UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2020

Present: John Robinson (Chair)
Jane Baston
Michael Bate (M19-20/114 to M19-20/120 and M19-20/122 to M19-20/125)
Mike Bentley
Ed Braman
Wayne Campbell (M19-20/114 to M19-20/120)
Gill Chitty
Sabine Clarke
Nigel Dandy
Jen Gibbons (to M19-20/124)
Claire Hughes
Steve King
Barry Lee
Tracy Lightfoot
Sinéad McCotter
Giang Nguyen
Mark Nicholson
Lisa O'Malley
Andrew Pickering (to M19-20/122)
Dave Smith
Jill Webb
Jez Wells

In Attendance: Elizabeth Allen (ASO, Minute Secretary) and Jane Iddon (ASO, Secretary).

Apologies were received from Sam Cobb and Matthew Perry.

CATEGORY I BUSINESS

M19-20/114   Minutes and Matters Arising

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 (UTC.19-20/**94**).

The Committee **considered** an update on matters arising from the minutes (UTC.19-20/**94 Appendix I**).

- MA / MSc new programme proposals (M19-20/37, 63 & 78). This action was now closed. In the light of the COVID-19 situation and its impact on the likelihood of securing a third external assessor report, the proposals and the second external report [UTC 19-20.51i] were reviewed by the Chair and Secretary. On the basis of the strength of the second external's report, the quality assurance risk of proceeding with the proposals, in the absence of a third external assessor report, was deemed to be low.

- Periodic Review of Natural Sciences (M19-20/104). The action plan for the Periodic Review of Natural Sciences had been revised and review by the Panel Secretary and Chair was in progress.

M19-20/115   **Oral Update from the Chair**

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

- The Chair reported that the University had adapted very quickly to the current COVID-19 crisis, and tribute was paid to staff and the engagement from students, during challenging times. Several projects had to be paused due to the situation, including the Module Evaluation Pilot, which had been postponed indefinitely. The Chair noted that once the University moves into a more normal working routine the project would be resumed. Members of the Working Group and the pilot departments had been informed.

- The Chair reported that work on the Degree Outcomes Statement had also been temporarily paused (M19-20/5 and M19-20/88 refers). The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) was encouraging institutions to publish to the original timescale (end of the academic year); if this time scale was not feasible UKSCQA had advised institutions to publish by the end of the calendar year. The Chair noted that, in light of other priorities related to the COVID-19 situation, the University would aim to publish the Statement by the end of the calendar year. The Statement would therefore need to be reviewed by SCA, UTC and Senate in October 2020 in order to be considered for approval by Council at its meeting in November.

- The Chair reported that in light of the current situation, a decision had been taken not to launch the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey this year. The Survey had been due to open on the 14 April 2020.

- The National Student Survey (NSS) had closed on 30 April and the (unconfirmed) response rate was 67.1% (slightly less than the 2019 response rate of 69.51%). The NSS had continued, as it had already started when the COVID-19 outbreak began. The Chair noted that the NSS website had publicised that the NSS data would be analysed to ascertain whether there had been an impact on the results, due to COVID-19. Notwithstanding such external analysis, the Chair reported that an internal analysis would be undertaken and an overall report would be produced in line with previous years. It was noted that inferences drawn from the data would take into consideration the potential effects from COVID-19 as well as the period of industrial action. The qualitative analysis would provide useful feedback, from the student perspective, with respect to the effectiveness of University measures to mitigate the impact of the industrial action and COVID-19.

- The Chair reported that the Office for Students had recently announced a delay to publication of the Subject-Level TEF pilot results and that there was no confirmed date yet for the next TEF exercise.

- The Chair reported that applications had been received for the Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Awards. The panel would be evaluating the applications received and notification letters would be sent out at the end of May. The Chair noted the COVID-19 situation may have made it difficult (or impossible) for colleagues to meet the March deadline; it had therefore been decided that there would be a second round of the Awards with an Autumn application deadline. Details would be announced in due course, and all application criteria and information would remain the same as they had been for the Summer round of the Awards.

2

- The Chair provided an update on the development of the University Strategy, and noted that work on the Strategic themes (which were being revised and consolidated) had now recommenced. Various projects including those connected to the Teaching Organisation theme (for example programme approval and the structure of the academic year) would resume. It was noted that, although the Interdepartmental and Cross-Faculty Teaching Working Group had temporarily paused its work, interdisciplinarity remained a key component of the York Strategic vision. It was reported that the Chair of the Working Group was a member of the University Strategic Working Group (Integrated Student Experience) and therefore work would be continuing at University level. Furthermore, the initial [7/5/20] guidance for departments regarding delivery of teaching for 2020/21 invited departments to consider the creation of new cross-discipline (core and/or transition) modules. The Chair of the Interdepartmental and Cross-Faculty Teaching Working Group expressed concern that the absence of an institutional framework for interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary teaching may give rise to a proliferation of projects which, in turn, may make a uniform structure in the future (if desired as part of the delivery of the University Strategy) more difficult.

M19-20/116 Update from the Student Representatives

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

- Nominations for 2020 Excellence Awards had closed and the shortlist was published on the website (https://yusu.org/excellence). Winners would be announced on 28 May. Members were encouraged to take part in the online event (details https://yusu.org/excellence).

- Work on the Student Voice Hub project was paused. YUSU/GSA representatives were members of the various contingency groups; the student voice was thus engaged in respect of planning for 2020/21.

- The YUSU/GSA led Survey on Transparency of Assessment Information had closed early due to the COVID-19 situation. The final number of respondents was 257. The data would be analysed and presented to the SCA at its July meeting.

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

- GSA elections had opened and campaigning would commence on 18 May. Voting would open on 25 May and close on 29 May; results would be announced shortly after.

M19-20/117 Degree Outcomes Statistical Analysis report

Karen Payne (Business Intelligence Analyst, Business Information Unit), Paulo Schau Guerra (Management Information Analyst, Business Information Unit) and Chris Hoyle, (Management Information Analyst, Access and Participation Monitoring and Evaluation Team) attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** the Degree Outcomes Statistical Analysis (DOSA) report 2019/20 (UTC.19-20/**95**). The purpose of the report was to identify meaningful relationships between undergraduate students' characteristics and their eventual outcomes. This year had seen the use of statistical analysis software in Python (M19-20/98 refers). The report included a comparison with the analysis conducted by the Office for Students (which forms the basis of York's Access and Participation Plan [APP] attainment and continuation targets) and it introduced disaggregated characteristics in line with the APP.

The analysis indicated the following key findings:

- Taking a leave of absence; having a BTEC as one of their top three A level equivalent qualifications; not having GCSE A/A* in Mathematics were all associated with a student having a greater likelihood of withdrawal.
- Having higher total tariff points; Chinese ethnicity; being in receipt of a bursary were all associated with a student having less likelihood of withdrawal.
- Taking a leave of absence; having a BTEC in their top three A level equivalent qualifications; repeating years; Chinese or Black ethnicity were all associated with a student having lower award marks.
- Overseas students, mature undergraduate students and students from a socio-economic classification band 4-7 were more likely to withdraw.
- Entry via Clearing did not appear to be significant factor in respect of withdrawal (although students who entered via Clearing achieved slightly lower award marks).
- Whilst overseas students were highlighted as having a greater likelihood of withdrawal, students with Chinese ethnicity were less likely to withdraw; this suggested that a reasonable proportion of Chinese students were home students, and that overseas students who were not Chinese, had a higher rate of withdrawal.
- The report identified four departments (Computer Science, Electronic Engineering, Mathematics and Physics) with a statistically significant increase in likelihood of withdrawal (table 4 of the report). SCA (which had considered the report at its meeting on 1 May) had noted that the definition of withdrawal as not achieving the 'intended' award may be skewing the data (anecdotal evidence suggested that students switch from Integrated Masters to Bachelors in order to later undertake a one-year postgraduate Masters programme instead - for the chance of having a full year of a research project) (SCA M19-20/79 refers). In response to SCA's query BIU had confirmed that Integrated Masters students, in the DOSA dataset, who change, withdraw, transfer, or who were otherwise awarded a degree were categorised as a Lower Exit or Withdrawal. This had now been amended so that any student obtaining an Honours Degree level classification is deemed to have completed. The models had been regenerated with the new status. With the exception of Physics (for which the revised 'Odds Ratio' indicated no statistical significance with respect to Withdrawn vs Completed) the recalculations were not discernably different from the original calculations.

The report had been considered by SCA at its May meeting and the Committee had welcomed the more detailed analysis. The Chair of SCA reported the key points of discussion at SCA:

- Science departments had a higher number of student withdrawals, and students repeating a year also had a greater likelihood of withdrawal; this correlated with the report on the University's Repeat Study Policy (UTC.19-20/**86**) which highlighted that the majority of repeating students (two-thirds) were from within the Faculty of Sciences (M19-20/102 refers).
- The outcomes of students with Black ethnicity and the impact of this characteristic on award mark was significant and, although this was consistent with national trends, it was concerning.
- Work undertaken with respect to the Degree Outcomes Statement had highlighted factors to focus on further.
- Members welcomed the finding that coming from a Low Participation Neighbourhood (Quintile 1-2) did not have a significant impact on withdrawals, which suggested that support for widening participation students had a positive effect.
- Positive increases in award marks for Archaeology, Music, History of Art and TFTI were noted.

UTC Members highlighted a number of other areas where further analysis would be useful:

- The strong link between students who took a leave of absence and subsequently withdraw, suggested that further analysis would be valuable. Members noted that some students who took a leave of absence were actually those who wanted to withdraw; they initially chose to take a leave of absence to give themselves more time to consider whether withdrawal was the right option (and then subsequently withdraw). The relationship between leave of absence and withdrawal was therefore a complex one.
- Members noted that it would be valuable to have a 'back on track' support process for students returning from a leave of absence (in a comparable way to the 'back on track' support package for repeat study students). The Academic Registrar noted that prior to the COVID-19 outbreak University Executive Board had agreed to fund a tiered student wellbeing support model with additional student-facing staff in the Open Door team. It was envisaged that Student Life and Wellbeing Officers recruited (via an internal recruitment round) as part of this initiative would provide some support to students returning from a leave of absence.
- In the light of the significance of BTEC as being associated with a higher probability of withdrawal, further analysis of this variable would be valuable (for example to decouple it from socio-economic classification 4-7). It may be that the BTEC is not providing good preparation for higher education study and therefore students entering with a BTEC need extra support.
- Members noted that students who had disclosed a mental health disability perform worse than those who had disclosed a learning disability, suggesting that students who declare a mental health disability may not always seek support.

Members supported the establishment of a working group to consider future DOSA reports. Members noted that the remit of the working group would be to help develop and prioritise the questions asked of future analyses, the methods of evaluation, and to define a reporting cycle. Members interested in joining the working group were invited to contact Karen Payne.

Action: Members of UTC

The Chair thanked Karen, Paulo and Chris for attending the meeting to present the paper.

M19-20/118   Degree Outcomes report 2018/19

Karen Payne, Business Intelligence Analyst (Business Intelligence Unit), attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** the Degree Outcomes report 2018/19 (undergraduate and postgraduate taught) (UTC.19-20/**96**). The overall percentage of good undergraduate degrees had increased by 1.9 percentage points (pp) to 82.4%. This change reflected an increase in the proportion of 1st class degrees awarded (there had been slight decrease in the proportion of 2:1 degrees awarded). Across the Russell Group, there had been a slight increase of 0.1pp to 86.2%, showing a closure of the gap between York and Russell Group outcomes by 1.8 percentage points. There was a marked variation in the percentage of good degrees awarded between different departments (this ranged from 66.5% to 96.1%). At faculty level, more good degrees were awarded in Arts and Humanities.

Members commended the useful sets of data produced by BIU. It was noted that extended data sets (which included students' top three A level results) had been developed to support the development of York's Degree Outcomes Statement; these extended datasets were available to members of staff with permission to view 'student experience' reports on the Management Information Gateway.

The percentage of postgraduate taught students achieving their intended award had also increased by 3.2pp to 85.6%. Across the Russell Group, there was an increase of 1.7 pp to 89.5%. Members suggested that it would be useful to include part-time degree outcomes in

5

the analysis, so that they could be compared with the full-time degree outcomes. It was noted that extending the analysis to include part-time provision would be subject to having large enough student numbers to ensure reliable data; BIU **agreed** to explore the possibility of extending the scope of future annual reports to incorporate part-time provision.

The paper had been considered by SCA at its meeting on 1 May. The Chair of SCA noted the significant increase in good degrees in the Department of Health Sciences and noted too that the size of the graduating cohort was significantly smaller than previous years. Members of SCA had suggested that it would be useful to compare outcomes across the whole sector, rather than with only the Russell Group. In response to a question as to whether the Degree Outcomes Statement would include sector wide comparisons, the Chair of SCA reported that it had been agreed (by the Working Group) that it would not.

UTC **agreed** that departments, supported by Associate Deans (for example through discussion at FLTGs), should be encouraged to reflect on their results. Annual Programme Review (APR) was also an opportunity for departments to reflect on their results; signposts to the Tableau workbooks were embedded in the APR departmental guidance.

The Chair thanked Karen for attending the meeting to present the paper.

M19-20/119   **York Experience Survey**

Dr Zoë Devlin, Executive Officer to the Academic Registrar, and Emma Triffitt, Management Information Analyst (Business Intelligence Unit) attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a report on the York Experience Survey (UTC.19-20/**97**). The York Experience Survey (YES) had been running annually since 2015-16, as an internal-only survey, which was commissioned by the National Student Survey (NSS) Task Group. The main purpose of the YES was to attempt to predict responses to the NSS and make interventions where student satisfaction was low, that would benefit the student experience.

BIU had compared the results from the same (estimated) student cohorts between the two surveys. The outcome signified that overall it appeared possible that the NSS loosely tracked the YES; that said, the finding was inconclusive due to having only three years of data and inconsistent patterns across faculties and subjects. Furthermore, the response rates for the YES had been consistently low (13%-17%). Members noted that whilst the survey delivered a large amount of data, it did not tie to the University's strategic aims.

The Academic Registrar commented that for the YES to continue, there would need to be a much higher response rate and suggested that the themes highlighted in the YES results 2018/19 (M19-20/56 refers) could be more effectively explored through the Student Engagement Working Group. Members noted that in light of the current COVID-19 situation, it was important to continue to explore different ways to engage with students to discuss their experiences during this period. The postgraduate student representative noted that the GSA were looking into ways to do this. The Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students reported that Maastricht had developed a student survey focused on the student response to the COVID-19 situation (and Maastricht's measures to mitigate the impact); Maastricht's survey questions would be shared with the GSA.

UTC **agreed to approve** the recommendation that the YES be discontinued.

The Chair thanked Zoë and Emma for attending the meeting to present the paper. Zoë's leadership of the YES over the years and the contributions of the Business Intelligence Unit were acknowledged.

M19-20/120   **Academic Skills Framework for 2020/21 academic year**

Cecilia Lowe, Head of the Learning Enhancement team, attended for this item.

The Committee **considered** a proposed Academic Skills Framework for 2020/21 academic year (UTC.19-20/**98**). It was reported that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, concerns had been raised with respect to possible increased diversity in the range of skills and language levels of incoming students, plus a related lack of confidence or 'sense of readiness' in a greater proportion of incoming students. In order to address these concerns an Academic Skills Framework had been developed. The Framework had been designed to:

- define the different stages of 'transition' and how these would be addressed;
- outline a three-pronged approach to skills support based on best practice.

The Academic Skills Framework outlines existing academic skills support as well as new resources, such as Short, Private Online Courses (SPOCs) and events which have developed this year to ensure retention of offer holders and to enhance induction. The framework also outlines the intention to balance the increase in online support resources with continued 1-to-1 support and the development of community events to foster a sense of belonging.

Members queried whether Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) would be appropriately placed for 1-to-1 support, as they would not have the knowledge of the wider curriculum and pathways through a degree. The Head of Learning Enhancement explained that GTAs were trained to support specific areas such as maths skills and were given clear guidance on signposting students to other places for support (for those areas that were not within the scope of the GTA role). The Head of Learning Enhancement further explained that coaching would not be undertaken by GTAs; Learning Enhancement staff members would be responsible for study coaching, as they had the relevant training to support the diverse groups of students.

Members commended the new framework and suggested that departments would find it valuable to see how departmental-specific provision (at each transition stage) could be connected to this overarching University-level provision. Members reported examples of good practice, at department-level, with respect to 'Preparing to Study' websites. The Head of Learning Enhancement agreed to share exemplars of departmental 'Preparing to Study' websites with the Associate Deans (for dissemination to FLTG members). It was noted that some departments' 'Preparing to Study' resources were available only to departmental staff and students. It may therefore be the case that the central list of exemplars could be expanded further. The Head of Learning Enhancement welcomed further additions for dissemination via the central list.

Action: Head of Learning Enhancement and Associate Deans

The Committee **endorsed** the three recommendations in the report, that:

- the stages of the Academic Skills Framework were a useful reference point for discussion of student support across all contingency planning groups;
- the Academic Skills Framework (online resources, 1-to-1 support, community sessions) was an appropriate approach for supporting skills and language development for all groups, and promoting an inclusive academic learning community through 2020/21 and beyond;
- *notwithstanding that the process regarding business critical recruitment resides with HR Services*, Learning Enhancement staffing capacity is 'business critical' in terms of:
    - GTAs / interns to support development and delivery of academic skills provision at all levels;
    - staff to support departments with large and diverse postgraduate taught cohorts.

The Chair thanked Cecilia for attending the meeting to present the paper.

M19-20/121 **Teaching, learning and assessment policy decisions arising from COVID-19 contingency arrangements**

The Committee **received** a report outlining the decisions (in respect of teaching, learning and assessment) taken to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the student experience (UTC.19-20/**99**). The report had also been received by SCA and Senate (at their meetings on 1 and 5 May 2020 respectively).

Due to the rapid timescale required for developing the contingency arrangements, amendments to teaching, learning and assessment-related policies had been considered, and approved, by the Chair of the respective Committee(s) (Senate, UTC, SCA) acting on behalf of its members; appendix 1 outlined the approval process and timeline.

The Chair reported that although work had been completed at rapid speed due to COVID-19, the amendments had been given close scrutiny. Notwithstanding the approval of the paper by Senate (5 May 2020) members were invited to comment. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Further guidance for postgraduate taught programmes (incorporating part-time provision) was being developed.
- The scope of the current guidance was for credit-bearing provision. Separate guidance would need to be developed for the non-credit bearing programmes; it was noted that this was not an immediate priority.
- Members highlighted the challenges for students and staff with childcare and other carer responsibilities.

The Committee **noted**:

- The suite of approved Teaching, Learning and Assessment COVID-19 Policy and Guidance and the mapping (appendix 15) of these documents to the Guide to Assessment and to Regulation 5: Assessment.   The mapping document explained how decisions (documented and detailed fully in appendices 3 to 13) corresponded to different aspects of the Guide to Assessment and where sections of the Guide were superseded by those decisions.
- That the record of approved modified assessment arrangements for Summer term 2020 modules would be received by SCA at its meeting on 3 July 2020.

On behalf of UTC, members of the Academic Contingency Group were thanked for their invaluable contributions to the development of the contingency measures.

M19-20/122 **Contingency planning in respect of 2020/21 academic year**

The Committee **received** a report outlining contingency planning in respect of 2020/21 academic year (UTC.19-20/**100**). The paper outlined current thinking on the delivery of teaching and assessments for the forthcoming academic year which would continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 situation. The paper had been considered by Senate at its meeting on 5 May. Subsequent to Senate's May meeting, initial guidance for the delivery of teaching for 2020/21 had been circulated (on 7 May 2020) to departments. It was reported that the principles underpinning the initial guidance had been considered at two Senior Leaders' meetings (which included Heads of Department).

The complex challenges with respect to planning the 2020/21 academic year, and beyond, in relation to learning, teaching and assessment were noted. Four different scenarios had been planned due to the uncertainty that lay ahead. Furthermore, implementation of the contingencies created a need for modifications to programmes, potentially on a large scale,

8

which required a review of the current procedure for approving modifications. The scope for streamlining the University programme modifications process, whilst ensuring continued robustness of procedures, and maintaining academic standards and assuring quality, were outlined in section 3.3 of the paper.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The deadlines for timetabling needed to be considered to ensure that the planned modifications were feasible.
- Members queried whether there was any flexibility in respect of the directive that there be no laboratories, studios or physical ensemble activity in the Autumn term. It was reported that it may not be possible to deliver all necessary laboratories, studios activity etc. in the Spring and Summer terms due to space constraints and ongoing social distancing rules. It was also noted that a second wave of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2021 could result in a further lockdown. Professional accreditation for some programmes necessitated a minimum number of hours to be spent in the laboratory or in the studio working on practicals. In this context some members queried whether the University position with respect to laboratories and studios was overly cautious and expressed concern that this decision placed constraints on subsequent delivery in Spring and Summer terms; this may result in fundamental features of a programme not being delivered.
- The Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students confirmed that further government guidance had recently been published in relation to the opening of research laboratories. University guidance may be updated in the light of these developments.
- The Chair noted that in the event of fundamental delays to teaching and assessments that required access to facilities, such as television and theatre studios, departments would (as with the Summer term 2020) need to devise assessments which allowed programme learning outcomes to be met (and students to graduate). It may also be possible for graduates to be provided with the opportunity to return to campus to gain the practical experience (via non-credit bearing provision). These decisions would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Student representative members of the Committee noted the importance of maintaining student consultation within the streamlined modification processes. The principle of working in partnership with students (and meeting the expectations of the Office for Students and the Consumer and Markets Authority with respect to student consultation) had been highlighted in section 3.1 (principles) of the paper.
- Members queried the intention of the advice on small-group teaching ('all small-group teaching for the Autumn term should be designed to support both physical face-to-face gatherings of groups and online gatherings of remote groups'). It was noted that the guidance was not suggesting *simultaneous* face-to-face and online delivery in a classroom; the intention of the guidance was that departments prepare for both forms of delivery. Members noted that it would be useful for a clear set of parameters in respect of dual teaching delivery to be developed.
- The Academic Registrar reported that Student Life Committee was considering the challenges in relation to students returning to campus, to ensure equity of the student experience.
- The Chair noted that Academic Contingency Group (which included the Associate Deans) met twice per week. Whilst the initial guidance had been circulated, there would be further opportunity to provide feedback and to clarify the details. The mechanism for departments to provide feedback and ask questions was via the Associate Deans.

9

M19-20/123   **Summary report of Postgraduate External Examiners' reports**

The Committee **considered** a summary report of the postgraduate external examiners' reports for 2018/19 (UTC.19-20/**101**). At the time of the meeting there were six (out of an expected 128) reports outstanding; follow-up in respect of the six missing reports, cognisant of the current situation, was being undertaken by the Academic Support Office.

It was reported that, in response to a request from SCA (M19-20/61 refers), the report had more clearly identified the extent of the concerns raised by externals by including information on the number of externals (who had raised the concern) and the provision for which the external(s) had oversight.

All externals had confirmed that: standards set were appropriate for the level of qualification; achievements of students were comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions; and processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted in line with University regulations. At the beginning of April departmental responses to the external examiner reports had been reviewed and, in the light of the contingency planning for COVID-19, a risk-based approach had been adopted in respect of missing responses; a specific response for these was only sought in cases where the Academic Quality Team resolved that there was a standards issue. It was reported that satisfactory responses had been received and that there were no outstanding responses for standards-related concerns.

Members considered the summary report, which highlighted eight themes:

- *Standards:* There was no discernable theme regarding overmarking (as had been noted in previous reports) and very few comments on undermarking. Two examiners commented on York's classification criteria. Members were asked to note that the requirement to achieve a particular mark in the dissertation module, in order to achieve an overall classification of Merit/Distinction, was fairly typical, although not universal, across the sector.
- *Moderation:* There was a recurrent theme in relation to the need for greater transparency in terms of how a final mark is determined when the first and second marks are discrepant.
- *Marking and grading criteria:* Numerous external examiners commended the use of marking schemes / grading criteria for being fair and rigorously applied. That said, several externals suggested ways to improve marking schemes and guidance to markers.
- *Assessment design and guidelines:* This was a recurrent theme, however Members noted that work was already underway to address issues raised. A YUSU/GSA-led survey on assessment transparency had been carried out, to further inform SCA (this included the information provided to students and the clarity of that information) (M19-20/116 refers).
- *Feedback:* Numerous externals identified areas of good practice across departments. Some externals reported variability of feedback and recommended more consistency in the quality of feedback and / or more detailed / feedforward comments.
- *English language skills:* Whilst this was a recurrent theme there were fewer comments compared to previous years (three departments commented in total). Members noted that the Academic Skills Framework being developed for 2020/21, should help address concerns (M19-20/120 refers).
- *Operation of Boards of Examiners*: As in previous years, the report highlighted the need for more contextual data to be provided to examination boards, to help identify trends. Members noted that a priority area of work for SCA in 19/20 academic year had been to review the information provided to external examiners and examination

boards, and work had started on this. In the light of the work arising from COVID-19 contingency planning this review had been temporarily paused and would recommence in due course.

- *Workload and marking deadlines:* Several examiners reported a higher workload resulting from the review of videos and blogs.

In addition to the eight themes UTC **noted** the examples of innovative and excellent practice identified by external examiners (section 3 of the report).

The paper had also been considered by SCA at its meeting on 1 May. The Chair of SCA reported that SCA had been pleased with the report (which, on the whole, was very positive); noting in particular that a number of concerns that had been raised in previous years were less prevalent (signifying that actions to address the concerns had been effective). In respect of the moderation theme the Chair of SCA reported that, last year, the guidance had been reviewed and deemed to be clear; the guidance had been recirculated to departments with a reminder to adhere to University expectations in respect of moderation (and to ensure that departmental moderation processes were clearly communicated to external examiners). External examiner reports for 2019/20 should identify whether this action has been effective. The Chair of SCA noted that work was ongoing in relation to assessment transparency; an initial analysis of the YUSU/GSA led Survey on Transparency of Assessment Information would be considered by SCA at its July meeting (M19-20/116 refers).

M19-20/124   **New programme proposal: MSc Advanced Clinical Practice**

The Committee **considered** a proposal from the Department of Health Sciences for an MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (UTC.19-20/**102**).

The programme would replace the current MSc Advanced Clinical Practice. The programme proposal, to be introduced in January 2021, included two routes (i) apprenticeship and (ii) non-apprentice learners. It was anticipated that the majority of learners would take the apprenticeship route, funded by the apprenticeship levy. The number of learners on the non-apprentice route was expected to be small (and to reduce over time). The duration of the programme was three years (this was part-time in terms of University study but was considered to be full-time in terms of the apprenticeship). Possible exit awards were Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Clinical Practice and Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Practice.

The Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard was an integrated apprenticeship (meaning that the End Point Assessment [EPA] is embedded within the degree programme). The EPA required for the apprenticeship route would therefore be delivered by the University of York, subject to a successful application to be on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO); the University's application had been submitted in April and the outcome was awaited. Learners on both routes would have access to the same programme of core and optional modules, apart from year 3, where the programme offered two comparable but distinct 20 credit 'Transition to Advanced Practice' modules (the apprenticeship version incorporated the EPA).   It was noted that the Independent Study Module (ISM) ('Service Improvement Project') was 40 credits; exemption to the University requirement with respect to permitted ISM credit size (Postgraduate Taught framework for programme design) was therefore sought.

Two external assessors had considered the proposal, the externals recommended that the proposal should proceed, with recommendations, including that a sense of cohort and community of practice is developed and maintained among students. The departmental responses to Ms Anna Neary and Dr Helen Rushforth (UTC.19-20/102 refers) had satisfactorily addressed the queries raised. The proposal had been reviewed in advance by

11

Lisa O'Malley and Mark Nicholson and, subject to conditions and the consideration of some recommendations, had the Reviewers' support.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Employer partnerships were in place (with York NHS Trust, Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, Haxby Medical Group and Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust). These partners had been involved in the programme design and would continue to be involved in ongoing monitoring through quarterly stakeholder meetings.
- Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) (articulated in the Apprenticeship Standard) had been mapped appropriately. That said, there were some mapping notes missing (for example "working on" / "assessed through" entries missing for PLO 4 for the *Independent and Supplementary Prescribing* module) for some modules; these required correction to ensure that the programme information paperwork accurately reflected the coverage of PLOs (and therefore KSBs) across the programme.
- It was noted that the Programme Design Document (PDD) indicated that the programme information had been circulated to Careers and that comments were awaited; it was not clear whether this feedback had now been received (and, if required, acted on).
- The Reviewers noted that the volume of independent learning may appear 'light' in comparison to traditional Masters programmes. That said, the combination of the 20 credit 'Transition to Advanced Practice' module and the 40 credit 'Service Improvement Project' module were considered to be appropriate for this programme.
- Teaching, learning and assessment activities had been clearly mapped with applied and integrated learning, and both external assessors commended the programme design and varied assessment tasks. Year 1 and 3 comprised compulsory assessments and Year 2 incorporated more optional flexibility to meet employer needs.
- The guided learning hours in respect 'off-the-job' learning complied with the regulatory requirements for 'off-the-job' working rules (which were 24.5% over 3 years, as defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency).
- The Reviewers noted that the curriculum differed from a traditional Masters programme, in that, it included:
    - an initial assessment of KSBs at recruitment, to allow an understanding of individual student needs;
    - appropriate Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning;
    - flexible options at Year 2, to meet employer needs;
    - Tripartite Reviews and the development of English and Maths skills (these elements would be mirrored for the non-apprentice learners).
- The Reviewers highlighted that further work was required to clarify how Level 2 English and Maths would be delivered (for apprentice learners without Level 2 on entry); this was important because of the regulatory requirement for apprentices, without Level 2 English and Maths on entry, to achieve it prior to taking the EPA. It was reported that the Apprenticeship Project Team were considering different approaches to ensure the delivery of this requirement (including, subject to a procurement process, delivery via an external provider). The Committee resolved that further assurance, prior to learners applying to the programme, was needed on the way in which this requirement would be met.
- The Reviewers suggested that the programme team may wish to consider the development of a PG Diploma award as an entry point; this would allow the PG Diploma award to be marketed as an award in its own right (and would replace the existing entry award which was being taught-out). The Committee **agreed** that, if the programme team wished to pursue this, the proposal would be reviewed by the two UTC Reviewers and approved (on the advice of the two Reviewers) by the Chair of UTC.
- Members queried the grading of the Transition to Advanced Practice modules. It was

12

reported that a numerical grade would be awarded for both the apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship versions of the module. This numerical mark would be treated like any other module mark for the purposes of calculating the overall MSc award mark. An apprentice learner who failed the EPA would not be permitted to transfer to the non-apprenticeship version of Transition to Advanced Practice module (both versions of the module were non-compensatable); in this case the learner would exit with a PG Diploma in Advanced Clinical Practice.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the programme (including the exemption to the Postgraduate Taught Framework for programme design to permit a 40-credit Independent Study Module) subject to the following two conditions and three recommendations:

Conditions, that the:

1. programme map be amended to ensure that it accurately reflected coverage of PLOs;
2. PDD be revised to articulate, with greater clarity and assurance, the way in which the University will ensure that apprentice learners without Level 2 Maths and English on entry, will be able to achieve these qualifications prior to taking the EPA.

Recommendations, that the programme team:

1. review departmental processes for dealing with student / practitioner disagreements over capability assessment in the workplace and confirm that these are fit for purpose for apprenticeships;
2. as per comments made by Anna Neary (external assessor) explore further opportunities to build a 'community of practice' and ways to develop and maintain a sense of cohort among students for peer support;
3. consider creating an entry point for the Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Clinical Practice.

The Committee **agreed** that the revised proposal should be reviewed by the UTC Reviewers and be subject to final sign-off by the Chair of UTC.

M19-20/125   **Periodic Review of Women's Studies**

The Committee **considered** a report, external assessors' report and action plan arising from the Periodic Review of the Centre for Women's Studies (CWS) (UTC.19/20/**103**). Sinéad McCotter had chaired the Review and Michael Bate had been the second UTC panel member. Jane Baston had been the Student Representative and Adrian Lee had been Secretary.

The Review had taken place prior to the 'lockdown' and the Chair of the Panel acknowledged, when presenting the report, that there were significant aspects of the academic environment that had now changed. The Chair of the Panel reported that the Review had been a positive experience supported by a high level of engagement from the Centre's team of staff, students and parent department Heads of Department (Sociology and English and Related Literature).

The Panel identified many strengths, which included: the Centre Director's vision for the future of CWS; the strong links with the Centre's academic parent departments; the excellent reputation nationally and internationally; the commendable level of flexibility and incorporation of the GEMMA (Erasmus Mundus MA in Women's & Gender Studies) within the Centre's portfolio; and the delivery of excellent research, teaching and pastoral student support. During the Review students commented on the innovative safe space approach, as well as its reputation, which was one of the reasons they chose CWS at York over other institutions. The Panel congratulated CWS on its outstanding external reputation, but felt that the Centre was not as well known within the University and could do more to raise its profile (internally) as an exemplar, in relation to staff / student relations and seminar design.

13

Recommendations to the Centre included:
- a robust strategy document be developed;
- an innovative approach to maximising its National and International reputation be adopted;
- collaborations with more departments within the University are expanded/explored;
- further enhancement of the teaching and research standards, and promotion of career progression routes;
- clarity is provided within the Centre's marketing (given it has two MAs with similar names) to aid applicants' understanding of the distinctions between both offerings;
- support is provided for academic staff to manage their office hours for the student community;
- the Centre considers, with support as required from the parent departments, what additional opportunities there might be within the Centre to use CWS Graduate Teaching Assistants on CWS modules.

The Committee noted that the Panel had made three University-level recommendations, that:

1. the University provides CWS with sufficient resources and assistance to result in more sustainable staffing, growth in teaching and research achievements and increased visibility extending beyond the University (para 2.5);
2. consideration is given to professorial recruitment and career development paths for staff to foster sustainable leadership and mentoring of newer academics (para 2.5);
3. the Planning Office/Operations Manager review policies on workload allocation and financial reward/cost for teaching and supervision across departments (para 4.4).

The three recommendations had been referred, in the first instance, for consideration by the Director of Planning and the Dean of Social Sciences. The Director of Planning had commented that, in recent Planning Committee Strategic Reviews, concerns about resource levels were framed around the subject area reprioritising its resources (rather than the University providing additional resource). Similarly the Dean had commented that resourcing issues should fall outside the remit of a Periodic Review (since a Periodic Review Panel is not provided with financial data or wider contextual information in relation to resources) and that issues on professorial recruitment / staff development and workload allocation should be directed to parent departments (who are responsible for line managing colleagues in CWS). The Chair suggested that the University recommendations be refocused to CWS and parent departments (Sociology and English and Related Literature): the Director and parent department Heads of Department will be asked to ensure that the issues are raised, as appropriate, within their respective planning processes. Panel members commented that they were confident that these matters would be dealt with between the Centre and its parent departments. The Committee **endorsed** the Chair's suggestion.

The Committee **approved** the report and agreed that appropriate actions in response to the Panel's recommendations had been identified.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

M19-20/126   New programmes, modifications and suspensions

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved
- The suspension of the MA Analytic Theology for one year (2020/21). This decision would

14

be reviewed again in one year.

- Three new programmes: MA Sustainability Studies; MSc Sustainability Science; MA Management in the Creative and Cultural Industries.
- Major modifications to the International Pathway College's pre-sessional courses (20-week, 15-week, 10-week) (UTC.19-20/**104**).

M19-20/127   Summary report of the conjoint Nursing and Midwifery Council / UTC approval event

The Committee **received** a summary report of the conjoint Nursing and Midwifery Council / UTC approval event (March 2020) for the new Independent & Supplementary Prescribing for Non-Medical Prescribers (Nurses, Midwives & Allied Health Professionals) programme (UTC.19-20/**105**).

M19-20/128   Sub-Committees / Groups

Standing Committee on Assessment

It was **noted** that the report of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment, held on 1 May 2020, would be received by UTC at its June 2020 meeting.

M19-20/129   Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups

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

- Arts and Humanities meeting held on 20 April 2020 (UTC.19-20/**107a**)
- Social Sciences meetings held on 18 February (UTC.19-20/**107c**) and on 22 April 2020 (UTC.19-20/**107d**)

It was **noted** that the report of the Sciences meeting, held on 16 April 2020, would be received by UTC at its June 2020 meeting.

M19-20/130   Exchanges

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved an exchange agreement between the Department of Politics and Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

M19-20/131   Periodic Reviews

The Committee **noted** that, in the light of the evolving COVID-19 situation, the Chair had approved the postponement of Summer term Periodic Reviews (Medieval Studies, Academic Practice and Hull York Medical School provision). These Reviews would be rescheduled, working alongside the three academic areas, in due course.

M19-20/132   Dates of 2019/20 meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of future 2019/20 meetings:

- Thursday 18 June 2020
- *Extraordinary meeting* (reserved for new programme proposals that cannot be accommodated in the cycle of term-time meetings) – Thursday 16 July 2020