

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2016

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair), Professor S Bell, Mr E Braman , Mr N Dandy, Mr J Fagan, Professor J Hudson, Professor A Hunt, Ms R Ibrahim (GSA representative), Dr S King, Ms T Laycock (YUSU representative), Dr B Lee, Professor T Lightfoot, Dr E Major, Dr G Chitty, Dr K Selby, Professor D Smith, Professor J Thijssen, Professor R Waites.

In Attendance: Mrs J Iddon (ASO, Secretary), Mrs J Brotherton (ASO, Minute Secretary), Dr R Vann (for M16-17/36), Dr A Lee (for M16-17/38) and Mrs S Broom (for M16-17/39).

Apologies: Professor G Ozkan, Mrs K Dodd, Professor B Fulton, Professor M Ormrod and Dr L Waldorf.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

M16-17/30 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Dr Emma Major and Professor David Smith as new members of the Committee to their first meeting.

M16-17/31 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2016 (UTC.16-17/22).

M16-17/32 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Committee **received** an update on matters arising from the October minutes (UTC.16-17/22). It was **noted** that all items had been closed, with the exception of the following:

- M15-16/109: the Attendance Monitoring Working Group would report its progress to UTC in December.
- M15-16/153-154: planning approval for the MSc Molecular Medicine and MSc in Agricultural Biodiversity and Ecosystems had not yet been granted. The Department of Biology intended to submit the necessary paperwork shortly.
- M16-17/9: additional analysis of the PTES results (relating to skills development) was being undertaken by the ASO and would be considered by the Chair in due course.
- M16-17/16: the Department of Chemistry had been asked to submit an amended action plan in response to its periodic review report and this would be received by the Committee in December.

The Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment **reported** that, in response to UTC's request that SCA consider co-opting a member of Disability Services to serve on SCA (M16-17/18 refers), Ms Claire Shanks (Disability Support Adviser) Services had been invited to attend SCA.

M16-17/33 Terms of Reference and Membership

The Committee **considered** revised membership for 2016/17 (UTC.16-17/23). The revision reflected the proposed addition of the recently appointed Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students as an ex officio member of UTC.

The Committee **decided to recommend to Senate** its revised membership for 2016/17.

M16-17/34 Oral Update from the Chair

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

- Professor Tracy Lightfoot had been appointed as the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning, Teaching and Students.
- Subsequent to the circulation of the report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action (UTC.16-17/32), the due diligence on the Yorkshire Teaching Schools Alliance had been completed satisfactorily and the partnership was being progressed.
- The Autumn 2016 issue of Forum magazine (Student Work) had recently been published.
- The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): The Year 2 specification had recently been published. The TEF Panel and Year 2 assessor pool did not include any University of York staff or students. Higher Education provider ratings would be dependent on performance against six metrics in comparison to a determined benchmark position which would take account of the student mix. In addition, universities were allowed to produce a 15 page qualitative submission. The final TEF results would take the qualitative submission into consideration, although the extent to which the submission could influence the overall TEF rating, relative to the core metrics, was not clear. Teaching Committee would review a draft of the University's submission at its December meeting.

M15-16/35 Update from the Student Representatives

GSA

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

- The training of course representatives was complete and had been well received by participants.
- Student representatives for the International Pathway College had been recruited; one for Pre-Masters and one for Foundation courses.
- Induction talks had been arranged for new postgraduate research students enrolling in January 2017.

YUSU

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

- The training of course representatives was now complete and YUSU was in the process of gathering feedback on the usefulness of the training. The early indications from the data were very positive.
- Thomas Shutt, the undergraduate Faculty Representative for the Faculty of Sciences, was gathering feedback on the draft student partnership agreement.

M16-17/36 Periodic Review: Health Sciences

Dr Roddy Vann, Chair of the review panel for the Periodic Review of Health Sciences, attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report, external assessors' report and action plan arising from the periodic review of the Department of Health Sciences (UTC.16-17/24). The review had been positive and, in particular, Dr Vann noted the helpfulness of the external panel members, the notable enthusiasm and commitment of staff in the department, and the seemingly universal view from students that they would recommend their course to others.

Dr Vann highlighted some of the key recommendations contained within the report which included improving the clarity of assessment tasks, improving the consistency of feedback, and clarifying the Department's governance arrangements. It was reported that the issues relating to assessment and feedback were also evident in the National Student Survey results 2016 and the Head of Learning Enhancement had indicated that the proposed actions connected with assessment and feedback (3.6, 3.8, 3.13 and, by extension, 3.15) did not specifically address the recommendations in the report. These actions would be revised following consultation between the Learning Enhancement Team and the Department, and treated as part of a broader, connected discussion on assessment rather than individual pieces of work.

Secretary's post-meeting note: a meeting had been scheduled between the Department, members of the Academic Support Office (Academic Quality, Learning Enhancement, the Department's ProPEL contact) and the Chair of UTC to consider how best to coordinate all curriculum-related work arising from a range of action plans and projects. The Department's periodic review action plan would be revised accordingly and resubmitted to UTC in the Spring Term.

The Committee **considered** the recommendation to UTC/ASO to consider establishing a means to facilitate programme approval and approval of major modifications during the summer vacation. The Chair reported that, in the past, this had been done by chair's action or via extraordinary UTC meetings. The Chair confirmed that UTC would continue to facilitate programme approval during the summer vacation in this way. The Sciences Faculty Learning and Teaching Group, which was now responsible for the approval of major modifications for Health Sciences programmes, had indicated that it would approve major modifications (and the planning case for new programmes) over the summer vacation via chair's action.

It was **noted** that two of the other University-level actions related to meeting the needs of the Department over the summer vacation. It was **reported** that the needs of students during the summer vacation was regularly considered at Student Life Committee. The University-level actions relating to timetabling (ref. 5.11) and accommodation (ref. 6.7) would be taken forward by the Faculty Operations Manager.

The Committee observed that the need to ensure continuity for students outside term time was not specific to the Department of Health Sciences. Members were aware that the absence of Ethics Committee meetings during the summer vacation caused PGR students some difficulty (and could potentially delay the start of research). The GSA representative was asked to make the Chair aware of other key areas which were delayed by the summer governance structures.

Action: GSA representative

The Chair thanked Dr Roddy Vann for attending Teaching Committee to present the Periodic Review Report.

M16-17/37 Social Research Masters programme

The Committee **considered** a proposal for a new Social Research Masters (MA in Social Research) programme to begin in September 2017 (UTC.16-17/25) which was being proposed as part of York's successful ESRC White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership bid. The programme will be delivered over one year full time and two years part time. The Committee was asked to approve the proposed structure of the programme, to enable recruitment to begin, on the basis of the summary information provided. The full paperwork would be considered by UTC at its February 2017 meeting. The programme structure had been reviewed in advance by Professor John Robinson. Professor John Robinson **reported** that the programme proposer had agreed to revise the programme structure to make clear that students would not start their dissertations until the spring term. It had also been confirmed that the student workload for the Professional and Transferable Skills module was minimal in the autumn term.

The following points were **noted** during discussion:

- A permanent programme leader would be appointed. In the meantime Professor Tracy Lightfoot was the acting as interim programme leader.
- The programme would be developed in line with the principles of the York Pedagogy including 6-8 programme learning outcomes (which would need to accommodate the ESRC prescribed learning outcomes).
- It was expected that the programme would recruit around 30 students.
- Some concern was expressed about the potential for the programme (which would involve 14 departments) to restrict activity in contributing departments.
- There was concern about the practicalities of coordinating 14 departments. The need to ensure that departments were committed to supporting the requirements of the programme was emphasised.

- The importance of creating a coherent cohort was highlighted. It was noted that whilst cohort-specific activity was limited, the Spring term modules “Working beyond disciplines” and “Professional and transferable skills” were cohort-specific.

The interim programme leader would consider the issues raised by Teaching Committee in further developing the details of the programme (which would be reviewed by UTC in February 2017).

The Committee **decided to approve** the amended programme structure which would permit recruitment to begin. It was **noted** that the broad aims and objectives of the programme would be advertised and prospective applicants would be referred to the White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Centre for more detailed information. The Chair made clear the importance of full and robust scrutiny of the complete programme documentation and this will be undertaken when it is submitted to UTC in February 2017.

The Committee **considered** the proposed membership of the Board of Studies and **decided** that it was appropriate subject to the addition of student representation and an Academic Liaison Librarian as an ex-officio member. It was **noted** that the remit of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee should articulate the need to consult with the relevant Departmental Exceptional Circumstances Committees as appropriate.

Subject to the agreed changes, the Committee **decided to recommend to Senate approval** of the creation of a Board of Studies to govern the Social Research Masters programme, which would be based in the Research Centre for Social Sciences.

Secretary’s post-meeting note: the proposed membership is contrary to Ordinance 1 and Senate will therefore be asked to approve an exemption with respect to the constitution of the Board of Studies. Senate has approved alternative arrangements for interdisciplinary programmes in the past (for example Natural Sciences).

M16-17/38 NSS arrangements

Dr Adrian Lee, ASO, attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report which set out the proposed arrangements for the 2017 National Student Survey, based on the conclusions of research undertaken by the ASO (UTC.16-17/26). Members observed that the research did not find a clear link between response rates and the overall satisfaction scores. Nonetheless, members welcomed the report’s suggestions for increasing participation, as a more representative set of results would better inform enhancement activity.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- The University would start the 2017 NSS on 6 February 2017.
- The additional bank of careers questions would be used.
- No institutional questions would be included.

- No institutional incentives or prizes would be offered.
- ASO's research paper into departments' NSS promotional activities would be shared at Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups and made available to departments via the University NSS webpage.

The Committee **endorsed** the value of the proposed methods of promotion including greater use of social media and the production of a video. The YUSU representative offered to consult colleagues on the production of a promotional video.

The Chair thanked Dr Adrian Lee for undertaking the research and for attending Teaching Committee to present the NSS paper.

M16-17/39 Freshers' and York Experience survey results

Mrs Susanna Broom attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report on two internal undergraduate surveys commissioned by the NSS Task Group; The Freshers' Survey and the York Experience Survey (YES) (UTC.16-17/27). The Freshers' Survey results were generally positive, although they identified certain groups who were slower to settle where future activity could be focussed. The YES aimed to provide better insight in to how undergraduates had been supported to engage with their programmes and wider developmental opportunities. While questions in the YES closely mirrored NSS questions, it was reported that the results could not usefully predict NSS performance until there was a bank of comparable results.

Although the usefulness of both surveys was hampered by low response rates, the results provided an indication of broad trends at University-level and a number of actions had been taken in response to the results, for example specific College support targeted towards 'slow to settle' students. The results of the 2016 Freshers' Survey would provide an indication of how successful the measures had been. In 2016/17 both surveys would be shortened and the Freshers' survey would start earlier to avoid the Christmas holidays.

During discussion members **noted** that the YES did not capture the experience of students studying off-site. The Committee agreed that shortening the surveys would be helpful, as it was felt that their length was likely to to impact negatively on response rates. It was also suggested that the YES might provide an opportunity to improve students' understanding of certain NSS questions.

The paper would be considered as a substantive item at Student Life Committee's January meeting and issues identified would be followed up as appropriate (for example via the Disability Accessibility Group).

The Chair thanked Susanna Broom for attending Teaching Committee to present the paper.

M16-17/40 Annual priorities

The Committee **considered** a summary of the main areas of work in relation to Learning and Teaching for 2016-17, set out in an action plan (UTC.16-17/28). The Committee **approved** the action plan and the prioritisation of the actions for 2016/17.

M16-17/41 Student Partnership Agreement

The Committee **considered** the latest draft Student Partnership Agreement (UTC.16-17/29). The Chair clarified the relationship between the draft agreement and the separate consultation paper on the policy implications of the Student Partnership Agreement (dimensions of practice and possible threshold standards) (UTC.16-17/33) which had been circulated for comment to Boards of Studies and Faculty Learning Teaching Groups. Members were encouraged to feedback on the possible threshold standards through the consultation process.

It was **noted** that the section 4 of the draft agreement did not explicitly articulate that the University would respect its students. The Working Group would be advised of this omission.

M16-17/42 Undergraduate External Examiners' reports

The Committee **considered** a summary report of the undergraduate external examiners' reports for 2015/16 (UTC.16-17/30). All externals had confirmed that standards were appropriate, that student performance was comparable with similar programmes in other institutions and that processes for assessment and the determination of awards were fair.

The report highlighted some common themes which had emerged from the suggested areas of improvement in the reports. Themes included a lack of clarity about the different roles being undertaken by the Departmental Exam Board and the Programme Exam Board, dissatisfaction with the data that was provided to external examiners, the absence of assessment variety and inconsistency in feedback.

Members **noted** that the implementation of the York Pedagogy, which emphasised the coordination of assessment at programme level and the alignment of assessments to learning outcomes, should help to address concerns related to assessment design.

The SCA had considered the report at its meeting on 28 October 2016 and the Chair of the SCA informed members of the following actions which had been agreed:

- All external examiners would be sent the revised section of the Guide to Assessment which had been amended to clarify the role of Boards of Examiners.
- Departments would be advised of the centrally-produced data reports which could be produced by the SITS Assessment Team and encouraged to use these in place of locally produced data reports. Departments would also be reminded of the capabilities of the Tableau software for data analysis and visualization.

M16-17/43 Learning and Teaching Forum Activities

The Committee **received** a report from the Learning and Teaching Forum on planned activities in 2016-17 (UTC.16-17/31). Members **noted** that the date of the Learning and Teaching Conference, Tuesday 20 June 2017 (week 10 of the Summer Term), coincided with Exam Boards and that this would make attendance difficult. It was reported that Forum had carefully considered competing arguments with respect to whether the event should be held during term-time or outside of term-time.

The Autumn edition of the Forum magazine had been published and copies were available for members.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

M16-17/44 Modifications and Withdrawals

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between 21 September and 20 October 2016 (UTC.16-17/32), as follows:

Education

Approval to revise the assessment of the undergraduate module Research Methods for Psychology in Education 1 - EDC00018I which forms part of the BSc in Psychology in Education. Following advice from the external examiner, the assessment method will be a closed exam without allowing students to take in notes. This is effective from 2016/17.

Approval to add a new PGCE School Direct partnership route - Yorkshire Teaching Schools Alliance - to start in 2017. This will offer initial teacher training in: Maths, English, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French/German, French/Spanish, German/French, Spanish/French. Approval of the programme and to open recruitment has been granted.

History

Approval of the standardisation of the assessment for the project element of the Stage 2 Explorations modules to group projects, for implementation in 2017/18.

Approval of the withdrawal of the Stage 2 modules 'Dissertation Skills' and 'Using Primary Material', and the addition of the new Spring/Summer Stage 2 core modules 'Discipline of History I' (for all History students) and 'Discipline of History II' (for single subject History students only). This is for implementation in 2018/19.

Approval of the withdrawal of the Stage 3 module 'Debating Historical Practice,' and revision of the 'Comparative Histories' modules from 20cu Spring/Summer option modules to 40cu Autumn/Spring/ Summer option modules. This is for implementation in 2019/20.

Approval of the introduction of two reading and writing weeks in week 6 of the Autumn and Spring terms for Stage 3 only. This is for implementation in 2019/20.

CELT

Approval to run bespoke pre-sessional courses to small groups of students in Education, SPSW, Music and Electronics in summer 2017.

Electronics

Withdrawal of the MSc Nanoscale VLSI Design, with effect from 2016/17.

IPC

Approval to add a new June entry point for the 'Entry to Pre-Masters' programme, to feed into the September start 2-Term Pre-Masters programme, with effect from June 2017.

Physics

Approval to create a 5-year MPhys Physics / Theoretical Physics / Physics with Astrophysics with year abroad route (with effect from 2017/18 as both an application route and a route for transfer) and to withdraw the 4-year MPhys Physics / Theoretical Physics / Physics with Astrophysics with year in Europe route with effect from 2018/19.

M16-17/45 Consultation on Student Partnership

The Committee **received** the consultation paper on the Policy implications of the Student Partnership Agreement (UTC.16-17/33).

M16-17/46 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **received** a report on the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on 28 October 2016 (UTC.16-17/34).

M16-17/47 Institute of Physics accreditation of degree programmes

The Committee **received** the report arising from the Institute of Physics' accreditation of degree programmes delivered by the Department of Physics (UTC.16-17/35).

M16-17/48 Periodic Review: Politics, Economics and Philosophy

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved the School of Politics, Economics and Philosophy's exceptional request to postpone its periodic review scheduled for the Spring term 2017 until the Autumn term 2017.

M16-17/49 Periodic Review: External assessors

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved the following assessors:

- Professor Mary Dalrymple (University of Oxford) and Dr Rosina Marquez-Reiter (University of Surrey), for the Periodic Review of the Department of Language and Linguistic Science.

M16-17/50 Exchange agreements

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved an exchange agreement between the University of York and City University Hong Kong for University-wide student exchanges.

M16-17/51 Registers for 2016/17

The Committee **received** the registers for 2016/17 for distance learning programmes; accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, and collaborations involving taught programmes (UTC.15-16/36).

M16-17/52 QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Sociology

The Committee **received** an update from the Board of Studies: Sociology on the Department's consideration of the revised Sociology Subject Benchmark Statement (QAA, 2016) (UTC.16-17/37).

M16-17/53 Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee **noted** that the dates of future meetings in the 2016/17 academic year were as follows (all at 9.30 am in HG21, Heslington Hall, unless stated otherwise)

Thursday 8 December 2016

Thursday 9 February 2017

Thursday 16 March 2017 (HG15, Heslington Hall)

Friday 19 May 2017,

Thursday 22 June 2017