

## UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

## TEACHING COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2018

**Present:** John Robinson (Chair)  
 Michael Bate  
 Stuart Bell  
 Mike Bentley  
 Ed Braman  
 Charlotte Chamberlain  
 Gill Chitty  
 Sabine Clarke  
 Valerie Cotter  
 Nigel Dandy  
 Joe Fagan  
 Jenny Gibbons  
 James Hare  
 Claire Hughes  
 Steve King  
 Barry Lee  
 Tracy Lightfoot  
 Sinéad McCotter  
 Lisa O'Malley  
 Matthew Perry  
 Dave Smith  
 Richard Waites  
 Jez Wells

**In Attendance:** Jane Iddon (ASO, Secretary), Jenny Brotherton (ASO, Minute Secretary) Chris Bovis (GSA Representation and Democracy Coordinator)

Apologies were received from: Gulcin Ozkan

## CATEGORY I BUSINESS

**M18-19/54 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Lisa O'Malley to the Committee.

**M18-19/55 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2018 (UTC.18-19/41).

The Committee **considered** an update on matters arising from the minutes (UTC. 18-19/41 **Appendix 1**).

- The Director of Planning would attend a future UTC to discuss student number allocations.

- History of Art had responded to concerns about Graduate Teaching Assistants managing teaching workload alongside their research.
- BIU would explore the sharp increase in Ordinary and Aegrotat degrees, in early December.
- FLTGs would consider the options paper on the Programme Module Catalogue in January. Undergraduate Department representatives had given their view on Programme Maps at a recent meeting and the GSA Vice President Academic was seeking feedback from the Postgraduate Department reps.

#### **M18-19/56 Oral Update from the Chair**

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

- Work on the subject level TEF pilot was being taken forward by a central team (with members of ASO, Careers, and the Library) led by David Gent. The University had received its metrics from the OfS and the initial hypothesis for each subject had been established. The process would involve early sharing of submissions so that good practice could be identified quickly and shared. The timescale was tight and the submissions would be finalised in January. FLTG meetings in January would be used to peer review the submissions.
- The UTC strategy meeting on 12 December had been cancelled, as the timeline for the subject-level TEF submissions meant that it could not usefully support the process.
- Some Rapid Response funding for 2018/19 for small-scale projects (up to £3000) was still available.
- The Together York Project for 2018/19 would focus on international student integration. It would build on the international student experience Together York Project from last year and was being Chaired by Tracy Lightfoot.

#### **M18-19/57 Update from the Student Representatives**

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

- the GSA had produced a Christmas vacation guide which contained information about events happening over the Christmas break;
- the GSA were working on research forums for PGR representatives and a project with the library (for both PGT and PGR representatives) primarily to ensure that representatives and students understand the bespoke postgraduate offering of the library, especially the role of the academic liaison librarian.

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

- Student Voice pilots were underway including an action research module with Biology and pre-arrival induction with the Management School;
- YUSU was recruiting to the vacant Student Engagement Development Coordinator post;
- The 'Keep Your Cool' campaign, which included publicising the support available to students during the examination period, would soon be launched.

#### **M18-19/58 Module Evaluation**

The Committee **considered** Terms of Reference for the UTC Working Group on Module Evaluation (UTC.18-19/42). The project aimed to propose a standardised evaluation methodology or tool to enhance teaching quality, maintaining some flexibility to adapt to differing contexts.

The Group had met once and established Terms of Reference identifying different areas it felt should be addressed. This included the format and timing of module evaluations, the

potential for separating the evaluation of teaching from the evaluation of assessment and feedback, ways to enhance student engagement with module evaluations, affording time to academic staff to analyse and report on evaluation data, and ensuring that actions taken in response to evaluations were reported back to students.

Members queried whether the Working Group intended to explore ways in which module evaluations could be used to assess the impact of the York Pedagogy, for example, asking if students understood the connection between modules and PLOs. The Chair of the Working Group explained that whilst the Terms of Reference did not explicitly refer to the 'York Pedagogy' the principles of the York Pedagogy would be a reference point.

It was suggested that the Terms of Reference should consider students' perceptions of value added. However, Members felt that this would increase the scale of the project too significantly.

The Committee noted the importance of reporting the action taken in response to module evaluations back to students and emphasised that evaluations should form part of a productive dialogue between staff and students. It was reported that the Group was considering a declaration or contract that would set out the expectations on students and staff. It was envisaged that there would be a recommendation for programme leaders in relation to providing clear responses.

It was noted that departments had different aims for module feedback. The Group had acknowledged that any recommendations to promote a degree of consistency would need to be adaptable to diverse contexts. The need to consider PGT and distance learning students was noted.

The Working Group would be splitting into two smaller workstreams, one looking at the effectiveness of feedback as an aid to learning, and one looking at good practice and ideas about closing the feedback loop and responses to evaluations. Both workstreams would report back to the Working Group with headline findings / issues.

UTC **endorsed** the proposed Terms of Reference.

#### **M18-19/59 External Examiners**

The Committee **considered** a report on the undergraduate external examiners' reports for 2017/18 (UTC.18-19/43). It was reported that, since the circulation of papers, a response from the Norwegian Study Centre had been received. 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.

Members considered the summary report which highlighted common themes:

- positive comments around programme design;
- comments on the variety of assessment methods used including a perception by some externals of over assessment;
- the use of clear marking criteria (including recognition of good practice with respect to tailored criteria for different levels and task);
- use of the full marking scale and the practice of "stepped" marking;
- pockets of poor student performance;
- the need for more contextual information at Module Examination Boards;
- the tight turnaround for examiners in scrutinising their sample.

The report identified possible areas of follow up for the University, in relation to themes and to individual points of concern. These had been considered by SCA:

- The report suggested consideration of opportunities to share good practice regarding tailored marking criteria for different assessments. The Chair of SCA had prepared a briefing note for the FLTGs asking them to consider this. It would also be discussed at the next Chairs of Boards of Examiners forum.
- It suggested that the impact of stepped marking should be explored further. SCA would gather information on this, including from FLTGs, and would consider whether there should be information on stepped marking in the Guide to Assessment.
- The report queried whether there was transparency and clarity in moderation and second marking processes and whether current guidance in relation to marking requirements was sufficient. SCA had noted that the Guide to Assessment set out the principles on this and that implementation was devolved to Departments. This issue would be discussed at the next Chairs of Boards of Examiners forum.

The issue of providing contextual information at Module Boards was raised. SCA had considered a paper in July 2018 exploring the advantages and disadvantages of reports which showed stage averages for individual and predicted degree classifications. It had resolved that such reports should not be made available on the basis that this might encourage Boards to adjust results for students at a classification boundary. Whilst the SCA was supportive of providing cohort-level reports, it acknowledged that there was a resource implication for Student Services. The Chair of SCA had asked the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress to consider what was feasible. Members of UTC were supportive of the need to provide external examiners with contextual information. It was noted that it was a requirement for external examiners to attend the Module Board and to participate in the Programme Board. Members queried whether the annual external examiner report template had been aligned (if required) to reflect the two stage examination board structure (approved in June 2014 for implementation in 2014-15).

The report had highlighted that the IPC required central support to develop effective IT systems to manage the IPC's progression and award regulations. It was noted that the IPC had developed an in-house solution which required a significant level of manual intervention. The Director of IPC reported that some resource had been allocated for a Tribal consultant to explore the development of the necessary infrastructure. Members agreed that there was a continuing need for this development.

The Committee **endorsed** the actions which had been identified by SCA. Members suggested that future summary reports should more clearly identify the extent of the concerns which were identified, so that the scale of the issues identified could be understood.

#### **M18-19/60 Online Project**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching Learning and Students on the Online Project. The third cohort of students on the Management programmes had started and recruitment for the three cohorts was slightly ahead of target. There were 102 students on the programmes, around a fifth of the University's distance learning student population. It was envisaged that the number of students on distance learning programmes delivered in collaboration with Higher Ed Partners UK would eventually exceed existing distance learning student numbers. New programmes in Computer Science would be considered later in the meeting (M18-19/61 refers).

The Project Team would be reviewing how students on the Management programmes were making use of study breaks. It also planned to review enrolment dates to ensure that these did not coincide with particularly busy times for the University and was looking at opportunities to offer fee waivers. The programme characteristics document was being updated and this would be brought to UTC in February.

Jan Ball (Educational Advisor – Online Learning) who had recently been appointed to the role of Faculty Learning Enhancement Project Manager (Social Sciences), was thanked for her significant contribution to the project.

#### **M18-19/61 Computer Science: online MSc programmes**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the Department of Computer Science for three new distance learning, part-time programmes designed in partnership with Higher Education Partners UK (HEP) to start in April 2019.

- MSc Computer Science (UTC.18-19/45a)
- MSc Computer Science with Cyber Security (UTC.18-19/45b)
- MSc Computer Science with Data Analytics (UTC.18-19/45c)

The Programmes had received planning approval from the Faculty Learning and Teaching Group for Sciences.

The programmes had been reviewed in advance by Claire Hughes and Gulcin Ozkan and had their support. The proposals had also been considered by three external assessors; all were supportive and recommended that the proposals proceed with minor changes (UTC.18-19/45i-v). The Department had addressed the comments made (UTC.18-19/45vi) and had revised the Programme Design Documents (PDD) and module descriptors, subsequent to circulation of papers, in accordance with the assessors' reports.

The programmes followed the structure agreed with HEP of 15 credit modules and a 30 credit dissertation. In line with the HEP's 'carousel' model, other than the first module 'Algorithms and Data Structures', the Research Proposal and the Research Project, modules were designed so that they could be completed in any order. In accordance with the parameters for HEP provision the programmes had been designed to be completed in two years with an additional two years permitted for leaves of absence or other breaks of study (after which, in the event of exceptional circumstances, a student could seek approval for a programme extension). The programmes shared 9 core modules and the specialist programmes (Cyber Security and Data Analytics) included two specialist modules. The MSc in Computer Science included one module from each specialism.

The programmes were designed as conversion courses for IT professionals without a qualification, or for those who want to move into the field. Admission requirements were a 2.2 in any subject. The first module, 'Algorithms and Data Structures', was designed to teach students programming to a level which would allow them to complete later modules successfully. The Committee was concerned about achieving this in a 15 credit module, particularly for students with no previous experience in computer science. This had been discussed by the Department and it planned to keep the module under review. It was noted that the team delivering the online Management programmes had found that a lot of work was required to support the first module and the Management School was discussing additional study skills support and induction sessions to try and better support students who were returning or new to academic study. In order to support the development of academic skills, Computer Science planned to release self-study modules. It was noted that students

on the Management online programmes were making good use of the Maths and Writing and Language Skills Centres.

One of the externals had suggested that the Research Project in the specialist programmes should be in the area of the specialism. The Department had indicated that it was happy with the suggestion. The reviewers advised that amending the module descriptor of the Research Project to reflect this should be a condition of approval.

The reviewers felt that good PLOs and Statements of Purpose had been developed. They suggested that the Statement of Purpose for the non-specialist Computer Science programme could be more specific about the industries which students might go in to or the problems which students would be able to solve. The majority of members agreed that the Statements of Purpose were effective. The reviewers highlighted that PLO 6 involved communicating to non-technical professional colleagues. This was achieved by producing an executive summary in *Computer Networks and Mobile Apps* and the *Independent Research Project*. The reviewers felt this element of the assessment task should be described explicitly in the module descriptors and the programme map.

It was noted that the IELTS requirements were incorrect in the documentation. The requirement would be 6.5 with no less than 6.0 in each component, as was the case for other Computer Science programmes.

It was noted that the Department had misunderstood the purpose of the 'consultation with careers' section (the text was focused on support provided by Careers rather than comments from Careers in respect of the proposals).

It was noted that PLO 6 'Communicate complex computational problems and their solutions in written format..' should be amended to include verbal communication if the Department pursued the development of a summative podcast assessment which was currently being considered.

The Committee agreed **to approve** the programmes subject to:

- revisions to the Independent Research Project module descriptor to make clear that the subject area of the dissertation for Cyber Security and Data Analytics must be in the relevant specialism;
- correction of the PDDs with respect to the IELTS requirements.

The Committee **recommended** that:

- the Statement of Purpose for the non-specialist Computer Science programme be amended to be more specific about the industries which students might go into or the problems which students would be able to solve;
- details of how students were assessed on PLO 6 (communicating to non-technical audiences) be added to the programme map and module descriptors (*Computer Networks and Mobile Apps* and the *Independent Research Project*).

Jan Ball (Educational Advisor - Online Learning) and David Gent (Academic Quality team contact – Sciences) were thanked for their substantial support to the Department in developing the programme proposals.

**M18-19/62 Electronic Engineering: new MEng programmes**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the Department of Electronic Engineering for four new integrated masters programmes to start in September 2020.

- MEng Engineering (UTC.18-19/46a)
- MEng Medical Engineering (UTC.18-19/46b)
- MEng Robotic Engineering (UTC.18-19/46c)
- MEng Micro-mechanical Engineering (UTC.18-19/46d)

All were on campus, full-time 4 year programmes and all had a year in industry variant available as both an entry point and transfer in. The programmes had received planning approval from the Faculty Learning and Teaching Group for Sciences. They had been reviewed in advance by Richard Waites and Michael Bate and had their support. The proposals had also been considered by four external assessors; all were supportive and recommended that the proposals proceed with a number of minor changes (UTC.18-19/46i-iv).

The programmes represented a new suite of 'Engineering' programmes, shifting the Department's focus from purely Electronic Engineering. The strategic shift had been approved by UEB, and would be accompanied by new buildings and new academic posts.

In advance of UTC, the Chair had agreed that Stage 3 and 4 module descriptors were not required at this stage of University consideration; the rationale being that the programme map contained sufficient detail to ensure the assessment of PLOs and to understand progression through the programme. This decision afforded the Department time to appoint the staff with the requisite specialist knowledge (who would then develop the modules).

Institute of Engineering and Technology's (IET) provisional accreditation for the programmes would be sought at the next IET visit (expected in the Autumn term 2019/20). The programmes will not be advertised as having IET accreditation (until such time that this had been granted). The programmes required the Department's existing exemption regarding compensation (at the IET limits, not at the University's). Students who did not meet the IET limits would be able to exit on a non-accredited degree route, but this had not yet been created. The Department also intended to have a BEng exit point but this had not yet been established.

Relevant comments from the Committee's discussion of the programmes were incorporated in the later reconsideration (see post-meeting note below).

*Secretary's post-meeting note:*

*Subsequent to the meeting it became apparent that the documentation received by UTC was incorrect. The nominated UTC reviewers and the Department's Academic Quality Team contact had reviewed a different set of documentation from the (incorrect) set seen by the remainder of the Committee. In the light of this, the Chair of UTC resolved that, the proposals be reconsidered. The correct documentation was considered by electronic circulation (12-19 December). The following discussion points from the meeting remained valid in the light of the corrected documentation, and therefore were also circulated; members were informed that, should the programmes be approved, these points would be incorporated in the feedback to the Department.*

*The reviewers had some concern about details that had been provided on assessment:*

- *the articulation of the formative assessment strategy (which did not come through strongly in the documentation);*
- *inconsistencies with respect to assessment task word limits (expressed variably as word counts / number of pages);*
- *concern regarding the assessment of an Autumn term module in the Summer term (Sensors, Noise and Filters – Engineering PDD);*
- *concern regarding the delivery of Introduction to Electrical Machines which was recorded as ending in week 10 of the Spring term and being assessed in the Summer CAP;*
- *concentration of Stage 2 assessment in the Summer CAP.*

*The Committee had a number of concerns about the degree of specificity with respect to each of the four distinct programme titles which, given the absence of descriptors for new Stage 3 and 4 modules (except for the Stage 3 project), was difficult to ascertain. Given the commonality between the four programmes, the Committee considered whether it would be more appropriate for there to be one programme at the point of application from which students could choose a specialism. It was noted that programme distinctiveness would be via the (yet to be developed) specialist modules in Stages 3 and 4 (in each Stage worth at least a total of 20 credits) and the Stage 4 (80 credit) project (the focus for which must be the relevant specialism). Furthermore the reviewers advised that the Department already offered programmes (Electronic Engineering) with individual titles which had a significant amount of commonality and so this model aligned with current practice.*

*The Committee suggested that in the long term seeking IMechE accreditation for Micro-mechanical Engineering might increase the attractiveness of the programme.*

*During discussion the Committee suggested that at Stages 3 and 4 there were opportunities to develop collaborative teaching. For instance the Medical Engineering programme could make use of the Clinical trials unit in Health Sciences. It was also suggested that the Statements of Purpose could be further strengthened by the addition of brief contextual information about the Department.*

*The Committee **agreed to approve** the programmes however, the full set of documentation including all module descriptors should be received by UTC at the earliest possible date and subject to its approval. It **recommended** that:*

- *the comments (above) in relation to assessment be addressed;*
- *a BEng exit route (and title) for students who exit at the end of Stage 3 be created;*
- *a non-accredited MEng route (and title) for those students who do not meet the IET's requirements be created.*

### **M18-19/63      Politics: BA in Global Development**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the Department of Politics for a new BA in Global Development, a three year, full-time, on campus programme to start in September 2020 (UTC.18-19/47). The programme had the following variants: a BA in Global Development (with a year abroad), as a transfer-in only route and a BA Global Development (with a year in industry), as a separate entry route. The Programme had received planning approval from the Faculty Learning and Teaching Group for Social Sciences.



The programmes had been reviewed in advance by Barry Lee and Sinéad McCotter and it had been considered by two external assessors. The two external assessors were supportive of the programme. The UTC reviewers noted that the programme would address timely and pressing issues in an interdisciplinary and innovative way, using a problem-based learning (PBL) approach. They suggested the following as conditions of approval:

- that the Statement of Purpose should be revised to improve clarity and to provide an explanation of the PBL approach. Suggestions had been provided, in advance of UTC, to the Programme Leader who had indicated broad agreement;
- the PLOs should be amended to make them more concise and accessible. Suggestions for strengthening the PLOs (which did not alter the content) had been passed, in advance of UTC, to the Programme Leader;
- on the advice of the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress, that transfers into the programme should only be permitted up to end week 3 in Term 1, in light of the need for students to be introduced to PBL. This would need to be reflected on the Programme Information section of the Programme Design Document 11.f.i (row 353).

In addition to the proposed conditions, the reviewers made a series of recommendations, that the Programme Team:

- should seek to highlight more distinctive career options in the Statement of Purpose;
- engage with Marketing to ensure that the distinctive nature of the programme was accurately conveyed in promotional materials;
- should continue to consult with CGP and Careers and Placements to develop the 'Year in Industry' and 'Year Abroad' variants;
- should consult further on best-practice for PBL to ensure the development of appropriate learning materials and training for staff, and to ensure that sufficient support and guidance was given to students;
- clarify with partner departments whether modules would be available on an equitable basis (or whether students from those partner departments would take priority in the event that a module is oversubscribed). The Committee agreed that this should be established at an early stage to protect the student experience;
- give careful consideration as to how levels of support for students would be maintained in the event of rapid growth;
- give careful consideration to the supervision arrangements. The reviewers noted that students were likely to need support in understanding what was expected of them in modules from a range of different departments. In addition to personal supervision arrangements members noted that it was important for dissertation supervision arrangements to be clear (in the event that supervisors are located in a partner department it would need to be very clear what practices – for example in relation to referencing – be applied).

Furthermore, the reviewers noted that students would be required to develop a range of writing styles and approaches for the different departments in which they would be studying. They suggested that consideration be given to building appropriate work on academic skills early in the programme.

Members **agreed** with the conditions and recommendations identified by the reviewers. In addition, the Committee noted that optionality on the programme was more limited than it first appeared due to the different sizes of modules in contributing departments. The Committee suggested that the Programme Team should explore with partner departments whether 10 credit versions of any option modules could be offered to increase the combinations that it would be possible for students to take. During discussion it was noted

that further detail was needed in respect of the assessment of the Year Abroad (section 9biv of the PDD) specifically the exact meaning of “pass”.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the programme, including the proposed governance arrangements (UTC.18-19/47i), subject to the three conditions identified by the reviewers. The Committee **recommended** that the other issues set out above be given further consideration by the Programme Team.

**M18-19/64      The York Management School: BSc in Finance, Operations Research, Management and Statistics (FORMS)**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the School of Management for a new BSc in Finance, Operations Research, Management and Statistics (UTC.18-19/48), a three year, full-time, on campus programme to start in September 2019. The programme would be delivered in partnership with the Department of Mathematics. The proposal included a ‘with a year in industry’; BSc in Finance, Operations Research, Management and Statistics (with a year in industry).

The programme had been reviewed in advance by Joe Fagan and Jen Gibbons and it had their support. In the light of the vocational nature of the programme one of the external assessors was from industry. The external assessors were supportive of the programmes.

It was reported that the programme was a variation of the School’s BSc in Actuarial Science. That said, the reviewers felt that the FORMS proposal was sufficiently distinct, with a stronger focus on Maths and Finance in Stages 2 and 3. The reviewers were satisfied that appropriate PLOs and Statement of Purpose had been developed.

The reviewers had observed that there was limited assessment variety and this was, in part, due to the fact that contributing modules from the Department of Mathematics were largely examination-based. It was reported that the School planned to develop more bespoke modules for the programme if recruitment was healthy.

One of the external assessors had commented that the IELTS requirement (6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in each component) might be too low. The Committee was advised that this was in line with other Management programmes and it agreed that it was appropriate.

It was noted that the timing of assessments was missing on the Module Structure and Summative Assessment Map (PDD section 7a) for some modules. The Committee recommended that the School ensure that the Assessment Map was complete.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the programme.

**CATEGORY II BUSINESS****M18-19/65 Validated Provision**

The Committee **received** an update on validated provision which included details of STEM Learning's teach out plan for the Senior Technicians Accredited Co-Leaders in Science programme (UTC.18-19/49).

**M18-19/66 Subject-level TEF pilot**

The Committee **received** the Membership and Remit of the UTC Steering Group for Subject-level TEF pilot (UTC.18-19/50).

**M18-19/67 Sub-committees***Standing Committee on Assessment*

The Committee **received** a report on the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on 30 November 2018 (UTC.18-19/51).

**M18-19/68 Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups**

The Committee **received** reports on the meeting of the FLTGS:

- Arts and Humanities held on 7 November 2018 (UTC.18-19/52a)
- Social Sciences held on 7 November 2018 (UTC.18-19/52b)
- Sciences held on 7 November (UTC.18-19/52c)

**M18-19/69 Periodic Reviews**

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved the following external assessors for Periodic Review:

- Professor James Connelly (University of Hull) for the Periodic Review of Politics.
- Professor Stephany Biello (University of Glasgow) and Dr Daniel Smith (Durham University) for the Periodic Review of Psychology.

**M18-19/70 Registers**

The Committee received the 2018/19 registers for:

- Distance learning programmes (UTC.18-19/53a)
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (UTC.18-19/53b)
- Collaboration (UTC.18-19/53c)

**M18-19/71 Dates of 2018/19 meetings**

The Committee **noted** that the dates of future meetings in 2018/19 were as follows:

- Thursday 7 February 2019, 9.30-13.30
- Thursday 14 March 2019, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 16 May 2019, 9.30-13.30
- Thursday 20 June 2019, 9.30-13.30
- *Extraordinary meeting if required*– **Thursday 18 July 2019, 9.30-13.30**