exceptional modification to the BSc in Film and Television Production (UTC.11-12/45). The proposal was deemed exceptional as it affected the current 2nd year when they reached their 3rd year in 2012/13. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr H Altink.

The Committee noted that part of the proposal consisted of the modification of two 3rd year production modules, Group Film Production Project and Group TV Studio Production. The department proposed making these modules 20 credits each instead of the advertised 40 credits each, and making them both compulsory instead of optional. The department believed that this would have added pedagogic benefit as students will acquire greater production experience and thus enhance employability. There were also changes to some of the other 3rd year 10 credit option modules to incorporate a business element into the Current Issues in Film and TV module, and introduce two new options.

Concerns had been expressed by current 2nd year students when the change was communicated to them, and also by Mr Osborn, as the proposal remove the chance for the students to specialise in their final year. Prof Higson acknowledged that a minority of students were unhappy with the change but that the department was trying to win them over, and had held discussion meetings with the entire cohort.

The proposal was **approved** subject to:
- the department continuing its dialogue with the 2nd year students
- the department exploring whether there was any way of giving the few 2nd year students who continue to object to the proposal, the chance to specialise.
- The introduction of a formative element to the assessment of the *Current Issues in Film and TV* module

11-12/80 Approval of External Assessors

It was noted that the Chair has approved the following external assessors:

- for a revalidation visit to the National Science Learning Centre: Professor Lynn Newton (School of Education, Durham University)
- for the Periodic Review of the Department of History of Art: Professor Michael Hatt (Department of History of Art, University of Warwick) and Professor Margaret Iversen (Department of Art History and Theory, University of Essex)
- for Periodic Review of the York Management School: Dr Caroline Elliott (Lancaster University) and Mr Nicholas Perdikis (University of Aberystwyth)

11-12/81 Department of Health Sciences: BSc in Nursing

It was noted that further to M10-11/122, the Department of Health Sciences had received confirmation from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) that, with respect to the approval of the new BSc in Nursing, the two outstanding conditions had been met. The programme was graded as 'good' for all standards except one, which received a 'satisfactory'. The NMC's annual monitoring event took place on 8 and 9 November 2011 and the Department's provision was graded as 'good' in all five areas.

11-12/82 Postgraduate Admissions Policy

It was noted that the Chair had approved a change to the Postgraduate Admissions Policy, section 4.1.1, to read "See the Code of Practice on Research Degrees for details of the admission requirements to research degrees, including the MA or MSc by research". The Code of Practice states "For admission to an MA or MSc programme by research, candidates shall normally possess at least a second class honours degree or equivalent"

11-12/83 MA in TEYL (by distance learning)

It was noted that the Chair had signed an agreement for the delivery of two-week intensive initial and mid-course modules for the MA in TEYL (by distance learning) to be taught by University of York staff at the University of Stavanger, Norway.

11-12/84 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 November and December 2011 (UTC.11-12/46). The Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, has approved modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study as follows (further details are available from the Academic Support Office):

Education: Approval, for students entering from October 2013, of a change of degree title from MA in Educational Studies to MA in Education. Approval, from November 2011, of a pilot accelerated (13 months full time rather than two years part time) version of the MA in

Teaching English to Young Learners. NB the start date of this pilot has been postponed until 2012.

History: Approval from October 2012, to change the teaching pattern and assessment for an Autumn Term 20 credit, stage three module. This module will be taught through discussion groups and lectures, and will be assessed via a 1500 or 2000 word assessed essay rather than an essay and seminar contribution.

Health Sciences: Approval, from October 2012, of a change of degree title from Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care to Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care: Associate Practitioner.

Philosophy: Approval from October 2012 of the withdrawal of the MA in Philosophy of Art and Literature

SPSW: Approval from November 2012 of two stand-alone modules for social workers supporting student social workers: Enabling and Assessing Practice Competence in Social Work, Stage 2 and Effective Supervision Skills for Managers.

11-12/85 Date of the Next Meeting
The Committee noted that the next meeting, to consider APR reports, would be:
Monday 19 December 2011 12:15 – 3:00pm in room H/G15 (including lunch)