UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held 10 March 2016

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair), Mrs L Booth, Mr N Dandy, Ms C Dantec, Dr J Hardman, Professor J Hudson, Ms R Ibrahim (GSA representative), Dr S King, Professor T Lightfoot, Mr T Ron (YUSU representative), Dr Á Sheil, Professor J Thijssen, Dr R Vann, Professor R Waites, Dr L Waldorf and Dr C van Wyhe.

In Attendance: Professor B Fulton (Dean, Sciences), Mr Ian Hall (Information Services, M15-16/112), Dr A Lee (ASO, Acting Secretary), Ms Liz McNeil (SRA, M15-16/114), Professor M Ormrod (Dean, Arts and Humanities), Dr Matthew Perry (IPC, M15-16/108) and Mr Karl Ward (CGP, M15-16/111).

Apologies: Dr G Cubitt, Mrs K Dodd, Professor C Fewster and Dr K Selby.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

M15-16/102 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

M15-16/103 Minutes of February meeting of UTC

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held 4 February 2016 (UTC.15-16/**70**), subject to the following amendments:

- M15-16/89 YUSU Strategic Plan – sentence "It was unclear if this was a result of errors in the data" deleted as it was not felt that the absence of PGT representation was due to errors, but a lack of PGT participation at the time in question.
- M15-16/94 Modifications and Withdrawals
    - *Electronics* entry amended to show the increase in MEng individual projects from 60-credits to 70-credits;
    - *Archaeology* entry amended to record more accurately the Chair's approval of an MA award variant of the MSc in Early Prehistory and Human origins, as follows: "Approval of a programme title change, so that the MSc in Early Prehistory will become the MSc in Early Prehistory and Human Origins, to take effect from 2017/18. Approval of an MA variant of the above MSc in Early Prehistory and Human Origins, to start in 2017/18. This programme will use existing modules and correlates with other Archaeology programmes that provide Science or Arts award options".

M15-16/104 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Committee **considered** an update on matters arising from previous meetings (UTC.15-16/**71 Appendix I**). It was **reported** that the following items had been closed subsequent to the circulation of papers:

- M14-15/122 Review of Health Economics for Health Care Professionals and MSc in Economic Evaluation for HTA: Academic Quality Team will continue to monitor the implementation of the action plan but no further Committee oversight is required.
- M15-16/69 Physics: Modifications to the Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Programmes: The transitional arrangements for students returning from years abroad and years in industry into the new structure have been approved under Chair's action.
- M15-16/72 Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning: The draft policy has been circulated to departments for comments and will then be submitted to the next SCA meeting.
- M15-16/85 Education: Revisions to MSc in Psychology in Education: All required actions had been completed and the Chair had signed off the proposal.

The following actions remained open:

- M15-16/36 Review of Compensation, Condonment and Reassessment: It was reported that continued progress has been made and Registry Services are analysing the previous three years of data, having widened the examination of data to look at progression, including modelling for the impact of rule changes. A report on results of this modelling and proposed responses will be tabled at a future meeting.
- M15-16/58 Learning and Teaching Strategy Action Plan: The Chair has discussed this action within the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group and a modified implementation schedule will be taken to University Executive Board (UEB, formerly SMG). The Chair had conveyed to the VCAG the Committee's conviction that it was advisable to delay the implementation of the pedagogy for PGT programmes, to facilitate departmental engagement with the educational opportunities raised by the pedagogy. It was also reported that, at its most recent meeting, members of the Science Faculty Board had also expressed concerns about the speed of the current implementation timetable.
- M15-16/84 York Law School Modifications and New MLaw Programme: An update on revisions was provided and it was noted that only those longer-term actions remained, namely to develop module descriptors and to complete a full programme specification for the MLaw.
- M15-16/90 Recruitment and Training of Course Representatives: The GSA continues to gather data from departments on PGT representations with the intention of submitting a report to the Committee at its next meeting.

M15-16/105 Oral Report from the Chair

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

- The Module Catalogue is now in use for managing the approval process for new modules and modifications to, and withdrawals of, existing modules. ASO will be supporting departments in using the new system. Work is under way to develop the public-facing web publish of module information, which is expected to launch in early April.
- Update on the pedagogy: UTC's working group is currently holding a series of meetings to give a 'sense check' to departments' draft sets of Programme Learning Outcomes. A good sense of momentum around the University was reported, with a number of departments holding away days or other meetings to involve colleagues. The next milestone will be for programme teams to undertake the mapping of programmes and the development of action plans to follow up on opportunities to enhance the alignment of the design and assessment of modules with the PLOs. This part of the schedule is to be completed by mid-July.
- As of 9 March 2016, the NSS response rate was 44.32% (50.49% at same time 2015). The slower performance in comparison to 2015 was noted as being quite consistent throughout the survey period to date. Departments were reminded that the survey closes 30th April.
- Vice Chancellor's Teaching Awards: Nominations are open for the awards with departments asked to nominate staff or to encourage individuals to nominate themselves.

M15-16/106 Oral Report from the Student Representatives

GSA:
- The GSA work to gather opinions from research postgraduate students on their experience of supervision is continuing.
- The GSA investigation into the availability of academic facilities (such as conference funding) across departments is continuing.
- The GSA has organised a panel discussion on employability for PG students involving a range of industry and research contacts. As well as the panel informing students about opportunities after their studies, postgraduate students will also present to the panel to enhance its understanding of what postgraduate students can offer in the workplace.

YUSU:
- The YUSU elections had taken place with Tamaki Laycock elected as the Academic Officer, and new faculty representatives elected who all attended recent Board meetings.
- YUSU will be undertaking activity over the coming weeks to help to boost the NSS response rate by engaging with course reps.
- The Love York Award nominations are open and departments were encouraged to nominate individuals or teams for the awards.

M15-16/107 York Law School New LLM Programme

The Committee **considered** a proposal by the York Law School of a new postgraduate taught programme LLM in Law that could be taken full-time over one year or two years part-time, starting in 2017 (M15-16/**71**). The proposal utilised existing modules in its entirety. The programme had been reviewed by John Hudson and Áine Sheil and had their support. The proposal had been

reviewed by two external assessors and had their support and YLS had responded to minor points raised by the externals.

In discussion it was **noted** that the proposal for a general Masters programme would provide the bedrock for PGT expansion in the School, better align their offering with those of competitors and help bring greater coherence to the PGT portfolio in the School. Further, the programme had been designed conscious of the likely changes in the regulation of postgraduate law degrees. The programme would provide a core of two modules which would become standard across Masters provision and then allow students to take optional modules depending on their interests. These were presented in pathways of related topics. In due course the School intends to propose new specialist LLM programmes on the foundation of this general programme.

The Committee **noted** that one of the external assessors had suggested the list of option modules available was short in comparison to similar programmes, however it was satisfied that the School was offering sufficient choice for the near future and that as additional programmes were introduced the range of modules would increase. It was felt that student experience would be improved by the proposal with a greater sense of cohort identity formed by the core component to the programmes.

The reviewers highlighted six particular aspects of the programme documentation:

- The uneven credit load across the terms particularly for part-time students, a model that was approved for existing LLMs and is not isolated to programmes within YLS.
- The name of the award as proposed is LLM Master of Laws in Law in order to show the title/ post-nominal, level and subject of the award.
- The core Research Skills and Methods module was proposed to be taught in the autumn term and assessed in the summer term. The rationale was felt to be appropriate as the module prepared students for their ISM with the Research module assessment comprising a research proposal. An earlier assessment was thought to be problematic though YLS acknowledge that alternative assessment arrangements may be necessary where individuals need to exit the programme early.
- The programme learning outcomes had been designed in the ethos of the new pedagogy and reflecting the broad range of optional modules that a student might take. Where references are made specific to modules involving placements it was suggested that these refer more generically to 'International or UK placements' to avoid the need for unnecessary modifications to the specification in future.
- In reviewing the modules it was noted that a number have missing information following their input into the module catalogue.
- The programme specification indicates that there are no ethical issues to the programme. Whilst the proposal utilised existing modules, as an overarching document the specification should still provide a more appropriate comment on the way in which ethical issues are managed.

The following observations were also made:

- On page 7 of the programme specification the table of structure for the programme should be amended to accurately represent the required credits of study for students not selecting the 40-credit Defending Human Rights module.
- Reassessments are timed before the completion of all taught modules.

The Committee **decided** to approve programme subject to:

- In due course the School reviewing the catalogued modules and add content in missing fields for more effective reference.
- Amending the programme structure to accurately represent the number of modules/ credit load to be taken per term.
- Amending the timing of reassessments to ensure it is within the rules as set out in the Guide to Assessment.

Action: York Law School/ Adrian Lee

M15-16/108 Update on the International Pathway College

The Chair welcomed Matthew Perry both to the University and to the Committee, to speak to an update report on actions to establish the IPC (M15-16/**72**). The Committee reviewed the paper and was informed that Stephen Gow, Learning Enhancement Team is scoping a version of the Academic Integrity Tutorial for the IPC students. The Committee **noted** that Steve King had been appointed as Chair of the IPC Board of Studies and that further thought would be given as to how the IPC and its BoS would be part of or connected with the Faculty structures.

The Committee was informed that the BoS would have student representatives and that it was intended that YUSU and the GSA would liaise with these representatives to ensure IPC students were part of the student bodies' structures.

The Committee was concerned to understand when IPC 'progression' outcomes would be known in order to enable departments to plan student numbers. Dr Perry confirmed that student outcomes should be finalised in good time before the UCAS confirmation period in the summer.

M15-16/109 Update on the Attendance Monitoring Working Group

The Committee **received** an update on the Attendance Monitoring Working Group (M15-16/**73**) and was informed that work to develop University policy on attendance monitoring has been put on hold. It was explained that for practical reasons of a change in personnel, delays in progressing the activity had arisen. Also the systems approaches require further consideration before policy development. Further it was suggested the Student Partnership Agreement Working Group could have an influence on conceptual aspects of the policy including deciding what aspects of student attendance to monitor and why.

The Committee discussed the potential for attendance monitoring systems to enable both departmental and University access to data and student access to their attendance record. It was recognised such access would need clear guidance to manage expectations and ensure appropriate

use of the data. The need to consider a consistent approach at departmental and university level to ensure overall Tier 4 compliance was also **noted**.

It was reported that external products and the construction of internal systems options are being explored. It was suggested that Tracy Lightfoot speaks with Computer Science who are planning a system in-house to meet their current attendance monitoring needs. It was also suggested that Professor Lightfoot speaks with the Director of the IPC as work is under way to build a system for use by the IPC.

Action: Tracy Lightfoot

M15-16/110 A Discussion Paper on Options for Reviewing the Committee Structure Supporting Learning and Teaching

The Committee **considered** a revised paper on the committee structure supporting learning and teaching (M15-16/**74**) following its initial discussions (M15-16/88 refers). The paper set out the rationale and options for: enhancing professional networking opportunities, for formal Faculty Learning and Teaching Development Committees or for a UTC Programmes Sub-committee. The Committee **noted** the wider context of drivers and influences on learning and teaching and the University Strategy and the overarching question of the intended roles of both faculties and UTC.

The Committee discussed the ethos and remit of the Faculty Boards in relation to those of UTC, conscious of the need to avoid duplication of effort or competing bases of authority. The Committee was informed of the way in which the Faculty Boards have taken on aspects of the research agenda to complement URC by providing structure and coordination and a process for collaborations.

The Committee was supportive of the further development of professional networking opportunities for staff, and that this should be pursued at Faculty or University level as appropriate. It was **noted** that:

- Chairs of BoS would welcome opportunities to share practice and gain support in those areas of their work of a more pastoral nature or that cover processes less frequently encountered.
- Chairs of BoE could benefit from greater opportunities to share good practice and gain support from colleagues in their work.
- The Learning and Teaching Forum works well in providing cross-University networking opportunities and in stimulating interdisciplinary initiatives, including for those units such as CLL and IPC that sit outside of the faculty structure and in providing students including PGWT opportunities to engage in pedagogic discussions.

With regard to proposals for Faculty Learning and Teaching Development Committees or a UTC Programmes Sub-committee it was **noted** that:

- The remits of any bodies should be genuinely complementary.
- The introduction of additional committees would create additional workloads for staff in

departments and central services and for student representatives, particularly where a limited pool of potential committee members might exist. It was not yet clear that these drawbacks would be outweighed by benefits such as the involvement of more colleagues in discussing learning and teaching matters.

- The creation of any faculty-level body should give due regard to the inclusion of those units outside the faculty structure to ensure that their good practice and experience can inform decision-making as well as providing a source of support to such units.
- The membership of a faculty committee would require careful consideration, particularly if a combined academic and business case remit is enacted. It may not be realistic to expect Chairs of Boards of Studies to undertake the additional time commitments, but staff with other departmental roles may not have sufficiently broad responsibilities to meet the needs of the committee.
- The potential for UTC to take on a more formal role in the planning approval of programmes could be considered, to streamline the evaluation of related issues.
- The value of UTC as currently constituted is that departments and university decision-making benefit from the cross-fertilisation of ideas and good practice that risk being lost with any devolution of processes to faculty bodies.
- Due consideration needs to be given to the governance of interdisciplinary and combined programmes that might cross faculties.
- Consultation with a wider audience outside of UTC could provide useful feedback in developing proposals further.

Further discussion was needed on the case for establishing a UTC Sub-committee.

The Chair thanked the Committee for its comments which he would discuss further the Deans of Faculties to table a revised proposal to a future meeting.

Action: Chair and Nigel Dandy

M15-16/111 Policy Statement on Visiting Students

The Committee **considered** a revised Policy Statement on Visiting Students with accompanying annexes (M15-16/**75**) proposed by the Centre for Global Programmes. Mr Karl Ward attended the meeting to speak to the proposal. The Committee was informed that the policy would cover incoming visiting students and consolidate existing documentation covering outgoing students, that it updated existing policy and included undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students. The Committee **noted** that CGP would welcome its approval to introduce an assumption in clause 5.7.5 of Annex I that would allow it to offer places to applicants if a department failed to respond to its request for a decision by a set deadline and following reminders. The Committee questioned the frequency and nature of late decisions by departments. CGP could provide UTC with data on such instances if required.

It was **noted** that as the policy included PGR students it would need the approval of the YGRSB Policy and Programmes Committee. Concern was also raised that the policy needed to give due consideration for the University's compliance with the CMA guidelines.

Members of the Committee suggested that CGP:

- Circulate good practice information to exchange coordinators of how departments have adapted modules or assessment to meet the needs of visiting students;
- Provide an opportunity for all departmental exchange coordinators to meet with each other and CGP staff;
- Consider strategically how visiting students can be better able to undertake modules in different departments.

The Committee **decided** to approve the Policy Statement subject to:

- Addition of principle in the policy statement covering the expectation that visiting students will be treated equitably with York students.
- Amendment of Annex II to refer simply to "supervisors".
- Amendment of the section heading in Annex II page 3 to refer to Boards of Studies responsibilities not Chairs of BoS.
- Amendment to Annex II page 3 and bullet point 3 on Chairs of BoS responsibilities to read "Board of Examiners".
- Consideration and appropriate incorporation of comments provided to CGP following the meeting from Nigel Dandy and Steve King.
- Consultation with Jim Irving to ensure that the policy adheres to the expectations of the CMA.

The revised statement and annexes will be submitted to the Chair for final sign off.

Action: Karl Ward

M15-16/112 Information Services Report

The Committee **received** a report on the work of Information Services in Support of Teaching Committee (M15-16/**76**). Ian Hall attended the meeting to introduce the paper. The Committee **noted** the significant work of Information Services to support Learning and Teaching Strategy and of the extent of 'back office' activity to underpin technological advances and the sustainability of infrastructure. The Committee was provided with reassurance that planned work to convert parts of the Raymond Burton Library to additional study space would not limit access to resources which would be moved to other parts of the Library and/ or are available in digital form. However, if student representatives had any concerns they were advised to provide feedback to Liz Waller or Heidi Fraser-Krauss. Student representatives were also advised to contact Michelle Blake should they wish to discuss further the potential uses of Qualtrics for generating student feedback.

The Committee appreciated the report and **decided** to endorse the proposal for a similar report to be submitted on an annual basis by Information Services.

M15-16/113 Student Employability Report

This item (UTC.15-16/**77**) was withdrawn for resubmission at the next meeting.

M15-16/114 Report on Widening Participation Activities

Freedom of Information Act Exempt: Minute Commercial in Confidence

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

M15-16/115 Modifications and Withdrawals

The Committee **received** a report on modifications to, and withdrawals of, programmes of study approved by Chair's action between 14 January 2016 and 22 February 2016 (UTC.15-16/**79**). These were as follows:

Academic Practice

Approval for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education to be offered as a stand-alone 20c M level module in addition to its current status as a component part of PGCAP. This is to enable greater access to members of staff of accredited CPD provision.

Archaeology

Approval to extend the suspension of MA in Landscape Archaeology for an extra year. It will now re-launch in 2017-18, under the new name MA in Prehistoric Landscape Archaeology.

Biology

Approval to modify Biology (and specialist degree), Biochemistry and Biomedical Science programmes as follows, with effect from 2016/17:

Stage 2:

'Marine and Coastal Biology' and 'Population Biology' become core modules for Ecology students.

Biochemistry students will take BIO00032I Scientific Skills & Tutorials rather than BIO00001I Biochemical Skills 2.

Rules for optional module selection amended for Biomedical Sciences and Biochemistry programmes.

Stage 3:

New module 'Mechanisms to therapies' introduced as an option in Stage 3 in 2016/17 and 2017/18, but will become core for Stage 3 students in 2018/19 (i.e. the 2016 entrants)

New module 'The Anthropocene' replaces 'Global Change Biology'; and 'Membrane Transport and its Role in Health and Disease' replaces 'Molecular Machines'.

Rules for optional module selection amended for Biomedical Sciences and Biochemistry programmes, to increase the 'optional compulsory' modules for both programmes.

Stage 4:

For all integrated masters in the Department, all optional modules to be withdrawn and replaced by a new 20-credit module in 'Data Analysis'.

Computer Science (and Sociology)

Approval to amend the structure of the MSc Human-Centred Interactive Technologies programme (to move this to being focused more around 20-credit than 10-credit modules), with some changes in content and assessment for some modules, with effect from 2016/17. As a consequence of this change, approval was given to amend the structure of the MSc Social Media & Interactive Technologies programme, with effect from 2016/17.

English

Approval to increase the word limit for the assessment of Philosophy and Literature (English and Philosophy bridge module) to 4000 words, from 2016-17. This would bring it in line with bridge modules in other combined programmes.

Environment

Approval to amend Stage 2 of the BSc/ MEnv Environment, Economics and Ecology programmes, to increase the value of the 'Applied Economics for the Environment' module to 20 credits, introduce 'Economics for Sustainable Development' (10-credit), and withdraw 'Economics of Resource' and 'Environmental Policy', with effect from 2016/17.

Mathematics

Approval to amend the assessment timings for campus-based MSc programmes so that these match the assessment and resit periods for undergraduate programmes, with the consequence that the ISM will commence from Summer Term week 8, with effect from 2016/17. Students taking resits will receive an automatic extension to their hand-in deadline for the ISM, with the caveat that this will be before the end of October.

Natural Sciences

Approval to amend Stage 2 of the BSc/ MSci Neuroscience programme to remove 'Neuroscience Skills' and 'Imagination' as core modules (the latter becoming optional) and make 'Biology Tutorials for Natural Sciences' core: this corrects an error in credit-values of other modules in the

original programme design. The changes are to take effect from 2016/17 for current and future students.

M15-16/116 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **received** a report on the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA) held 5 February 2016 (M15-16/**80**).

M15-16/117 Distance Learning Forum

The Committee **received** the minutes from the 5 February 2016 meeting of the Distance Learning Forum, available at https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/contacts/committees/distance/#tab-4.

M15-16/118 Exchange Agreements

It was **reported** that the Chair had approved the following exchange agreements:

- Between the Department of Politics and Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain; Institute of International Relations, University of Warsaw, Poland
- Between the Department of Sociology (including SPS) and Universität Konstanz, Germany; University of Trento, Italy
- A University-wide agreement with the Vancouver Campus of the University of British Columbia, Canada.

M15-16/119 Periodic Reviews and Other Visits

- It was **reported** that the 'Health Check' of Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, scheduled for Autumn Term 2015/16, had been incorporated into the 2014/15 Annual Programme Review process. The partnership was reported as working very well and issues identified in the action plan arising from the 2013 validation review (M13-14/96 refers) had been addressed. Additionally it was noted that the current validation agreement would expire in August 2018, with a re-validation review visit scheduled for Autumn Term 2017/18.

M15-16/120 Collaborations

It was **reported** that:

- The Chair has given approval to the Department of Physics to bid for funding to develop an Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree in the field of Plasma Science. If successful, this would involve developing a double degree with Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal and Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, the Netherlands, to commence in 2017/18.
- The Chair has given approval to the Department of Politics to apply, with partner institutions, for funding to continue the Erasmus Mundus Joint MA in Public Policy for a further three cohorts. If successful this funding would begin in 2017/18.

M15-16/121 QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

- It was noted that the Department of Computer Science has considered the recently published revised QAA subject benchmark statement for Computing, and is confident that its programmes remain aligned to the statement.

M15-16/122 Future Meetings

It was **reported** that the dates of the next meetings (all to be held at 1.00pm in HG/21, Heslington Hall) were as follows:

Thursday 12 May 2016
Thursday 16 June 2016.