

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair)
Professor S Bell (from M17-18/98)
Mr N Dandy
Ms C Chamberlain (Postgraduate Representative – GSA)
Professor B Fulton (from M17-18/97)
Professor J Hudson
Dr S King
Dr B Lee
Professor T Lightfoot (Chair for M17-18/99)
Mr J Porch (Undergraduate Representative - YUSU)
Professor R Waites

In Attendance: Mrs J Iddon, ASO, Secretary

Apologies were received from Mr E Braman, Dr G Chitty, Mrs K Dodd, Mr J Fagan, Mrs J Brotherton, Professor J Buchanan, Professor A Hunt, Dr E Major, Professor M O'Neill, Professor G Ozkan, Dr K Selby, Professor D Smith.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

M17-18/95 Welcome

The Chair noted that Mrs K Dodd, Academic Registrar, would be leaving the University at the end of April. Kate had been a member of the Committee since October 2009 and during that time had made a substantial contribution to the business of UTC. Kate was thanked for the invaluable wisdom and expertise she had brought to the Committee over the last nine years.

M17-18/96 Minutes and Matters Arising

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2018 (UTC.17-18/66).

The Committee **considered** an update on matters arising from the minutes (UTC. 17-18/66 **Appendix 1**).

- MA in Railway Studies (M17-18/77): the Chair reported that the Academic Quality Team contact for the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) had liaised with the Programme Leader regarding the condition stipulated by UTC. The Programme Leader had confirmed that arrangements would be made to ensure that the new External Examiner had oversight of the entire programme (through participation in the relevant Module Boards and the relevant Programme Examination Board). This action was now closed.
- Annual Programme Review (M17-18/78): the Chair reported that he had discussed with the Chair of Planning Committee ways to embed the weight of the student experience

more deeply as a factor in decision-making regarding student growth; where it was possible to reinforce consideration of the student experience within the planning process this would be done. The Chair had not yet discussed the proposal for a consultation on the structure of the academic year with the Deans; there had been one Deans'/PVC TLS meeting since February's UTC and, in the light of more urgent business, there had not been an opportunity to re-open the discussion regarding the structure of the academic year. The action with respect to communication channels between departments / centres and Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups / UTC also remained open; this would be taken forward by the Chair once the three Associate Deans (TLS) were in post.

Secretary's post meeting note: It had been confirmed that the proposal for Repeat Study for students who do not complete the first attempt (M17-18/78) would be considered by Senate in May as a category I paper.

M17-18/97 Oral Update from the Chair

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

- National Student Survey response rate: as at 5 March, 41.61% of those students eligible had responded to the NSS. It was noted that this figure was slightly lower than the response rate at the same time last year (44.66%).
- UTC Steering Group: the Group has been reestablished and would consider how priorities for the next steps arising from the Initial Evaluation of the York Pedagogy Report would be taken forward; these priorities, once agreed by the Steering Group, would be recommended to May UTC.
- Associate Deans for Teaching, Learning and Students: Dr Steve King (Computer Science) and Dr Gill Chitty (Archeology) had been appointed as Associate Deans in the Faculties of Science and Arts and Humanities, respectively. The Committee congratulated Steve and Gill on their appointment. An appointment in the Faculty of Social Sciences had not yet been made. It was envisaged that the Associate Deans would formally take up their posts in the Autumn Term; that said, in the light of Steve's current role as Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment, the Chair reported that there was some flexibility with respect to the exact start date.
- Discontinuation of Combined Boards of Studies: work on policy and guidance for combined programme governance was underway. Key stakeholders including Chairs of Boards of Studies, Heads of Department, students and Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups would be consulted as the proposals are developed. The revised policy and guidance would be considered by UTC in May.
- Opt-out Lecture Capture proposal: the proposal was considered by Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups in February. The Faculties of Arts and Humanities and Sciences had provided feedback on the proposal (UTC.17-18/**74ai**, UTC.17-18/**74c**). The Faculty of Social Sciences FLTG had discussed the proposal and resolved that members give further consideration (in consultation with departmental colleagues) outside of the FLTG with a view to discussing the proposal in greater depth at the April FLTG (UTC.17-18/**74b**). In the light of the on-going consultation in the Social Sciences FLTG the Chair reported that a modified proposal (revised to reflect feedback from all three FLTG) would be submitted for consideration by UTC in May.
- Industrial action: a solution acceptable to UCU and UUK had not yet been reached and UCU was now making preparations for a second wave of strikes to take place over the assessment and examination period. The Chair thanked all staff, in both academic departments and professional services, for actions taken to minimise the impact on the student experience. It was further reported that should strike action continue in to the

Summer Term, revisions to the *University Contingency Framework for Assessment and Examinations* (approved by Senate in January 2015) may be required; in the light of the pressing timeframe it might be necessary for amendments to be considered by UTC Chair's action (rather than by UTC in May) for approval by Senate. The Academic Contingency Planning Group, Chaired by the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students, was continuing to meet regularly. In the light of the duration of the industrial action and the potential impact on student welfare, members suggested that further advice relating to personal supervision (and questions regarding students' access to supervisors) and exceptional circumstances affecting assessment processes (for example the decision-making powers of an Exceptional Circumstances Committee that is not quorate) would be welcome. The Chair agreed that he would take forward this feedback to the Academic Contingency Planning Group and also the suggestion that a round-table discussion for Chairs of Boards of Studies be convened.

Secretary's post meeting note: A round-table discussion event had been scheduled for Wednesday 28 March and invitations to Chairs of Boards of Studies had been sent.

M17-18/98 Update from the Student Representatives

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

- The Sabbatical Officers had not taken a collective position with respect to the industrial action. This neutral perspective would be maintained (unless a referendum on the issue was proposed).
- YUSU had launched a survey to help better understand the impact of the strikes on students and the effectiveness of the University's mitigating actions. The results of the survey would support the identification of themes which would help YUSU consider what additional advice might be needed.
- It was noted that there was no data to evidence the varying views of the student body with respect to its position on the dispute.

The Chair reported that the Assistant Registrar: Student Progress was undertaking work with departments to understand the impact of the strike action, at a module-level, on cohorts and individual students. This 'Census of Affected Teaching' would help inform further University contingency actions required; it was hoped that the data collected via YUSU's Industrial Action survey could be used to supplement the information gathered via the census.

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

- It was noted that the YUSU's Industrial Action survey did not include a question which allowed postgraduate students to identify themselves correctly.
- The governance of GSA currently mandated that a position, either way, with respect to the dispute not be declared; a neutral stance and dialogue with all parties in the dispute would be maintained.
- The volume of additional work associated with the impact of the industrial action had meant that it had not been possible to progress with projects such as Together York.
- Consideration was being given to resourcing a third Officer role to specifically focus on academic matters (similar to YUSU's Academic Officer role).

Members queried what the University's position was with respect to payment of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) during strike days. The Chair shared his view that there were three scenarios:

1. a GTA who *is not* participating in the strike but is unable to deliver the session planned because of the industrial action – in this situation the GTA will be paid;
2. a GTA who *is* participating in the strike and who, as a consequence, does not deliver the session planned because it coincides with a planned strike day – in this situation the GTA would not be paid;
3. a GTA who is participating in the strike and who may be subject to financial difficulties if they are unpaid - it was noted that this was a heterogeneous group and that careful consideration would need to be given with respect to individuals within this group.

The Chair agreed to clarify with Human Resources the University's position with respect to the payment of GTAs.

Action: Chair

Secretary's post meeting note: It had been confirmed that GTAs who had not participated in the strike, but who had been unable to deliver a teaching session on a strike day as a consequence of the industrial action, will be paid.

M17-18/99 The Department of Theatre, Film and Television: new PGT programme proposals

Secretary's note: this part of the meeting was Chaired by the Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students.

The Committee **considered** proposals from the Department of Theatre, Film and Television (TFTV) for three new masters programmes:

- MA in Film and Television Production with Directing (UTC.17-18/**67a**)
Exit awards – PGDip in Film and Television Production with Directing and PGCert in in Film and Television Production with Directing
- MA in Film and Television Production with Producing (UTC.17-18/**67b**)
Exit awards – PGDip in Film and Television Production with Producing and PGCert in in Film and Television Production with Producing
- MA in Film and Television Production with Cinematography (UTC.17-18/**67c**)
Exit awards – PGDip in Film and Television Production with Cinematography and PGCert in in Film and Television Production with Cinematography

It was reported that, as part of its Strategic Development Plan, the Department was proposing to revise its postgraduate provision in film and television production and postproduction in order to create a more coherent and better integrated portfolio. The replacement of the current MA in Digital Film and Television (yet to be withdrawn) with the introduction of three specialist variants, 'directing', 'producing' and 'cinematography' (based on the same core curriculum) was part of this package of proposed revisions. In the light of the proposal being one of evolutionary change to existing provision rather than completely new programmes the Chair of UTC, in advance of the meeting, had agreed that

scrutiny of the proposals by one UTC reviewer, working alongside the academic quality team contact, was proportionate.

All three proposals were for full-time (over one year), or part-time (over two years) on-campus programmes to be introduced in September 2019.

The programme proposals had been reviewed in advance by Professor John Robinson and had his support. The proposals had also been reviewed by two external assessors; both had been supportive and recommended approval as is (UTC 17-18/67i-ii). The Dean of the Faculty was also supportive of the proposals which were critical for the Department's strategic development plan.

In advance of the UTC meeting a number of minor issues had been queried with the Department:

- The documentation did not make clear whether the PG Dip / Cert were entry points or exit only – it had been confirmed that they were exit only (and the Programme Design Documents had been updated accordingly).
- The absence of a 30 credit module for PG Dip students as an alternative to the 90 credit individual project – this had been addressed by the Department who had developed a module and submitted the descriptor for approval via the module catalogue.
- The absence of specific details about the timings of formative assessment – the Department had explained that, at this stage, it was not possible to be specific about formative assessments due to uncertainty around the availability of space and equipment (given the variable cohort size for the BSc). Formative assessments would be worked out to take place at a time to most effectively support students' learning (without overcrowding the assessment schedule for PGT students) and also to balance the needs of undergraduate cohorts.

The UTC reviewer and the academic quality team contact had also queried the structure of the part-time delivery for all three programmes which was very imbalanced (50 credits in year 1 and 130 credits in year 2) and, therefore in year 2, was comparable to the workload for a full-time student (the 90 credit individual project was studied over 23 weeks and thus equated to a nominal weekly workload of 39 hours). In order to ensure a more balanced workload for those studying the part-time route the Department had been asked to consider moving the start date of the 90 credit individual project to an earlier stage of the programmes (for example starting at the beginning of year 2). The Department had explained that, from a pedagogic perspective, the proposed scheduling of the modules was optimal: year 1 included all of the taught modules and was focused on core and specialist skills and; year 2 was almost entirely independent study and enabled students to apply and refine those skills on practical projects, both in group and individual settings. UTC considered the rationale provided by the Department and agreed that it was not sufficiently strong. UTC therefore **decided not to approve the part-time routes for each of the three proposals**. UTC advised the Department to give further consideration to the part-time structure and suggested that, in the light of Department's pedagogic rationale for the module schedule, a longer duration for the part-time route might provide a solution. It was noted that there may be wider implications of lengthening the duration of the programme and the Department should liaise with relevant professional services (the

Planning Office, Student Recruitment and Admissions and Student Services) to fully understand what these might be.

During discussion of the proposals the following additional points were noted:

- the documentation, in places, referred to PGWTs rather than GTAs;
- PLO 2 for each of the three variants was, in fact, two distinct outcomes;
- the articulation of PLO 7 for each of the three variants was very broad and, to some extent, did not fully capture the particularities which were articulated in the programme maps.

The Committee agreed to approve the full-time versions of each of the three programmes on condition that:

- erroneous references to PGWT be corrected;
- PLO 2 be separated to create two distinct programme learning outcomes;
- PLO 7 be revised to articulate more clearly the specifics of the “transferable skills” as per the respective programme map.

Teaching Committee decided that the proposals should be refined accordingly and be subject to final sign-off by the UTC reviewer and the Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students.

M17-18/100 Annual Programme Review 2017/18

The Committee **considered** revised Annual Programme Review (APR) templates and guidance.

At its meeting in February 2018, UTC considered the outcomes of APR for the academic year 2016/17 and the arrangements for APR 2017/18. UTC agreed that for APR 2017/18 it should be a requirement for departments to reflect on employability data such as the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey data and also that the template for the programme-level reflection should be simplified to focus on major issues, risks and planned actions. The APR templates and guidance had been revised accordingly.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- programmes designed using the carousel model would have multiple end points during the academic year; members noted that the current APR process which encouraged reflection on provision delivered during the previous academic year, regardless of whether a cohort(s) had completed or were part-way through, was sufficiently flexible to accommodate this;
- the International Pathway College (IPC) had found the APR process a valuable exercise;
- scrutiny of the IPC’s APR report, which covered cross-faculty provision, had been overseen directly by UTC (scrutiny was undertaken by the College’s UTC designated contact and the academic quality team contact and their reflective commentary had been shared with the Chair of UTC and the Deans of the Faculties of Sciences

and Social Sciences¹); members noted that the IPC was not represented on Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups and therefore did not benefit from discussion relating to sharing best practice that takes place at FLTG meetings;

- the departmental-level APR documentation did not refer to Foundation Certificate or Pre-Masters provision.

Members queried whether the process should be revised to include the addition of a pre-populated data-sheet (to include key data such as progression, retention, student-staff ratio, recruitment, NSS etc.) and an invitation for the department to respond to the data. It was noted that the University's quality enhancement framework already included an annual requirement for departments to reflect (and act) on NSS results. The addition of a data coversheet would necessitate the development of a process to automatically generate the data and would substantially change the nature of the current 'by exception' approach. UTC decided not to explore further this proposed revision at this time.

The Committee **approved** the revised templates and guidance subject to amendments to reflect University Foundation Certificate and Pre-Masters programmes.

The Committee agreed that consideration should be given to how best to facilitate IPC's connection with Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups in the light of its position outside the faculty structure; this could take place within the planned wider discussion relating to communication channels between departments / centres and Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups / UTC (M17-18/78 refers).

M17-18/101 Review of the compensation rules

The Committee **considered** a report of the review of the compensation rules (UTC.17-18/69). The Committee was reminded that in July 2016 Senate had approved revised compensation rules for undergraduate awards; specifically that compensation be allowed to operate down to a mark of 10% in up to 40 credits in the award year. This approval was subject to review after two years (Senate M15-17/44 refers). It was reported that the Standing Committee on Assessment had considered the report at its meeting on 2 March 2018 (UTC.17-18/73).

During discussion the following points were noted:

- the revision to the rules had impacted on small absolute numbers (81 students were awarded degrees with marks below the level which would previously have been compensatable);
- the application of the revised rules did not result in any student achieving a first class degree;
- the classification table was labelled left to right 2.2, 2.1, 3, Ord and it would be helpful if the labelling was revised (and begin with a 2.1 and then move through the classifications in order to achievement);
- the revised rules did not explicitly exclude the award of an Ordinary degree and accordingly, two students were awarded an Ordinary degree with just 40 credits of passed material in their final year;

¹ The 2016/17 APR did not include IPC provision that led to progression to programmes delivered by departments in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (the Foundation Certificate Humanities, Creative Arts and Media had been approved for delivery from September 2018 (M16-17/147 refers)).

- the scope of the revised rules also did not exclude assessments which had been capped as a result of academic misconduct;
- it was not known whether there was any pattern with respect to the modules which had been compensated under the revised rule.

The Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment reported that SCA had agreed that Ordinary degrees should be excluded from the rule and recommended that a revised report should include departments where there were no students affected. SCA had also agreed that further consideration was needed with respect to the application of the rules in cases where students are compensated for assessments capped due to the outcomes of academic misconduct.

The Committee **endorsed** the recommendations made by SCA and agreed that, on the basis of the data arising from the first year (2016/17) of the operation of the amended rules, the revisions should be maintained subject to (i) the exclusion of the award of an Ordinary degree from the scope of the rule and (ii) modifications arising from SCA's consideration of the application of the rule to modules subject to academic misconduct penalties.

The SCA would revise the report in accordance with the comments made by the SCA and UTC and it would be submitted for consideration by a future meeting of Senate.

***M17-18/102 Student number forecasts**

Minute - Commercial in Confidence

M17-18/103 Online Project Implementation

The Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students provided the Committee with an oral update from the Online Project Implementation Group.

The carousel model was now final and would be shared with the UTC as a category II paper at its May meeting. Whilst progress with the module build had been made since the last update to UTC (M17-18/85 refers), including completion (in draft) of the orientation module, progress had nevertheless been slower than anticipated (in part due the impact of the industrial action). An 'end-to-end' assessment workflow, including the interface with University systems, had been mapped. It was reported that Higher Ed Partners UK (HEP) had commended the University for its flexibility with respect to establishing systems to accommodate the non-standard programme structure.

HEP was in the process of recruiting Student Success Coordinators; these post holders would be employed by HEP and would be based in London. Student Success Coordinators would provide additional support to students in signposting students to the most appropriate source of University advice and guidance (for example the GSA or the Wentworth Distance Learning College Officer). Members noted that the Student Success Coordinator was a distinctive feature of the distance learning provision delivered in partnership with HEP and it would be interesting to see how the this new role developed in practice.

It was reported that student demographic data available thus far indicated that the new programmes were recruiting new students to TYMS (rather than competing with existing TYMS' programmes). The key characteristics of applicants to date:

- in employment;
- not recent school leavers;
- higher proportion of males;
- the ratio of overseas to home students is higher when compared to that for other TYMS postgraduate programmes.

The importance of considering student demographics in order to inform teaching delivery was noted.

The Chair thanked Tracy Lightfoot for the oral progress report.

M17-18/104 Report on Widening Participation

Liz McNeil, Widening Participation Manager, attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report on the widening participation (WP) activity at the University in 2016-17 (UTC.17-18/71). It was reported that social mobility continued to feature strongly at national level and that an Access and Participation Agreement would be a requirement of registration with the Office for Students. The guidance for the 2019/20 Access and Participation Agreements had been published subsequent to the submission of the WP report to UTC; as anticipated the guidance required a focus in Agreements on collaboration, evaluation and outcomes throughout the student lifecycle (pre-arrival, achievement during the programme of study, progression to employment / further study).

It was noted that the Government had stepped back from the proposition (included in the Higher Education Green Paper 2015) that universities sponsor a school. Nonetheless the guidance identified work to support the raising of attainment in schools as a priority. It was reported that the Director of Initial Teaching Training was working alongside the WP team to consider other initiatives aimed at raising attainment.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- whilst the proportion of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN) had fallen slightly in 2016/17 (8.1%) when compared with the 2015/16 (8.7%) this figure was in line with the University's milestone target of 8% for 2019/20;
- the LPN data was volatile (both across the period and the Russell Group) which made it difficult to establish trends and draw conclusions;
- for the last few years the proportion of students from State School/Colleges had been 81-82% and this positioned the University eighth (above Leeds and Manchester) for 2016/17 in the Russell Group;
- the proportion of mature students had fallen significantly in 2016/17 (7.9%) when compared with 2015/16 (10.3%) and this decline reflected a national trend (in part explained by the withdrawal of bursaries for nursing students);
- the proportion of BME entrants had risen steadily over the last few years (13.2% in 2017/18 from a base of 8.5% in 2012/13).

It was noted that, as part of the 'Realising Opportunities' and 'Next Step York' initiatives, participants complete an academic assignment. Participants are allocated an 'Academic Assignment Tutor'; that is a postgraduate student employed and trained to support participants with their academic assignment. It was reported that Academic Assignment Tutors were mostly postgraduate taught students and that there had been no indication from these students that undertaking this role had negatively impacted on their own studies.

Secretary's post meeting note: subsequent to the meeting of UTC it had been confirmed that postgraduate taught students are not used as Academic Assignment Tutors for the academic assignment; this role is undertaken by postgraduate research students (in each case permission is first sought from the student's supervisor).

In addition to the initiatives overseen centrally it was noted that there were a wide variety of WP activities delivered at the department-level. The challenge of co-ordinating departmental-level activities (with a view to maximising their 'reach' and impact) was noted. The University Widening Participation forum is an important vehicle for the sharing of best practice; the next forum would be held on 19 June.

On behalf of UTC the Chair thanked the WP team for all of the initiatives carried out during the reporting year; the data presented in the annual report was encouraging and reflected the impact of the central WP programmes and those being delivered by departments.

The Chair thanked Liz McNeil for presenting the paper.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

M17-18/105 Modifications and Withdrawals

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between 29 January 2018 and 23 February 2018 (UTC.17-18/72).

M17-18/106 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **received** a report on the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment held on 2 March 2018 (UTC.17-18/73).

M17-18/107 Distance Learning Forum

The Committee noted that the minutes from the meeting of the Distance Learning Forum held on 19 February 2018 were available at

<https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/contacts/committees/distance/>

M17-18/108 Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups

The Committee **received** reports of meetings of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups:

- Arts and Humanities meeting held on 15 February 2018 (UTC.17-18/74a, i, ii)
- Social Sciences meeting held on 15 February 2018 (UTC.17-18/74b)
- Sciences meetings held on 13 February 2018 (UTC.17-18/74c)

M17-18/109 Mathematics Year in Industry

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved that the MMath Year in Industry programme in the Department of Mathematics commence in 2018/19 for students currently enrolled on the MMath programme, as opposed to 2019/20 as previously approved (M17/18/66 refers).

M17-18/110 Teach Out

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved arrangements for the teach-out of the Diploma HE / BSc Health and Social Care Practice (and specialist variants), BSc Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Applied to Physical and Mental Health Problems and PG Certificate Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Applied to Physical and Mental Health Problems, in the Department of Health Sciences.

M17-18/111 Student Exchange Agreements

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved a student exchange agreement between the Department of Mathematics and the University of Trento, Italy.

M17-18/112 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved an exemption to the policy that RPL should normally be applied only if the relevant module has been taken in the past five years, with respect to the 'Non-medical Prescribers: Independent and Supplementary Prescribing' module in the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice delivered by the Department of Health Sciences. This is because non-medical prescribers who prescribe in the course of their employment are subject to annual appraisals of their competence to prescribe.

M17-18/113 Graduate Teaching Assistants

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved the use of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) to support M-level teaching in the following departments:

- Physics: to support a range of modules within the Department's integrated masters programmes and MSc Fusion Energy programme, dependent on the subject expertise of the GTA;
- SPSW: to support a range of modules, in a demonstrator capacity, within the Department's campus-based Social Policy Master's programmes.

M17-18/114 Periodic Review

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

- the deferral of the Periodic Review of Politics, Economics and Philosophy until the Autumn Term 2018/19;
- Professor Briony Fer (University College London) as an external assessor for the Periodic Review of History of Art.

M17-18/115 Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee **noted** that the dates of future meetings in 2017/18 were as follows:

- Thursday 17 May 2018, 9.30-13.30
- Thursday 21 June 2018, 9.30-13.30