

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2020

**Present:** John Robinson (Chair)  
Jane Baston  
Mike Bentley  
Wayne Campbell  
Sabine Clarke  
Sam Cobb  
Nigel Dandy  
Jen Gibbons  
Claire Hughes  
Matt Johnstone  
Steve King  
Barry Lee  
Tracy Lightfoot  
Sinéad McCotter  
Mark Nicholson  
Matthew Perry  
Andrew Pickering

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

Apologies were received from Michael Bate, Ed Braman, Tom Cantrell, Lisa O'Malley, Dave Smith, Jill Webb and Jez Wells.

**CATEGORY I BUSINESS**

**M19-20/156 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 (UTC.19-20/**126**).

The Committee **considered** an update on matters arising from the minutes (UTC.19-20/**126 Appendix I**), and noted that they were all now closed.

**M19-20/157 Welcome**

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting for Elizabeth Allen (minute Secretary for 2019/20), as Jenny Brotherton had returned from maternity leave and would be resuming her role as minute secretary from October 2020. Elizabeth was thanked for her support of the Committee during 2019/20. It was also noted that this would be the last meeting for the Chair before his tenure as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students came to end in September. On behalf of UTC and ASO, the Head of ASO thanked the Chair for his hard work and leadership of Teaching Committee since May 2012. The Chair's significant impact in respect of programme design and the implementation of the York Pedagogy was noted.

The Chair's close partnership working with students and colleagues, throughout his term, was also noted.

#### **M19-20/158 Provision of digital textbooks**

*Masud Khokhar, Director of Library and Archives, attended for this item.*

The Committee **considered** a proposal for the provision of digital textbooks (UTC.19-20/**127**). The paper provided a business case for a core digital textbooks subscription, which included a series of options. The paper had been considered by Heads of Professional Services (HoPS) at its meeting on 30 July 2020; HoPS had supported the recommendation therein. The proposal would be considered by the Library Committee at its September 2020 meeting.

The paper recommended 'option 3 – Undergraduate (UG) Year 1 and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) offer with wider Arts and Humanities coverage', which provided broad coverage for all subjects. This option would provide core textbooks for all UG Year 1 and PGT modules (based on providing 2 core textbooks per module). This would apply to approximately 5000 students. In addition, the Library would procure the Cambridge University Press new digital textbook platform, for a cost of £25,000, which provided access to over 750 digital textbook titles, 500 of which were relevant to Arts and Humanities. This would bring the overall cost, for this option, to £275,000 per annum.

The Director of Library and Archives reported that, whilst COVID-19 had highlighted the lack of digital textbooks offered, the problem itself existed before COVID-19. The Library had been working with YUSU and GSA since 2019 to develop the case for a pilot digital textbook initiative for the academic year 2020/21. This case had been strongly endorsed and approved by the Information Strategy Group (Chaired by the PVC Teaching, Learning and Students). During the COVID-19 pandemic free pilots (for three months) had been trialled. During this time, selected digital textbooks were opened up to students on request over the lockdown period and were manually linked to reading lists. This free trial access ended at the end of July. Feedback from students was almost (except one comment) universally positive.

The recommended provider was Kortext, an approved supplier on the national purchasing framework. The Kortext platform could be easily integrated with VLEs and was also available on an app that students could download to their device(s).

Members noted that the initiative would provide a better student experience. It would ensure equity of provision for on-campus and off-campus students, and mitigate the risk to the student experience arising from a second wave lockdown scenario (as access to core textbooks - UG Year 1 and PGT modules - would be available, regardless of whether the Library had to be physically closed).

Members welcomed the initiative, and during the discussion, the following points were made:

- The proposed option was inclusive of IPC provision, part-time programmes and short courses.
- A number of competitor universities were similarly making a case for digital textbooks. It was therefore important that York consider its digital offering to support student recruitment.
- The Kortext subscription model meant that the cost for each subscribing institution would fall at the stage where more than 10 or 25 institutions subscribed; for example, if more than 10 universities subscribed to the Kortext complete model, then the cost would be £200,000 instead of £275,000.
- The initiative would also have a positive impact at departmental level as the cost for core textbooks sometimes resided with departments (for example distance learning provision in Management and Computer Science).

- The Director of Library and Archives reported that, whilst the costing had been based on providing two core textbooks per module (based on an average of 6 modules per annum), there would be opportunities to negotiate extra books (potentially on a restricted license) in the future.
- Members queried whether the initiative could be extended further to provide core textbooks to all undergraduate students rather than being restricted to first year students. The Chair put this suggestion to the Committee; members' support for wider coverage was universal.

The Committee strongly **endorsed** the proposal for the provision of digital textbooks as per option 3 ('undergraduate year 1 and postgraduate taught offer with wider Arts and Humanities coverage'). It was **noted** that the Committee supported broader coverage; it was therefore **recommended** that, subject to the approval of the business case for option 3, consideration be given in the summer term of 2020/21 to widening the initiative (from 2021/22 onwards) to include all undergraduate students.

The Chair thanked Masud for preparing the business case and for attending the meeting to present the proposal.

**M19-20/159 New programme proposal: [York-Maastricht partnership] MSc Sustainable Business: Management, Innovation and Leadership**

*Heather Stout, Project Manager, York-Maastricht Partnership and Ian Wiggins, Director, York-Maastricht Partnership, attended for this item.*

**Declaration of interest:** *Claire Hughes. The Chair noted that whilst Claire would participate in discussion of this item she would not participate in the Committee's decision-making for this proposal.*

The Committee **considered** a proposal for an MSc Sustainable Business: Management, Innovation and Leadership (UTC.19-20/128) which, if approved, would be jointly awarded by the universities of York and Maastricht. The Programme Leaders were Dr Claire Hughes (University of York) and Professor Nancy Bocken (Maastricht University). The Programme would be based on a 50:50 partnership split between the two institutions. The Department of Environment and Geography would be the lead Department at York. The programme had been considered by Environment and Geography's Board of Studies (BoS) and approval had been granted subject to further consideration of an issue.

*Secretary's post-meeting note: at the time of the meeting BoS approval had not been finalised. Final BoS sign-off was granted on 21 August 2020.*

The programme included a full-time and 3-year part-time route, to be introduced in September 2021. Possible exit awards were a Postgraduate Diploma Sustainable Business: Leadership, Innovation and Management and a Postgraduate Certificate Sustainable Business.

It was reported that, whilst the business case was in progress, planning approval had not yet been granted. With the agreement of the Chair of UTC, academic approval was being sought in parallel with planning approval.

This was the first joint Masters programme to be developed through the Partnership. Whilst the academic governance of this proposal resided with Environment and Geography's Board of Studies, it was reported that, as the York-Maastricht programme portfolio grew, consideration would be given to establishing a Joint Board (comprising teaching staff from both institutions).

The programme comprised all new core modules. The delivery mode of the full-time route consisted of a combination of face-to-face and distance learning. York-based students would receive face-to-face teaching from York and online teaching from Maastricht (and vice-versa for Maastricht-based students). The part-time route would be delivered entirely online. It was proposed that Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) would act as facilitators during Problem Based Learning (PBL) sessions; permission for this (in line with the GTA policy) would be sought.

Two external assessors had considered the proposal; both had welcomed the programme, commending the significant emphasis on business and change management, with a strong focus on supporting the radical changes needed to meet sustainability goals. The externals recommended that the proposals should proceed, subject to the consideration of a number of recommendations. The Committee **noted** that the Department's responses to Professor Robinson and Dr Tennant (UTC.19-20/**128c&d**) had satisfactorily addressed the recommendations raised.

The proposal had been reviewed in advance by Sam Cobb and Jen Gibbons. The proposal had the reviewers' support, subject to a number of outstanding queries in relation to the assessment, progression and award regulations. The reviewers reported that:

1. In order to qualify for the joint award, Dutch legislation required that students study for 25% of their credits in the Netherlands. York-based students who did not participate in the exchange element (in Maastricht) would therefore not be eligible for the joint award. The reviewers noted that in this scenario students would be awarded a York degree and, to recognise the joint delivery of the programme, an additional certificate from Maastricht confirming this.
2. The proposal had not yet been approved by Maastricht University; the lead in time was expected to be longer as, in addition to University approval, Maastricht had to seek approval from the government (for the national assessment of the need for the programme). As a result, the arrangement in respect of the award may need to be different for the first cohort (September 2021 start) of the programme; if approval was not granted at the stage where the programme was ready to be advertised, the award for the 2021/22 cohort would be a single award conferred by the University of York.
3. The intention was that all York-Maastricht programmes would be governed by a jointly agreed assessment, progression and award framework. In order to maintain standards and ensure parity of experience for students on the programme it was the intention that this joint framework apply to the 2021/22 cohort regardless of whether the MSc was awarded jointly or by York only (arising from the longer lead in time for Maastricht approval [as per point 2 above]). The Committee had been presented with an initial draft set of rules (which drew on the respective rules of both institutions); a number of areas of compatibility had been identified along with a number of key differences:
  - a) Exit Awards. York permitted lower exit awards whereas Maastricht did not. It may therefore not be possible for exit awards to be jointly conferred; PgCert or PgDip (regardless of whether the student is Maastricht or York-based) may need to be awarded by York.
  - b) Reregistration / resits. Maastricht permitted only one resit in any given academic year (in the absence of exceptional circumstances). Students were able to reregister for the same programme in a subsequent academic year and retake the failed module.
  - c) Right to Complain. Maastricht students had the right to file a complaint against the grading of their work. This appeared to directly counter the UK HEI approach which permitted appeals based on procedural irregularity but did not permit students to complain/appeal against an academic judgement.

4. Elements of the Programme Design Document required further clarity:
  - a) Awarding institution (as per points 2 and 3a above)
  - b) Admissions criteria. The statement should be amended to make clear whether applicants with sufficient professional experience, but without a first degree, would be accepted.
  - c) Statement of Purpose (section 5a) and Inclusivity (section 5eiii). The text should be revised to be inclusive of all students (York and Maastricht-based) and consideration be given as to whether the potential mobility/travel between York and Maastricht is sufficiently clear (for example, if costs would be incurred for conference attendance, this should be clear to students at application stage).
  - d) Progression - Postgraduate Certificate exit. Consideration should be given as to whether the Group Sustainable Business Project could be included (and therefore PLO 6 incorporated).
  - e) GTAs. The text should be revised to explain in more detail how GTAs would be managed and regulated.
  - f) Placement-based ISM (section 9). This section should be revised to provide further detail in respect of the academic supervision arrangements.
  - g) Programme structure. The accuracy of the duration of the group project for part-time students (which appeared to be twice the duration as for full-time students) should be confirmed.
  - h) Transfer. The text should be revised to ensure it accurately reflected the award variants.
  
5. Module descriptors. The Module Learning Outcomes were clearly articulated at level 7 and aligned with the Programme Learning Outcomes. Minor amendments, for clarity, were required in places
  - a) Module descriptors should be fully inclusive of both York-based and Maastricht-based students.
  - b) Further details in respect of re-assessment and feedback turnaround were required and it was noted that this would be a subject of the joint policy discussion.
  - c) Individual Sustainable Business Project. Further consideration, within the (yet to be agreed) joint assessment framework, should be given as to the assessment of the ISM (which included a conference presentation). It was noted that, under York rules, whilst the report/thesis component could be revised if failed in the compensatable range, the conference presentation ISM component would not be reassessable.
  - d) Social and Economic Sustainability. It was noted that the descriptor did not include information on the way in which students would be able to undertake advanced research.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Chair of SCA commended the proposal and endorsed the intention that the joint assessment, progression and award framework apply to the programme from the outset (regardless of the awarding body). The Chair of SCA offered assistance in respect of the development of the joint framework.
- The York-Maastricht Project Manager reported that the partnership team aimed to finalise the Collaborative Agreement and the proposed assessment, progression and award framework by the end of the calendar year. It was **agreed** that SCA and UTC should consider the final proposed joint framework in the Autumn term.

**Action: Secretaries to SCA and UTC**

- It was noted that York's PGT programme design framework permitted the inclusion of a maximum of 30 Level 6 credits. Whilst the current proposal comprised Level 7

modules only, the development of the joint framework should include a discussion regarding the inclusion of Level 6 modules; if it was agreed that Level 6 modules may be included in a joint York-Maastricht programme, the assessment rules would need to cover Level 6 modules (which, if taken as part of a PGT programme at York, were marked on a pass/fail basis).

- The GSA representative was very supportive of the proposal, and recommended that dedicated student representation was embedded within the programme across both locations. The York-Maastricht Project Manager confirmed that student representation was a key partnership consideration and would be taken forward.
- Members noted that the proposal was based on an ECTS [European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System] conversion ratio (to York credit) of 1:3 whereas the usual ratio was 1:2. The rationale for the 1:3 ratio was that Maastricht equated 1 credit to a notional workload of 30 hours (York equated 1 credit to a notional workload of 10 hours). Whilst ECTS recognised that 1 ECTS is equal to between 25 to 30 hours and that the exact number of hours varied from country to country, the Centre for Global Programmes had advised that it would be unprecedented to use anything other than a ratio of 1 ECTS: 2 UK credits. The Academic Quality Team had therefore suggested that the ECTS be revised to reflect a 1:2 ratio
  - Modules 1 to 6: 15 UK credits / 7.5 ECTS
  - Group Sustainable Business Project: 30 UK credits / 15 ECTS
  - Individual Sustainable Business Project: 60 UK credits / 30 ECTS

It was noted that this revision required the agreement of Maastricht University.

- Members commended the assessment design and PBL pedagogy. The importance of establishing a common academic language in respect of PBL (for which there existed diverse approaches) was noted.
- Members suggested that, in order to provide greater opportunity to augment assessment case studies and PBL to sectors and organisations, greater specificity on possible career destinations would be beneficial.

The Committee agreed to **approve** the programme subject to the following 5 conditions and consideration of 2 recommendations:

Conditions, that:

1. Board of Studies approval is granted;

*Secretary's post-meeting note: Final BoS sign-off was granted on 21 August 2020.*

2. planning approval is granted;
3. elements of the Programme Design Document be clarified as per 3 above;
4. module descriptors be revised to ensure that the language reflects that the cohort of students on this programme was a single cohort (regardless of whether they are based in York or Maastricht) (5a above);
5. the outstanding issue in relation to the ECTS credit conversion be resolved to the mutual agreement of both partners.

Recommendations that consideration be given to:

1. providing further specificity on possible career destinations;
2. expanding the module descriptor for Social and Economic Sustainability to include information on the way in which students would be able to undertake advanced research.

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.

## CATEGORY II BUSINESS

### M19-20/160 New programmes and Suspensions

- i. The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved a proposal to unsuspend the MA in Postwar Recovery Studies to allow for its modification and retitling as MA in Peace and Conflict Studies, to commence in 2021/22.
- ii. The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved a proposal to move the 'with Year Abroad' from between Stages 1 and 2, to between Stages 2 and 3, for implementation in September 2020, for the following programmes:
  - BA History of Art
  - BA Curating and Art History
- iii. The Committee **noted** that, under powers delegated by Senate, the Chair (acting on behalf of the Committee) had approved a proposal, to commence in November 2020, for a new York-Higher Ed Partners (HEP) UK programme: MSc Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence.

### M19-20/161 Annual Programme Review 2019/20

The Committee **received** the revised Annual Programme Review report template and guidance (for reporting on the academic year 2019-20) (UTC.19-20/**129**) (M19-20/84 refers) and **noted** that the Chair had approved, for this year (reporting on 2019-20), the removal of the requirement for reflection at the programme-level (via completion of an individual programme pro forma).

### M19-20/162 Exemption to the policy on assessment feedback turnaround

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved an exemption to the policy on assessment feedback turnaround for programmes delivered in partnership with HEP; the deadline for feedback for final summative assessments for modules on York-HEP online programmes would be the end of Tuesday of week 5 of the subsequent teaching period. This exemption would be incorporated into the 2020-21 Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback.

### M19-20/163 Graduate Teaching Assistants

The Committee **noted** that the Chair had approved the use of Graduate Teaching Assistants to support teaching on Masters-level programmes in the Department of Archaeology.

### M19-20/164 Dates of 2020/21 meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of 2020-21 meetings:

- Thursday 8 October 2020, 13.00-17.00
- Thursday 12 November 2020, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 26 November 2020 - \*Annual Strategy meeting\* 09.30-13.30

- Thursday 10 December 2020, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 11 February 2021, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 18 March 2021, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 20 May 2021, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 24 June 2021, 09.30-13.30
- Thursday 15 July 2021 - \*contingency meeting (for new programme proposals)\* 09.30-13.30.