

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2017

Present: Professor J Robinson (Chair)
Mr N Dandy
Mrs K Dodd (to M16-17/129)
Dr S King
Professor D Smith
Mr J Fagan
Professor J Hudson
Ms R Ibrahim (GSA representative)
Dr K Selby (to M16-17/128)
Ms T Laycock (YUSU representative)
Dr B Lee
Professor T Lightfoot
Professor G Ozkan
Professor R Waites

In Attendance: Mrs J Iddon (ASO, Secretary)
Mrs J Brotherton (ASO, Minute Secretary)
Liz Waller and Claire Shanks (for M16-17/124)
Andrew Ferguson and Lucy Brookes (for M16-17/127)
Stuart Jolley (for M16-17/130)

Apologies were received from Professor J Buchanan, Dr L Waldorf, Dr G Chitty, Mr E Braman, Professor J Thijssen, Dr E Major, Professor S Bell, Professor B Fulton and Professor A Hunt.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

M16-17/120 Minutes

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2017 (UTC.16-17/78).

M16-17/121 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Committee **received** an update on matters arising from the meetings of Teaching Committee held in December and March (UTC. 16-17/78).

- The proposal for the BA TESOL had not yet received planning approval (M16-17/60).
- The conditions set by Teaching Committee for the approval of the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice had been addressed by the Department and the updated documentation had been approved by Chair's action (M16-17/101).
- The Chair had established a subgroup to consider PGT programme structures (M16-17/102). The University's position on awarding PGCerts as Exit awards would be considered as part of the wider discussion about PGT programme structures (M16-17/103).
- The APR pro-forma and guidance notes had been approved by Chair's action. (M16-17/105).

The Committee noted that the data which UTC had requested from Timetabling, which had originally been scheduled to be received by the Committee at its May meeting (M16-17/79 refers), would now be received in June.

M16-17/122 Oral Update from the Chair

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

- The Teaching Excellence Framework 2 results would be announced on 14 June. The University would get its result, under embargo, on 12 June and the full set of awards would be released (under embargo) to all participating providers the following day.
- In connection with the Pedagogy, members were thanked for the feedback which they had provided on draft Programme Learning Outcomes and Statements of Purpose. Members were advised that ProPEL contacts would be seeking feedback on draft programme maps and enhancement plans in the coming weeks.
- HEFCE had published its guidance regarding changes to the Key Information Set data return. The University would be required to return a reduced data set to HESA by 13 July 2017. Tuition fee, accommodation costs, learning and teaching proportions and assessment proportions would no longer be included in the return, however, the University would still be required to publish this information on its course web pages. A Steering Group would be established to oversee the implementation of the new requirements.
- After nine years, Ellen Roberts had stepped down as the Chair of the Distance Learning Forum. During that time the Forum had been an active and important group to share and promote excellent practice in online learning and it was noted that the Forum had been specifically commended in the QAA Institutional Review in 2012. Ellen's significant contribution to the effectiveness of the Forum and as a champion of distance learning was acknowledged. Tracy Lightfoot, Associate PVC, would take over as Chair of the Distance Learning Forum.
- Discussions with an external provider in respect of the strategic initiative to expand the University's distance learning provision were ongoing. The external provider had visited the University in the week commencing 8 May to conduct a "readiness assessment". The intention was to launch three new distance learning programmes in the Management School in January 2018. The challenging nature of the timeframe was highlighted, particularly for the Management School and for Support Services.
- An extraordinary meeting of UTC, comprising a subgroup of members, would be held on 13 July to consider the three proposed distance-learning programmes. The student representatives were asked to ensure that there was student representation at the meeting. A number of UTC members had already agreed to attend the extraordinary meeting and Ellen Roberts had been co-opted in the light of her considerable expertise with respect to distance-learning. The Chair acknowledged that attendance might be difficult, as the meeting was taking place during graduation week, but emphasised that members were welcome. Members were invited to contact the Secretary if they could attend.
- The final NSS response rate was 65%, over 5% lower than it had been the previous year. All JACS3 subject codes had met the reporting thresholds with the exception of German and Spanish.
- The final PRES response rate was 33%.

- The Chair congratulated those who had received Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Awards.
 - Andrew Kardasz, HYMS
 - Andy Hunt, Electronic Engineering
 - Bryan Radley, English and Related Literature
 - Chris Wilkinson, York Law School
 - Gill Chitty, Archaeology
 - John Bone, Economics
 - Laura Fitton, HYMS
 - MA Online Team, SPSW (Sally Brooks, Kevin Caraher, Helen Chan, Angela Chapman, Jane Lund, Samantha McDermott, Emma Piercy, Enrico Reuter, Ellen Roberts and Helen Story)
 - Marton Soskuthy, Language and Linguistics
 - Mike Dunn, Information Services
 - Moray Stark, Chemistry
 - Patrick Gallimore, York Law School
 - Paula Mountford, Education
 - Phil Hasnip, Physics
 - Sethina Watson, History
 - Shirley-Ann Rueschemeyer, Psychology
 - Tony Tew, Electronic Engineering
- In the light of the long agenda, the June meeting of UTC would be extended to four hours (from 9.30-13:30).

M15-16/123 Update from the Student Representatives

YUSU

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

- New faculty and departmental representatives (with the exception of Criminology, Language & Linguistic Science and Social Policy & Social Work) had been appointed. Training and induction events would be taking place later in the term.
- Nominations for the YUSU Excellence Awards had closed; 428 nominations had been received. The shortlist would be announced on 2 June, ahead of the event of Friday 16 June. Seminar sessions delivered by previous award winners and students had been arranged in the morning and the awards event would take place in the afternoon. Members were encouraged to attend.

GSA

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

- GSA had organised a Summer Skills Week. The sessions had covered a range of practical and knowledge based skills.
- Nominations for the GSA elections were closing at the end of the day. The results would be announced on 9 June.

M16-17/124 Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Liz Waller and Claire Shanks attended for this item

The Committee **considered** a draft Policy on Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment (UTC.16-17/79). The Policy had arisen from discussions at the Disabled Students Allowance Working Group, following changes made to the Disabled Students' Allowance. The Working Group had agreed that the University should adopt a more inclusive approach to teaching, learning and assessment specifically to address the diversity of the student body and to capture all of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act (2010).

It was reported that the Policy also took account of issues which had emerged from consultation on the Student Partnership Agreement (now called 'Together York'), Policy Implications paper (UTC.16-17/33) relating to Lecture Capture and the Virtual Learning Environment.

Members were supportive of the development of an Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy but observed that the current draft focussed more explicitly on disability than other protected characteristics. During discussion it was **noted** that:

- whilst the policy made clear that diversity is to be understood in its broadest sense (and encompass all protected characteristics), due to its particular focus on disabled students, members' perception was that the draft nevertheless did not 'speak' to students with the other protected characteristics in the same way;
- in the light of the above, members noted that students with a protected characteristic other than disability may well be disappointed by the Policy given its broad title;
- the insertion of an additional section to capture consideration of the other characteristics would not be an appropriate response to the above points (the other characteristics needed to be captured *throughout* the document to better capture the spirit of inclusivity);
- the document contained very little on teaching practice, for example consideration of group work (allocation of groups), reading lists (encompassing a range of views) and teaching of unconscious bias;
- the University's commitment to Athena SWAN should be included.

It was acknowledged that certain inclusive practices would be difficult to frame into a policy statement (which if not adhered to, could give rise to student complaints) and that the Policy may need to be accompanied by guidance on best practice. Members **noted** that case law made it easier to address disability in policy terms and that inclusive practices aimed at the other protected characteristics were more difficult to codify. Whilst it would be difficult to capture the University's values with respect to inclusivity (articulated in 'Together York') within the Policy, members agreed that there was great benefit to the development of one Policy that embraced all protected characteristics.

It was **agreed** that:

- the draft should be revised to take account of the different perspectives from members and that additional comments should be sought from those members who had made substantive comments; and
- the revised draft should be circulated to Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups, the York Graduate Research School and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for further discussion and refinement.

Action: Liz Waller & Claire Shanks

It was **noted** that the revised draft would be returned to Teaching Committee for a second reading during the Autumn term.

The Chair thanked Liz Waller and Claire Shanks for presenting the paper.

M16-17/125 Programme Governance

The Committee **considered** a proposed policy statement relating to programme leadership and governance (UTC.16-17/80) which had been developed following discussion at UTC and consultation with the Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups. The proposals aimed to enhance aspects of programme and departmental governance and included principles

around programme leadership, the establishment of Departmental Teaching Committees and the discontinuation of combined Boards of Studies.

Members were supportive of the proposals and commented specifically on the following recommendations:

That Programme Leaders should normally be three years, with research/sabbatical leave as the only expected reason for any exception

It was **noted** that this did not take account of situations where the role of Programme Leader was built into a job description.

That Heads of Department should ensure that the role of programme leader is appropriately recognised in the department's workload model. This should include leaders of combined programmes in their 'home' department.

It was **noted** that in the absence of a University-wide workload model there was diversity across departments with respect to the time allocation for particular roles. Members **noted** that this proposal would encourage Heads of Department to ensure that all roles were appropriately recognised.

That Combined BoS should be discontinued and their role merged with the BoS of the lead department. Representation from the partner department would occur when combined programmes are discussed.

In relation to this and the proposal above, it was **noted** that there were administrative costs associated with being the lead department and that on occasions it might be difficult to agree where responsibility should lie. It was **noted** that it was the responsibility of the respective Heads of Department to agree on the designated 'lead' department and in cases where agreement could not be reached it would be necessary to seek the view of the relevant Dean(s) of Faculty. Members **agreed** that disputes about governance arrangements should be referred to the Dean of Faculty. Members **agreed** that the requirement for student representation from joint/combined programmes on Boards of Studies should be made clear.

Departments should ensure that new Chairs of BoS receive appropriate handover support from their predecessor

Members **noted** that there could be instances where a handover was not possible. It was suggested that, alongside the termly Chairs of BoS briefings, consideration should be given to the provision of central training for newly-appointed Chairs of Boards of Studies. If this was not possible, it was suggested that arrangements for cross-department support should be facilitated (perhaps by Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups).

That some combined boards should remain owing to the complexity of the programme and/or the number of participating departments. This exception would currently apply to Natural Sciences and PEP.

The Committee **noted** that the exception should also apply to the new MA in Social Research.

That all departments should have a DTC. This is not a requirement for Centres

The Committee noted that the Policy should specify whether this was a requirement for PEP*

Subject to consideration of the issues above, the Committee **agreed to recommend** the policy proposals to Senate to take effect from 2017/18. The Committee **noted** that, if approved by Senate, the recommendation to discontinue Combined Boards of Studies would require amendments to University ordinances.

*raised during M16-17/130

M16-17/126 Policy on Academic Misconduct

The Committee **considered** a recommendation from the Standing Committee on Assessment to approve a number of additions to the Academic Misconduct Policy, arising from a report on the use of custom essay writing services (UTC.16-17/81).

Members **noted** their concern about the increasing sophistication of custom essay services and the scale of the issue, as described in the QAA's report. Any guidance that could be provided to departments on detecting the use of essay mills would be welcomed.

The Committee **approved** the proposed additions to the Academic Misconduct Policy. It was suggested that the SCA should contact Alison Sherratt, Internal Communications Manager, for advice on how to best communicate the amended Policy, particularly addition four which emphasised the consequences of using unauthorised third party support.

M16-17/127 Careers-hosted 'with placement year'

Andrew Ferguson and Lucy Brookes attended for this item

The Committee **considered** a proposal for the creation of a 'with placement year' variant for all undergraduate and integrated masters degrees starting from the 2018/19 academic year (UTC.16-17/82).

A draft proposal had been considered by UTC in December and the Committee had highlighted issues which required further consideration. The Careers Service had addressed these issues and discussed the proposals with FLTGs and the SCA. Members thanked the Careers Service for its thorough consideration of the points which had been raised and for its engagement with FLTGs.

The Committee considered the terms of reference and membership of the proposed Board of Studies. The Committee **agreed** that there should be increased academic representation and that one academic representative should be recruited from each Faculty. The Committee **agreed** that FLTGs should each nominate a representative. The Committee suggested that points G and I in the terms of reference should make explicit reference to relevant QAA guidance.

The Careers Service would initially look to recruit a student representative who had undertaken a year in industry or placement through their Department. Once the 'with placement year' had been established the representative would be recruited from a previous cohort. It was noted that YUSU may wish to organise some bespoke training for the course representative for the Careers-hosted 'with placement year'.

The Committee observed that Careers Service should get as much disclosure as possible on any health issues affecting students on the placement year, and that communication between placement supervisors and students' departmental supervisors would be important. It was reported that all placement supervisors would be undertaking the University's mental health training. It was noted that Alison Sherratt was working with the Distance Learning Forum on communication with distance-learning students and members suggested that it might be helpful for the Careers Service to be updated on this.

The Committee **noted** that the placement year would need to be embedded into departmental programme design documents and into the programme approval process. It **agreed** that this should be determined by the Academic Support Office and the Careers Service.

It was observed that students may wish to register an interest in the placement year earlier than had been suggested (week 2 of the Spring term in their second year); it was reported that the Careers Service was open to further consideration of the timing of the registration of interest.

Members queried how a failed placement year would be recorded on a student's transcript and the Chair of SCA confirmed that it would appear on the transcript as a fail.

The Committee **approved** the creation of a 'with placement year' variant for all current and future undergraduate and integrated masters degrees to commence during the 2018/19 academic year (excluding the exemptions outlined in table 1 of the paper), subject to UEB's financial approval of the initiative. The Committee **approved** the proposed governance arrangements for the programme and, subject to the agreed amendments with respect to academic representation, **recommended the creation of Board of Studies to oversee the programme to Senate** (appendix 3 of the paper (UTC.16-17/82)).

Teaching Committee **agreed** that the placement year should be subject to a three-year review visit from UTC.

The Chair thanked Andrew Ferguson and Lucy Brookes for presenting the paper.

M16-17/128 Student Surveys

The Committee **considered** a report arising from the results of YUSU's liberation survey (UTC.16-17/83).

The survey provided an opportunity for students who identified as LGBTQ, BAME, female, or disabled, to highlight their experiences in academia. Although only 146 students had responded, a notably high proportion of respondents (47) had reported that they suffered from mental health issues. Members **noted** that the results reemphasised the need for an Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy (as discussed in M16-17/124). In connection with concerns about intolerance or bullying, it was noted that the student partnership agreement 'Together York' reiterated the University's expectations about fairness and respect. Together York would be launched by three projects (co-owned by the University and YUSU) and it was suggested that the scope of one these projects could be to consider how to address some of the emerging issues from the survey.

M16-17/129 Postgraduate external examiners' reports

The Committee **considered** a summary of the Postgraduate External Examiners' reports for 2015/16 (UTC.16-17/84). All Examiners had confirmed that standards set were appropriate for the level of the qualification, that standards of student performance were comparable with similar programmes in other institutions and that processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted. The reports had generally been very positive and a significant amount of good practice had been identified, particularly with respect to assessment and feedback.

The summary report had been considered by the SCA at its April meeting and the following actions agreed:

- *Lack of clarity to External Examiners regarding the role of Chairs of Boards of Examiners:* further information would be disseminated to External Examiners and the relevant section of the Guide to Assessment would be amended.
- *Availability of data on student progress:* There was a need to raise awareness of the data that was available. The Assistant Registrar (Student Progress) would take this forward.
- *Academic Skills provisions:* It was recommended the Learning Enhancement Team provide support as necessary.
- *Difficulty of obtaining merit/distinction:* It was noted that these had been considered recently by SCA, resulting in relaxation of the merit rule and SCA queried whether the External Examiner in question had up-to-date information on this recent change.
- *Over-length assignments:* Whilst SCA acknowledged that submission of work which exceeded the stated word count may be problematic, it was noted that no University wide standard was necessary other than for departments to be transparent and ensure that students are aware of the assessment specifications and penalties for over-length work.

It was **noted** that five external examiners had reported examples of over-generous and over-exacting marking and that, in some cases, the department's response to the issue raised by the external examiner (as indicated in appendix II of the paper) was not specific enough for SCA and UTC to be assured that the concern had been adequately addressed. UTC **agreed** that departments should be reminded of the need to respond fully to concerns raised by external examiners, particularly when concerns related to academic standards, and that the summary report should be explicit about the action(s) taken by departments in response to concerns about over-generous and over-exacting marking.

Action: Academic Support Office

M16-17/130 Board of Studies of the School of Politics, Economics and Philosophy (PEP)

Stuart Jolley attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a proposal to revise the constituency of the Board of Studies of the School of PEP (UTC.16-17/85). The proposal was part of the reforms which had been agreed by University Planning Committee (minute 16-17/50 refers), to embed PEP within the Department of Politics. It was reported that the three respective Heads of Department, the School Director, the Deans of Faculties for Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, and PEP students (who had been consulted) supported the proposal.

Members were also supportive of the proposal. It was noted that the number of student representatives had not been specified and the Committee **agreed** that there should be one undergraduate representative from each year group and a PGT representative. It was also **noted** that the policy proposals on the establishment of Departmental Teaching Committees (M16-17/125 refers) should specify whether the School of PEP would be required to establish a separate DTC.

Subject to the amendment regarding student representation, the Committee **agreed to recommend** the revised constituency of the Board of Studies, and its associated sub-committees, to Senate for implementation at the start of the 2017/18 academic year.

The Chair thanked Stuart Jolley for presenting the paper.

M16-17/131 Periodic Review Action Plan, Department of Health Science

The Committee considered a revised Action Plan arising from the periodic review of Health Sciences in June 2016 (UTC.16-17/86). It had originally been considered by UTC in November. During the November meeting the Committee had noted that, in places, the action plan did not specifically address some of the recommendations (notably those relating to assessment and feedback). Following the meeting of Teaching Committee, members of the Academic Support Office, the Chair of UTC and the Department had met to consider how best to coordinate all curriculum-related work arising from a range of action plans and projects. The action plan was subsequently revised and it was agreed that Teaching Committee should consider the revised actions to ensure the concerns raised in November had been addressed.

Although the Committee was supportive of the actions which had been identified, members were concerned that some actions would not be implemented until 2018/19, for example the revised marking criteria. It was noted that the Department had been working with the Learning Enhancement Team and some delays had arisen from the difficulty of arranging meetings. It was also noted that work with the Learning Enhancement Team on assessment needed to be completed before marking criteria could be considered.

The Committee **approved** the amended Action Plan. It was **agreed** that, in light of the protracted timeframe, the Department's progress with the action plan would benefit from additional monitoring, and therefore a summary report outlining progress with the agreed actions should be submitted to UTC during the Autumn term.

Action: Department of Health Sciences

It was noted that the issue of an absence of social space had been raised in four recent periodic reviews; Social Policy (January 2016), Health Sciences (June 2016), Social Work (March 2017) and Economics & Related Studies (April 2017). Members noted that the three departments in question occupied geographically the same area of campus (near Alcuin College).

In the light of this issue being repeatedly raised it was agreed that the Chair of Teaching Committee should contact the Director of Estates and Campus Services to ensure that the absence of communal / informal space for students studying in departments located near Alcuin was considered within the University Master Plan.

Action: Chair

Secretary's note: the Report arising from the Periodic Review of Social Work would be considered by UTC in June and the Report arising from the Periodic Review of Economics and Related Studies would be considered by UTC in October.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

M16-17/132 PTES Skills Development Summary

The Committee **received** the Careers Service response to the PTES Skills Development Summary (UTC.16-17/87).

M16-17/133 Pedagogy Approval Panels

The Committee **received** a report on the decisions of York Pedagogy Approval Panels approved by Chair's action in March (UTC.16-17/88).

M16-17/134 Modifications and withdrawals

The Committee received a report of modifications and withdrawals that had been approved by Chair's action between 6 February and 2 March (UTC.16-17/89) as follows:

Sociology, SPS, Criminology

Approval to withdraw the entry routes only for the with a year abroad variants of BA in Sociology, BA in Social and Political Sciences, BA in Social and Political Sciences with Philosophy and BA in Criminology for the 2018 year of entry. The programmes would all remain for students to transfer into from the standard programmes.

Economics

In connection with the York Pedagogy, approval to introduce an optional 20 credit dissertation module from 2017/18 to be available to that cohort of stage 3 students.

M16-17/135 Learning Enhancement Report

The Committee **received** a report from the Learning Enhancement Team on the range of its activities supporting teaching and learning (UTC.16-17/90).

M16-17/136 Complaints report

The Committee **noted that the** Chair had **received** the annual report on complaints received by the Registrar and Secretary in 2015/16. In addition to the details of formal complaints 2015-16, the Report included consideration of whether any trends were evident over the last three years (2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16). The Report concluded that there are no in-year trends and that there are no trends over a three-year period. The Chair resolved that there were no matters, patterns or trends that need further attention by Teaching Committee or other University-level body.

M16-17/137 Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee **received** a report on the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment on 21 April 2017 (UTC.16-17/91).

M16-17/138 Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups

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

- Arts and Humanities meeting held on 20 April 2017 (UTC.16-17/92a)
- Social Sciences meeting held on 19 April 2017 (UTC.16-17/92b)
- Sciences meetings held on 14 February 2017 (UTC.16-17/92c) and 20 April 2017 (UTC.16-17/92d).

M16-17/139 Collaborations

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved a collaboration between the Department of Health Sciences and York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for the delivery of the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care: Nursing Associate programme from 1 April 2017 (UTC.16-17/93).

M16-17/140 PSRB

The Committee **received** the report from the Royal Society of Chemistry confirming re-accreditation of BSc, MChem and MSc programmes within the Department of Chemistry (UTC.16-17/94).

M16-17/140 Exchange agreement

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved a University-wide exchange agreement with the National Research University - Higher School of Economics (HSE St Petersburg).

M16-17/141 Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee **noted** that the dates of future meetings in the 2016/17 academic year were as follows:

Thursday 22 June 2017 (09.30, in HG21)

Thursday 13 July 2017 (13.30, in SLB/001 Seminar room) [M16-17/122 refers]