



## SENATE

### TEACHING COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2014

**Present:** Professor J Robinson (Chair), Ms L Booth, Mr N Dandy, Ms C Dantec, Mrs K Dodd, Dr J Grenville, Dr J Hardman, Ms J Horvatic (GSA representative), Dr S King, Professor M Matravers, Mr G Offer (YUSU representative), Professor M Ormrod (Academic Co-ordinator, Arts and Humanities), Dr M Roodhouse, Dr K Selby, Professor J Thijssen, Dr R Vann, Dr R Waites, Professor A Young

**In attendance:** Mr G Ashmore (Head of Estate Development, for M14-15/38), Mr M Burton (Accommodation and Timetabling, for M14-15/38), Mr D Clarke (ASO), Mrs J Fox (ASO, Secretary), Ms K Harper (Constantine College Officer, observer), Mr A Mingozi (Race Cottam Associates Ltd., for M14-15/38), Mr K Morimoto (Ritsumeikan University, observer),

**Apologies:** Professor S Bell (Academic Co-ordinator, Social Sciences), Professor C Fewster, Professor B Fulton (Academic Co-ordinator, Sciences), Dr T Lightfoot, Dr Á Shiel, Dr C van Wyhe

#### **M14-15/37 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Mr Kotaro Morimoto (Ritsumeikan University) and Ms Kate Harper (College Officer, Constantine College) were attending the meeting as observers.

#### **M14-15/38 New Teaching Building**

Mr Gary Ashmore, Mr Alex Mingozi and Mr Matthew Burton attended for this item.

The Committee **received** a presentation from Race Cottam Associates Ltd. Architects, outlining design specifications and plans for the new Teaching Building. During the discussion it was **noted** that:

- in answer to a question about anticipated provision of blackboards it was confirmed that extensive blackboard space would be provided in the lecture theatre. It was further confirmed that seminar room design would facilitate the use of both screens and boards;

- the design team envisaged breakout space to be available throughout the building. Loose furniture would be provided to create informal study space, which would be easily accessible from every room;
- the building had been designed to ensure that large congregations of people accessing the lecture theatre would not create a bottleneck and affect the flow of people through the main walkways;
- from the outset of the design process the provision of quality teaching spaces had been the priority, and the majority of rooms would have a fixed capacity. However the design team were looking into the possibility of including room dividers on the ground floor. This would enable the option of larger space that could be opened up for examinations, exhibitions, careers and recruitment events.

Members were asked to feed any additional comments back to the Chair.

#### **M14-15/39 Minutes of the October Meeting**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 (UTC.14-15/23).

#### **M14-15/40 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Committee **considered** the matters arising from the minutes (UTC.14-15/23 **Appendix 1**) and **noted** that all items had been closed.

#### **M14-15/41 Oral Update from the Chair**

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

- further to M14-15/11, a paper on proposed actions in response to 2014 NSS results had been approved by Senate. A memo would be sent to departments outlining the targets for future years, and more focused work was ongoing with seven departments where 2014 overall satisfaction was 82% or less;
- HEFCE was undertaking a review of the NSS which could result in the inclusion of revised questions in 2017. Addressing yea-saying (students giving the same response to all questions) by adding some negatively worded questions was under consideration. The existing question set was also being considered to establish whether any questions could be removed. HEFCE was also considering an additional bank of questions on student engagement. After the 2015 fieldwork they would perform cognitive testing on suggested new questions. There would be no changes to the 2015 questionnaire;
- further to M14-15/17, the Chair reported that the Operations Managers were collating information on PhD desk allocation and would report to the Operations Group for the new Graduate School;
- the UTC Strategy meeting would be held on Wednesday 10 December 2014, 11am to 1pm. The meeting would take a workshop format to discuss implementation of

the Learning and Teaching subsidiary strategy following agreement of the new University Strategy;

- Annual Programme Review reports were due on Friday 28 November. Members would be given access to the reports and guidance late in week commencing 1 December or early in week commencing 8 December. The deadline for comments from UTC members would be early in January 2015.

#### **M14-15/42 Oral Update from the Student Representatives**

##### *YUSU*

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

- elections for course representatives were complete, with a healthy number recruited for 2014/15;
- fifteen departmental representatives were now in place, and had taken the lead on the successful training of course representatives. Work was underway to identify a set of objectives for student representatives in each department;
- use of the Advice and Support Centre had increased and more cases were being picked up.

##### *GSA*

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

- further to M14-15/15, the GSA representative had met with Student Recruitment and Admissions and some amendments to the Admissions Policy had been made in relation to the equivalence of English language qualifications;
- the GSA, YUSU and Commercial Services were working together on initiatives to improve facilities for postgraduate students;
- nominations for elections were underway and the GSA representative was hopeful of recruiting a full team;
- extra workshops would be offered to raise student awareness of issues around academic misconduct and mitigating circumstances;
- the GSA was working on outreach and initiatives which would improve its links with the wider community in York.

#### **M14-15/43 The York Management School: BSc in Marketing and BSc in Marketing with a Year in Industry**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the York Management School for a BSc in Marketing and a BSc in Marketing with a year in industry (UTC.14-15/24) to start in October 2016. The proposal had been reviewed in advance of the meeting by Tracy Lightfoot and Andy Young, and had their support and that of an external assessor.

During the discussion the UTC reviewers **noted** the need for careful implementation of advice and guidance to students regarding the diversity of assessment methods and timings in stages 2 and 3, and the differing balances of workloads in the Spring/Summer term in existing modules that would be part of the programme. UTC members also asked questions about workloads in the Autumn term and early Summer term. The Chair **noted** that these areas were part of wider ongoing discussions across the School.

The Committee **decided** to approve both programmes, subject to the School addressing some minor issues from the Academic Support Office and the UTC reviewers (including ensuring the programme specification for both programmes was accurate and complete, e.g., regarding transfers and that all intended learning outcomes had a method of assessment recorded).

**ACTION: TYMS**

[**Secretary's note:** having received both Planning Committee and UTC approval, the programmes may now be advertised].

During consideration of this proposal, it was **decided** that in future, departments would be asked to provide evidence regarding supply and demand for placements for a year in industry. This requirement would be included in the Placement Policy which was currently under revision.

**ACTION: QA Team, ASO**

#### **M14-15/44 The York Management School and the Department of Mathematics: BSc in Actuarial Science and BSc in Actuarial Science with a Year in Industry**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the York Management School and the Department of Mathematics for a BSc in Actuarial Science and a BSc in Actuarial Science with a year in industry (UTC.14-15/25) to start in October 2016. The proposal had been reviewed in advance of the meeting by Tracy Lightfoot and Roddy Vann, and had their support and that of an external assessor.

During the discussion members **noted** that the programme would share modules with the Natural Sciences programme. It was agreed that the Exams Office would be alerted to assess and address any issues this could raise for the Exams Timetable.

**ACTION: QA Team, ASO**

Members also **noted** that when Institute and Faculty of Actuaries exemptions were received, the Department should consult with the Standing Committee on Assessment on how the assessment and reassessment rules could be applied and whether UTC exemptions would be needed.

The Committee **decided** to approve both programmes subject to some clarifications and further information being provided, as follows:

- clarification of how governance and management of the programmes would work in practice (e.g., how the Actuarial Board would report into the York Management School Board of Studies, and how mitigating circumstances would be handled);
- further development of the programme learning outcomes to reflect the broader knowledge and skills alluded to in the programme aims, and to make some of the learning outcomes less generic;
- confirmation that there would be further work on the quality of information provided to students and prospective students. For example, to ensure that all module descriptors were clear and complete (the Committee **noted** the ongoing work to address this in the Department of Mathematics), and that information about supervision and feedback to students was clear for students and staff (the Committee **noted** that the challenges of managing these across departments made clear information vital);
- further consideration of the external assessor's comments regarding the inclusion of more project and presentation work;
- confirmation of the arrangements for management and quality assurance of placements for the year in industry. The arrangements for placements should be clear in information for prospective students and when they arrive at the University;
- addressing some minor issues from the Academic Support Office.

**ACTION: TYMS and Dept of Maths**

[**Secretary's note:** having received both Planning Committee and UTC approval, the programmes may now be advertised].

During consideration of the proposals, the Committee **decided** that the naming of modules (to avoid subject/programme-specific titles, e.g., Maths for Natural Scientists) should be revisited as part of the PMC project.

**ACTION: ASO**

### **M14-15/45 Learning and Teaching Strategy**

The Committee **considered** a report from the Working Group on Learning and Teaching Strategy Development (UTC.14-15/26).

The Working Group's focus had been on taking forward ideas for implementing a distinctive York pedagogy, based around the propulsion of effective student work. In the paper, the Working Group proposed the adoption of an assessment-focused approach to programme review, as a starting point for exploring and implementing the wider set of pedagogic principles with academic departments. It was **reported** that the Group was considering whether a wider set of issues could be explored as a starting point not just assessment and feedback. The methodology would be piloted initially with a small number of departments and linked to the work of the NSS Task Group (M14-15/11 and M14-15/41 refer).

The Committee **decided** to approve the report. A further update would be received at the December meeting.

#### **M14-15/46 Contingency Plans for Assessment and Examinations**

The Committee **considered** an update of the contingency plans for assessment and examinations (UTC.14-15/27). The policy set out contingency arrangements and guidance for departments to minimise the potential disruption to students because of staff unavailability in relation to teaching, learning and assessment, and had been updated in March 2014 to make it compliant with the modular scheme rules following consideration by SCA.

The Committee was supportive of the policy although members **noted** the sensitivity of the timing of the revision being considered, in relation to ongoing discussions between the Employers Pension Forum and the University and College Union over the future of USS.

During the discussion, it was suggested that:

- there should be a small re-wording of the second paragraph to be more explicit that the Vice Chancellor could initiate *and stand down* the special measures;
- B.2.1 of the document could potentially put large amounts of pressure on Heads of Department and should be amended to “Heads of Department (their nominees, or the Vice Chancellor’s nominees) are responsible for ensuring that assessments and examinations continue where possible”;
- the title of the document could be changed to Contingency Framework.

Members **noted** that these special measures often put staff in difficult positions, and it was felt that more detailed guidance for Heads of Department and Chairs of Board of Studies to follow in these situations would be appreciated.

The Committee **decided to recommend the policy amendments to Senate for approval**. The cover note to Senate should reflect the Committee’s concerns regarding the unfortunate timing of the approval of the amendments.

**ACTION: Steve King**

#### **M14-15/47 National Student Survey 2014**

The Committee **considered** a report on the analysis of the additional questions from the National Student Survey (NSS) 2014 (UTC.14-15/28). During the discussion it was noted that although the response rate for these questions was considerably lower than the main NSS questions, the results backed up findings from the main survey. Members felt that the results for banks of questions on careers (B1) and feedback from students (B6) gave valuable information. B6 emphasised the need to ensure that students were aware of actions being taken as a result of their feedback. The planned review of Student Staff Forums would allow for more consideration of these issues.

### **M14-15/48 NSS, PRES and UKES 2015**

The Committee **considered** arrangements for the 2015 National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the UK Engagement Survey (UKES) (UTC.14-15/29).

During the discussion it was **noted** that the Academic Registry was recruiting a marketing officer who would have a role in trying to increase response rates. Members felt that response rates would be best improved through effectively explaining to students the benefits of survey completion, rather than by offering incentives. YUSU and the GSA were in support of incentives, and it was **noted** that the GSA would consider offering its own incentives for PRES. After a discussion in which members put forward cases on both sides, the Committee **decided** not to offer incentives for 2015 surveys, including the donation of £1 to the Student Hardship Fund for every completed NSS questionnaire.

The Committee **decided** to approve the following:

NSS:

- the start date of the NSS: 19 January 2015;
- the inclusion of additional banks of questions: B1. Careers and B6. Feedback from Students;
- the recommendation not to include any institutional questions;
- the recommendation not to offer incentives or prizes.

PRES

- that the University would take part in PRES 2015;
- the dates of the survey: 1 March to 15 May 2015;
- the recommendation not to offer incentives or prizes.

UKES

- the dates of the survey: 13 April to 15 May 2015;
- the recommendation to include two additional questions: "Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course", and "Are there any particularly positive or negative aspects of your course that you would like to highlight?"
- the recommendation not to offer incentives or prizes.

### **M14-15/49 Undergraduate External Examiners' Reports 2013/14**

The Committee **considered** a summary report of the undergraduate external examiners' reports for 2013/14 (UTC.14-15/30). Members **noted** that overall the reports were positive about the standard and quality of provision and all externals confirmed that standards were being met. Externals also raised points for the University and departments to consider to further improve the student and teaching experience. The report highlighted substantive

issues for University quality and standards and issues that appeared in a number of reports. Department and programme-specific issues would be fully considered as part of Annual Programme Review.

The YUSU representative **noted** that issues with (the lack of) use of the full mark scale could be a particular issue for combined students who were exposed to different practices.

The Committee **decided** to forward the report and issues arising from undergraduate external examiner reports to the Standing Committee on Assessment, for further consideration and appropriate action.

#### **M14-15/50 Anonymous File Submission and Marking Workflow Pilots**

The Committee **considered** a report on the anonymous file submission and marking workflow pilots (e-Assignment) (UTC.14-15/31). The report summarised the progress of the Controlled Open Assessments Working Group in developing a workflow for the electronic submission of student work via the VLE's anonymous file submission tool. The workflow had been piloted in 2013/14 by the Schools of Law and Management and by the Departments of History and Politics.

Members **noted** that the pilots had been a success. The intention was for an increased number of departments to adopt the workflow throughout 2014/15, and for further enhancements to be made to the process during a second cycle of technical development. The YUSU representative **reported** widespread student support for a move to electronic submission.

The Committee **decided** to endorse the recommendation that a second cycle of technical development work be carried out on the e-assignment workflow, under the continued supervision of the Controlled Open Assessments Working Group.

#### **M14-15/51 Teaching Expectations**

The Committee **considered** the University of York Statement on Teaching Performance Expectations (UTC.14-15/33) which had been developed as part of the HR-led Performance Excellence Project. During the discussion it was **noted** that:

- the English language ability of teaching staff was an issue for some students. Members felt that although language was arguably a recruitment issue (rather than performance) the statement should include reference to the importance of teaching staff expressing themselves in a fluent and clear manner;
- the statement should be reviewed in two years, in the light of the new University Strategy and new Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- the statement should be clear that it includes specialist teaching units (e.g. the Centre for Lifelong Learning) and supplementary programmes.

The Committee **decided** to approve the statement, subject to consideration of the amendments as listed above.

**ACTION: Duncan Jackson**

#### **M14-15/52 Periodic Review: School of Social and Political Sciences**

The Committee **considered** the report, external assessor's report, agreed action plan, and an update from the School arising from the periodic review of the School of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) (UTC.14-15/32).

Members of the review panel **reported** that the review had been positive. The report highlighted a number of areas for further consideration by the School, including programme and graduate identity, and core modules and pathways. It was **noted** that since the review, SPS had undergone a change in leadership and administrative support and the Chair of the review panel would be attending the School's away day in December, which would include further discussion of the implementation of the action plan.

#### **Category II Business**

##### **M14-15/53 Learning and Teaching Forum**

The Committee **received** a report from the Learning and Teaching Forum on activities in 2014/15 (UTC.14-15/34), which included details of workshop themes, magazine themes, the Learning and Teaching Conference 2015 and the newly launched Forum blog.

##### **M14-15/54 Modifications to and Withdrawals of Programmes**

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between September and October 2014 (UTC.14-15/35).

*Chemistry:* The Department of Chemistry reported that students had been actively informed of all modifications reported to the October 2014 meeting of UTC. The changes received no opposition and multiple messages of support.

*Centre for Christianity and Culture:* Approval of a delay in the start date of the PGDip in the History, Heritage and Fabric of the English Parish Church to January 2015 with resultant alteration to the programme structure for the incoming cohort only.

*Centre for English Language Teaching:* Approval of an 8 week pre-sessional for Summer 2015 for undergraduates expecting to enter TYMS: 8-week Management English Language Pre-sessional for Undergraduates.

*Computer Science:* Approval of modification to Stage 4 20-credit Group Project module, so that this would now run Spring / Summer only rather than year-round; reduction in assessments from five to three; and change in hand-in dates to concentrate these in Summer Term, to take effect from 2014/15 and affecting all single subject integrated masters' programmes in Computer Science.

*Education (ITT):* Further to M14-15/23:

- approval of the partnership agreements between the Department and the Pathfinder and Pinnacle Alliances for Schools Direct PGCE provision for 2015/16.
- approval to change the name of a number of language PGCEs to meet UCAS naming conventions for Red Kite Schools Direct partnership:

<i>Old title</i>	<i>New title</i>
Spanish	Modern Languages (Spanish)
Spanish with French	Modern Languages (Spanish with French)
Spanish with German	Modern Languages (Spanish with German)
French	Modern Languages (French)
German	Modern Languages (German)

The change is immediate for recruitment to the programmes in 2015.

*Environment:* Approval of changes to hand-in dates of coursework on Level 7 modules in Corporate Social Responsibility and Risk and Tools for Environmental Assessment, so that hand-in moved from end of Autumn Term to week 2, Spring Term, for 2014/15; affected all MSc and MEnv programmes.

*Health Sciences:* Approval of revisions to the MSc Applied Health Research to reduce the dissertation to 60 credits with resulting restructuring of taught modules. Approval was also given to offer the PGDip as a programme from 2015/16 (retaining it as an exit award only for 2014/15).

Approval, with immediate effect, that students on the BSc Nursing and BSc Midwifery who either (i) failed at reassessment or (ii) exceeded the credit failure threshold for the stage would leave the programme immediately (there was no compensation on the programmes). If eligible the student would receive an appropriate exit award.

*Languages for All:* Approval of a new 20-credit Medieval Latin 2 module, to be available from 2014/15 as an extra-curricula option for students and to members of the public.

*Management:* Approval, with immediate effect, of a change of assessment for stage 3 module Strategy in Context: Theory and Practice to one 3000 word open assessment.

*Mathematics:* Approval of part-time variants of the PhD in Mathematics, MPhil in Mathematics and MSc in Mathematics (by research) programmes, to be available for 2015/16 entry.

Approval of revisions to assessment on two MSc modules from 2014/15 (Advanced Multivariate Analysis and Survival Analysis) so that these modules were now assessed 100% by exam (modules accidentally omitted from list of similar modifications reported to the Committee in October 2014).

*PEP*: Approval of a change from 30 to 20 credit modules in stage three of the PPE programme for the 2013 and 2014 cohorts.

*Philosophy*: Approval of modification to Level 5 pathway modules from 2014/15. Assessment components will be weighted at 30/30/30/10, with students' lowest scoring piece of work weighted at 10%.

*Politics*: Approval to change the first summative assessment of stage two core module Political Inquiry from an exam to an essay for the 2014/15 cohort onwards.

#### **M14-15/55 Standing Committee on Assessment**

The Committee **received** a report on the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment on 26 September 2014, the terms of reference and annual priorities (UTC.14-15/36).

#### **M14-15/56 Distance Learning Forum**

The Committee **noted** that the minutes from the meeting of the Distance Learning Forum held on 21 October 2014 were available online at:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/groups/distance/#tab-4>

#### **M14-15/57 Registers**

The Committee **received** the 2014/15 registers for:

- Distance learning programmes
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
- Collaboration (taught programmes)
- Collaboration (postgraduate research) (UTC.14-15/37)

#### **M14-15/58 Computer Science: British Computer Society Accreditation**

The Committee **received** a report from the British Computer Society (BCS) on the accreditation of the Department's programmes (UTC.14-15/38). The Department had already submitted a response to the satisfaction of the BCS.

#### **M14-15/59 Centre for Women's Studies: Erasmus+ Bid**

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved an Erasmus+ bid to further develop the existing intensive module "The Social Challenges of Gender and Equality: Theory, Practices and Professions" in the Centre for Women's Studies as part of a 'Professionnalisation Aux Saviors Autour du Genre et de l'Egalite' consortium (EGALES partners plus Frankfurt and Bruxelles Libre).

#### **M14-15/60 Exchange Agreements**

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

- an Erasmus exchange for postgraduate research students or faculty between the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Philosophy, University of Milan, Italy

#### **M14-15/61 QAA Consultation**

The Committee **noted** that the QAA had been consulting on the subject benchmarks for Anthropology, Business and management, Education studies, Engineering, English, Librarianship, information, knowledge, records and archives management, Osteopathy, Philosophy, and Politics and international relations. The relevant departments had been alerted to the consultations.

#### **M14-15/62 Meetings**

The Committee **noted** the dates of the next meetings (all at 1.00pm in HG21, Heslington Hall, unless stated otherwise):

- Wednesday 10 December 2014, 11am to 1pm (Strategy meeting, with lunch)
- Thursday 11 December 2014
- Thursday 5 February 2015 in HG15, Heslington Hall
- Thursday 12 March 2015
- Thursday 14 May 2015
- Thursday 18 June 2015 in HG15, Heslington Hall