SENATE

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2011

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Dr H Altink, Ms I Arora (GSA Representative), Mr N Dandy, Dr D Efird, Mr B Humphrys (YUSU Representative), Dr S King, Dr N Milner, Dr A Parsons, Ms E Roberts, Mr T Tew, Dr R Vann, Dr R Waites, Dr M White.

In attendance: Ms J Concannon (Director or External Relations) for M10-11/168 and 169, Mr S Davis (E-Learning Development Team) for M10-11/168, Dr J James (Academic Support Office), Dr B Kewell (TYMS) for M10-11/179, Ms C Moore (Secretary), Ms C Lowe (Project Leader, Learning Enhancement), Mr S Willis (Director of Student Recruitment and Admission) for M10-11/168 and 169.

Apologies: Mr B Saynor, Ms S Ford, Dr H Smith (on research leave)

10-11/150 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2011 (previously circulated) were approved. A new action log would be introduced from the next meeting.

10-11/151 Mathematics: MSc in Statistics and Actuarial Science
Further to M09-10/137, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed. Given the length of time elapsed since the programme had been considered, the Department should provide a formal update for the Committee on progress.

ACTION: Mathematics

10-11/152 English: MA in Culture and Thought after 1945
Further to M10-11/77, it was noted the matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed. Given the length of time elapsed since the programme had been considered, the Department should provide a formal update for the Committee on progress.

ACTION: English

10-11/153 Learning and Teaching Priorities and the New Funding Regime
Further to a number of Committee discussions, including that concerning the Oxford Tutorial System (M10-11/100), a need has been identified to review how the learning and teaching experience of students can be improved. Rather than a working group(s), it has been decided that an open meeting(s) of the Committee on this topic will be held over the summer.

ACTION: ASO to circulate dates and consider invitees
10-11/154 Student Activities During Weeks 8-10 Summer Term
Further to M10-11/105, the Committee noted that the Learning and Teaching Forum would be holding a half-day event during Autumn Term 2011 to share departmental experiences in relation to the provision of student activities during weeks 8-10 of Summer term 2011, in addition to exploring future opportunities for cross-University initiatives. The event would also include the Careers Service and CETLE.

10-11/155 History of Art: MA in History of Art
Further to M10-11/107, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee had been addressed by the Department of History of Art to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

10-11/156 Management: BA in Management
Further to M10-11/108, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee have been addressed by The York Management School to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

10-11/157 Computer Science/Philosophy: MEng/BSc in Computer Science and Philosophy
Further to M10-11/136, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee had been addressed by the Departments of Computer Science and Philosophy to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

10-11/158 Health Sciences: MSc in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Advance Clinical Practice
Further to M10-11/137, it was noted that matters raised by the Committee were still to be addressed.

10-11/159 History: MA in Public History
Further to M10-11/138, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee in relation to the MA in Public History had been addressed by the History Department and the Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

10-11/160 Lifelong Learning: University Certificate in Lifelong Learning (Social Enterprise)
Further to M10-11/139, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee in relation to the University Certificate in Lifelong Learning (Social Enterprise) had been addressed by the Centre for Lifelong Learning to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.
10-11/161 Politics: MA in International Relations
Further to M10-11/140, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee in relation to the MA in International Relations had been addressed by the Department of Politics to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

10-11/162 Theatre Film and Television: MA in Cinema, Television and Society
Further to M10-11/141, it was noted that the matters raised by the Committee in relation to the MA in Cinema, Television and Society had been addressed by the Department of Theatre, Film and Television to the satisfaction of the Chair and so final approval has been granted.

Further to M10-11/141, it was noted that the General Social Care Council has confirmed that the University of York continues to meet GSCC and DH requirements and normal monitoring would continue.

10-11/164 Oral Report from the Chair
The Committee received an oral report from the Chair.

Meeting dates in 2011/2012
Meeting dates have been revised for 2011/12 to take account of the need to consider Annual Programme Review (APR) reports in time to give feedback to departments early in the Spring Term as previously agreed. The APR meeting has been scheduled for 19 Dec 2011, and 6 February meeting has been moved to 16 January 2012.

National Student Survey (NSS)
The NSS 2011 closed at the end of April. The University’s response rate was 74%, the highest achieved to date and well above last year’s 60%. The overall response rate for all institutions also increased to 66%. £2067 has been donated to the student hardship fund (£1 for each response.). All subject areas that could reach the publication threshold have done so. The release of the results from HEFCE and Ipsos-MORI is expected to be in August.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
The PRES 2011 closed in mid May. The University’s response rate was 53.5%, up significantly from the previous year. £896 has been donated to the student hardship fund (£1 for each response).

Working Group to Review Student Representation
The terms of reference of the working group to review student representation have been agreed and are attached as Appendix I.
OFFA Agreement
The summary of the OFFA Access Agreement 2012/2014 had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for information and further to M10-11/128. A significant number of HEIs had been asked to revise their Access Agreement but so far OFFA had not been in touch with the University.

Vice-Chancellor’s Awards for Outstanding Achievement
A member of the Committee, Ellen Roberts, had received a gold Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Achievement for her work in championing excellence in an online teaching and learning environment.

Study Space
The Harry Fairhurst building had opened, and had been positively received. Much use was being made of the flexible study spaces but the ‘research hotel’ for visiting researchers was under-utilised. The Student Study Centre in Heslington Village was also under-utilised and its future was under discussion.

10-11/165 Oral Report from the Student Representatives
The Committee received an oral report from the student representatives.

The YUSU representative noted that:
- the Supervisor of the Year Award was now open for nominations and members were asked to publicise this. The awards would be given out on 30 June at an event that would also celebrate those receiving V-C’s Teaching Awards
- he was working on the alternative prospectus
- concerns had been raised about the lack of social space on the Heslington East campus and although this was not a matter for UTC it could impact upon NSS results.

The GSA representative noted that she and the GSA were working on the representation of postgraduate students and that the GSA elections were due to be held shortly.

10-11/166 Employability Coordination Group
The Committee considered a report from the Employability Coordination Group (ECG) (UTC.10-11/105), on recent progress, including consideration of potential metrics and a means of better understanding the career intentions of current students.

The Committee considered the Departmental Employability Plan template, which would be completed annually within each department by the Careers Service liaison academic and their nominated contact in the Careers Service. The template would provide information on where employability skills were embedded within the curriculum and other employability-related activities within the department.

The Committee approved the template subject to further consideration of the following:
whether the template, in its current form, would be practical, particularly in departments offering a significant number of programmes, each with a different diet of modules, and at both undergraduate and postgraduate level
• how to ensure that the process of completing the form was not a ‘tick box’ exercise but instead prompted reflection, the identification of gaps in provision/ways of making current provision more explicit, and the generation of ideas for future development
• whether the procedure should be amended so that a version of the template is considered by the department as a whole (e.g. a Board of Studies meeting) to ensure that all staff, and students, are involved
• in the list of employability skills, to amend the fourth bullet point to read ‘ability to present information clearly and appropriately both verbally and in writing’, and in the section on ‘world of work awareness’ to consider whether the concept of ‘commercial awareness’ was sufficiently covered.

ACTION: ECG

The Committee noted that it did not require the ECG to resubmit the template and it recognised that the template would evolve with use.

The Committee also noted:
• the desirability of highlighting to students, e.g. in module descriptions, the employability skills that could be gained in a particular module and to ensure that the module aims and learning outcomes encapsulate these skills.
• the need to consider employability skills in publicity material for prospective students.

The Committee approved the action plan for the Student Employability Strategy, which had been revised in the light of comments at the Committee’s March meeting (M10-11/132). With respect to point 1.3 of the action plan, it was noted that completion of the employability tutorial was no longer a progression requirement. With respect to point 3 of the action plan, it was noted that some departments might need some help to identify appropriate work-related activities and experiences within their discipline. With respect to point 1b, it was agreed that the Academic Registrar would speak to Dr Richard Waites about his concerns regarding Skills Forge, with a view to removing specific references to this particular package.

The Committee noted that it would receive a further progress report from the ECG in due course.

ACTION: ECG

10-11/167 Research Led Teaching
The Committee considered a report on research led teaching at undergraduate level (UTC.10-11/106) from Ben Humphrys, the YUSU representative.
In introducing the report, Mr Humphrys noted that he had wanted to consider research led teaching from a student, rather than a staff, perspective. The report identified many examples of good practice within and without the University and also a number of areas for enhancing practice at York.

The Committee decided:

(a) that the Learning and Teaching Forum should be asked to organise events to showcase existing good practice in the area of research led teaching and to consider how to build upon this. This should form the base of a central resource on the Learning and Teaching webpages. Amongst other things, consideration should be given to the role of peer-reviewed student research journals at departmental and university level; ACTION: Learning and Teaching Forum

(b) that consideration of a University fund for summer vacation studentships should form part of the discussion of learning and teaching priorities in the light of the new funding regime (see M10-11/153);

(c) that in the light of the Forum work, the Committee should revisit its Learning and Teaching Strategy to consider whether a more detailed statement on research led teaching should be included. ACTION: Committee

The Chair thanked Mr Humphrys for his paper.

10-11/168 Transition Sites

The Committee received a presentation, from Simon Davis, E-Learning Adviser, on transition sites within the VLE, which have been developed by some departments, with central support, for incoming students (undergraduate and taught postgraduate) to aid the transition to studying at York. Joan Concannon, the Director of External Relations, and Simon Willis, the Director of Student Recruitment and Admission, attended the meeting for this item.

In discussion it was noted that:

- transition sites were rapidly becoming the norm across the sector and York would need to ensure that it was not left behind in this area
- many universities had a generic transition site offering; the York approach of offering departmental sites was felt to be more desirable as they were better tailored to students’ needs
- transition sites should be seen in the context of plans for an applicant portal and applicant sites, and careful thought was needed to consider what information and activities were required at each stage of the journey from enquirer to registered student to minimise repetition and ensure appropriate timing of information and activities
there needed to be clear guidelines on responsibility for categories of information, for example to avoid departments duplicating information best provided centrally (e.g. visa information)

in terms of the presentation of transition sites, a balance needed to be struck between departments expressing their individuality and a need for some consistency across the institution

it was felt that transition sites were more effective when they were dynamic rather than static pages, for example when student ambassadors were available online to answer queries

it was highly advisable for departments to test their sites on current students and for evaluation of live sites to focus on what was useful, rather than on simple access statistics

a key factor in the success of a transition site was effective communication of the login and reminding people of their existence (e.g. advising when new material had been loaded)

transition sites provided an ideal opportunity to begin to manage expectations around feedback and independent learning

consideration needed to be given to how combined degree students would access transition sites, so that they did not receive a poorer service

it would be important to ensure that increasing use of the VLE did not cause the speed of access to decrease.

The Committee **decided** that all departments should be encouraged to engage with the transition sites project, for example by attending the Transition Developers Forum.  

**ACTION: Simon Davis**

**10-11/169 HEFCE Key Information Set**

The Committee **considered** consider a summary report on the HEFCE Key Information Set (KIS) (UTC.10-11/107) from the KIS working group. Joan Concannon and Simon Willis attended the meeting for this item.

In introducing the report, the Head of the Academic Support Office **noted** that institutions would be informed of the final KIS requirements by July 2011, at the latest, and the deadline for implementation would be September 2012, to apply to the 2013/2014 entry cohort. He highlighted a number of key challenges presented by the introduction of the KIS including:

- technical: the production of the KIS would require the University to submit information to a central collection agency, representing a significant new reporting exercise, and the University would be required to display the relevant KIS on all its programme information webpages via a piece of HEFCE-provided software
- the extent to which the University should seek to actively engage with the KIS, for example by tailoring information to address issues raised by it
- whether the KIS should form part of discussions about quality assurance and enhancement.
In the course of discussion, it was noted that many members of the Committee felt that it was likely that prospective students would use the KIS in deciding what university to attend. In addition, the KIS might be used in league tables which also influence student choice. There was considerable concern that use of the KIS might result in prospective students making decisions based on superficial and therefore ultimately unhelpful data. There were also concerns about the impact of the KIS on the design of programme webpages, the timing of changes to programmes (in relation to the data return to HEFCE), and on programme development. In relation to the last two points, it was, however, noted that HEFCE had indicated that the KIS should be indicative rather than binding, thus allowing some flexibility.

The Committee decided that:

(a) the University and departments should provide information to ‘wrap around’ the KIS to contextualise it for prospective students, for example explaining the pedagogic model used by the department and highlighting key elements of the student experience, and providing clear explanations for the bare figures;

(b) raising departmental awareness should be a key priority for the KIS working group, particularly given that departments would need to undertake additional work e.g. in relation to the data return, and in providing a narrative to contextualise the KIS;

(c) the KIS should be used to inform QA and QE discussions, as it had the potential to highlight good practice and identify areas for possible action.

ACTION: KIS working group

Secretary’s note: the Committee did not consider the proposal that there should be a consistent use of the term ‘course’ (rather than programme) for student-facing material. This will need to be resolved at the next meeting.

10-11/170 Taught Postgraduate External Examiners’ Reports for 2009/10

The Committee received an analysis of taught postgraduate external examiners’ reports for 2009/10 (UTC.10-11/108). The Committee had considered the full log of issues raised by the external examiners at its Annual Programme Review meeting on 14 April 2011.

It was noted that the analysis had been considered by the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) at its meeting on 28 April 2011. The SCA had identified four issues (the role of external examiners in relation to changing marks, word limits, marking and research methodology/skills) and identified a number of actions to deal with these. The Committee endorsed the actions identified. In relation to the role of external examiners in changing marks, it was noted that it was important that Chairs of Boards of Examiners were able to explain University policy if this was raised at an Examiners’ Meeting.

ACTION: SCA
10-11/171 Annual Programme Review Reports
Consideration of a summary of the discussion from the Committee’s consideration of departments’ Annual Programme Review (APR) reports at its meeting on 14 April 2011 (UTC.10-11/109) was postponed to the next meeting to allow for a fuller discussion. It was decided that APR feedback letters could go out to departments with the discussion document, prior to the identification of actions arising from the discussion document at the next meeting.
ACTION: ASO

10-11/172 QAA Institutional Review
The Committee considered a briefing paper on the QAA Institutional Review (UTC.10-11/110) which will take place in 2011/2012. The week-long review visit will be from 13-17 February 2012. A key aspect of the Review will be the production of a Self-Evaluation Document (SED) and it was noted that an SED drafting group would include members of the Committee. The Committee would be asked to approve the SED in October.

10-11/173 National Review of External Examining
The Committee received a report on the outcome of a national review of external examining produced by Universities UK and GuildHE (UTC.10-11/111).

The Committee noted that most of the report’s recommendations had already been implemented by the University, and that there had been an internal report on external examining commissioned by the University last year. The Committee decided that the Standing Committee on Assessment should be asked to compare the report’s recommendations with current practice and recommend any changes to policy and procedure in the light of this.
ACTION: SCA to consider by October 2011

10-11/174 Archaeology: BA in Heritage Studies
The Committee considered a proposal for approval of a BA in Heritage Studies (UTC.10-11/112) to be introduced from October 2012 (or October 2011 for students transferring within the Department). The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr H Smith and Dr M White. The proposal had the support of the external assessor.

It was noted that the programme was a variant of the Department’s existing Archaeology programmes and there was discussion as to whether there was sufficient heritage studies-related content to justify the title, whether the programme paid enough regard to non-archaeological aspects of heritage, and whether the programme would have a distinct enough identity.

The Committee was reassured to learn that staff in the Department have considerable expertise in the area of heritage studies, that there are a number of option modules in the field of heritage studies, and that the subject area features in a range of core modules. The Committee was pleased to learn that a heritage studies-specific module was being developed
as an alternative to the Excavation module in stage 1, and also that the Research Skills module in stage 2 could be tailored to this programme, and hoped that this innovation would continue.

The Committee approved the programme, subject to:

(a) a greater focus of the programme’s aims and learning outcomes on heritage studies;
(b) clarification for applicants of the programme’s strong archaeological focus and where the programme might lead in terms of a career or further study;
(c) clarification for students in the programme specification and handbook of which elements of the programme provide the focus on heritage studies, and the recommended module choices to maximise exposure to this area, whilst still maintaining choice.

Secretary’s Note: this programme received Planning Committee approval 18 February 2011 (by Chair’s Action) and may now be advertised.

10-11/175 History: MA in History and Politics
The Committee considered a proposed modification to the MA in History and Politics programme (UTC.10-11/113) to take effect from October 2012. The proposal, which was designed to make the programme more attractive, included a change of name to the MA/PGDip/PGCert in Contemporary History and International Politics, the introduction of a new core module and changes to option modules. The proposal had been considered in advance of the meeting by Dr N Milner and Ms E Roberts and it was noted that the department had dealt satisfactorily with the queries that they had raised. The proposal had the support of the external assessor.

The Committee approved the programme, subject to:

(a) further consideration about how the interdisciplinary nature of the programme might be enhanced; in particular, that there should be the opportunity for the dissertation to be interdisciplinary in its approach, which might necessitate the provision of a joint supervision pathway for some topics (as an alternative to supervision from either the History or the Politics Department);
(b) the removal of minor errors in the paperwork, for example the size and timing of the History long essay for the Postgraduate Diploma;
(c) revision of the aims and outcomes of the core module to better reflect the exciting interdisciplinary nature of the module (in consultation with the Project Leader, Learning Enhancement).

In relation to (c) it was noted that the Project Leader, Learning Enhancement had agreed to write some University guidance on aims and learning outcomes.
Secretary’s Note: this modification does not require Planning Committee approval and may now be advertised.

**10-11/176 Review of the MA in Stained Glass and Heritage Management**
This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**10-11/177 Theatre, Film and Television: Interim Review Report and Agreed Action Plan**
This item was deferred until the next meeting.

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**10-11/179 York College: Health Check of the BA in Business Management**
The Committee *considered* the Health Check of the BA in Business Management at York College which is validated by the University of York (UTC.10-11/117). The final cohort of University-validated students will complete in August 2011. Dr Beth Kewell, the subject contact from The York School of Management (TYMS), attended the meeting for this item.

Dr Kewell *noted* that students on the programme were very happy with the support they received from the College and student achievement had been good. She and TYMS had put considerable effort into helping the programme team, for example by introducing a successful mentoring programme. She had enjoyed seeing the programme evolve and improve over time, particularly with respect to independent learning and its intellectual base. She felt that a good legacy had been left for the College to build on with its new validating body, Leeds Metropolitan University.

The Chair thanked Dr Kewell for all her work in relation to the BA in Business Management.

**10-11/180 Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA)**
The Committee *considered* the reports of the SCA meetings of 25 February and 28 April 2011 (UTC.10-11/118).

The Committee *approved* a number of amendments to the *Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback*.

**ACTION: SCA**

Secretary’s note: the revised *Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback* for 2011 will need to incorporate a number of changes approved during 2010/2011 and the rules for assessment, progression and award for taught postgraduate students on programmes operating under the new modular scheme.

**10-11/181 Chemistry: 2plus2 Collaboration with the Open University**
The Committee noted that the Chair had approved the proposal for a 2plus2 scheme for the subject area of Chemistry in collaboration with the Open University (OU). This scheme would enable students who have successfully completed part of a Chemistry degree at the OU to transfer to the University of York to complete their degree, subject to meeting an agreed level of attainment.

**10-11/182 Education: Agreement with PHZ Schwyz, Switzerland**

The Committee noted that the Chair had approved an agreement between the Department of Education and PHZ Schwyz, Switzerland concerning delivery of the Intensive Initial and Mid-Course modules for the MA in Teaching English to Young Learners (from August 2011). As with other MA in TEYL overseas arrangements, this would involve the partner providing practical services (e.g. marketing, teaching accommodation etc.) to facilitate delivery of the modules; the partner would not be involved in teaching or supporting students. It was also noted that the previously approved agreement with the Primary Education Department, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland was never signed by UASN.

**10-11/183 Modifications and Withdrawals**

The Committee received a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair’s action between March and May 2011 (UTC.10-11/119):

*Education:* Approval of an extension to the mark and feedback turnaround time for Masters dissertations (for 2010/11 only).

*Electronics:* Approval of the change to the examination length of the *MSc in Internet and Wireless Computing* Digital & Computing ECAD module to 2.5 hours (from 2 hours) from 2010/12.


*Economics and Related Studies:* Approval of change of term from T2-3 to T1 of the module ECO00018I, *Britain’s Prime and Decline* from 2011/12 academic year.

**10-11/184 Undergraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design**

The Committee noted that the Chair had approved an amendment to the *Electives* section of the *Undergraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design* to permit students to undertake 20 additional optional credits in order to meet later elective pre-requisite requirements. These extra credits would be regarded as additional to the programme requirements and the module results would not contribute to progression or classification requirements.

**10-11/185 HYMS Joint Learning and Teaching Committee**

The Committee received action notes of the meeting of the HYMS Joint Learning and Teaching Committee held on 17 March 2011 (UTC.10-11/120).
10-11/186 External Assessors
The Committee noted that the Chair has approved the following external assessors for periodic review:

- Mathematics (2 June 2011): Dr David Salinger (University of Leeds) and Professor Ian Moss (Newcastle University)
- Economics (21 June 2011): Professor Julia Darby (University of Strathclyde) and Professor Peter Sinclair (University of Birmingham)

10-11/187 University Exchange
The Committee noted that the following University Exchange has been approved ‘in principle’

- The Department of Health Sciences and the Technological Educational Institute of Patras, Greece.

10-11/188 Dates of the Next Meeting
The Committee noted the date of the next meeting: 27 June 2011 at 14.15 in HG15, Heslington Hall.
Appendix I

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

Teaching Committee

Terms of reference for the working group to review of student representation

1. To review the principles and practices of student representation across the University as they contribute to the University’s commitment to ‘institutionalising quality improvement’ outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2010-15.

2. To receive and consider proposals to improve the organisation and effectiveness of student representation in departments, including departmental committees relating to teaching and learning.

3. To consider ways of encouraging greater student engagement and participation with feedback and representation.

4. To explore ways of ensuring that all students understand the purposes and processes of representation.

5. To make recommendations to Teaching Committee in June 2011 based on these proposals for the future management and oversight of departmental student representation.

The review will include consideration of the following:

- Guidance on operational aspects of the student representation system
- Opportunities for increased coordination and oversight of student representation across departments to disseminate good practice and ensure consistency of opportunity for student engagement
- Opportunities for increased collaboration between the University, the Students’ Union and the Graduate Students’ Association in achieving effective representation
- Issues relating to the workload of the different forms of student representation, and opportunities to streamline the work of such representatives
- Terms of responsibilities between YUSU, GSA, academic departments and central support departments over a range of areas including the APR, election and training processes
- Increasing student engagement with the representation process