**University Teaching Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 March 2025, 09:30-12:30, in HG/21 Heslington Hall and via video conference**

**Meeting Attendance**

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students (Chair)
Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students (Deputy Chair)
Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development (Secretary)
Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Student Success
Claire Hughes, Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor; Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Sciences)
Jill Webb, Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor; Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences)
Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)
Tom Banham, Academic Registrar and Director of Student Education and Experience
Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director: Student Services
Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability
Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)
Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)
Daniel Keith (representing Social Sciences)
Michelle Alexander (representing Arts and Humanities)
Michael Bate (representing Sciences)
Claire Ball-Smith (representing Professional Programmes)
Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing
Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb, York SU Activities Officer
Frederick Newell, York SU Undergraduate Student Voice Assistant
Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships

In attendance:
Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)
Kate Freeman, PA to Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students
Ruth Hale, Project Officer
Sally Quinn, Director of Interdisciplinary Teaching [UTC.24-25/71]
Richard Walker, Associate Director Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing: Digital Education [UTC.24-25/73]
Adrian Lee, Academic Quality Policy Manager [UTC.24-25/74]
Becky Lloyd-Jones, Academic Quality [UTC.24-25/75]

Apologies: Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities); Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, CITY College; Fenella Johnson, York SU Academic Officer

**Section 1: Standing Items**

### Welcome

24-25/128    The Chair welcomed Freddie Newell, York SU Undergraduate Student Voice Assistant, attending in place of Fenella Johnson, and Kate Freeman, new PA to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students, attending for information only.

### Declarations of interest in items on the agenda [oral report]

24-25/129    Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting; none were declared.

**Unreserved minutes of the last meeting held on 13 February 2025 [UTC.24-25/69]**

24-25/130    The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2025 as an accurate record.

**Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

24-25/131    The Committee **noted** that a number of previously outstanding items had been closed, with details available on the "Completed" tab of the action record.

**Report of Chair's and Deputy Chair's Action taken since the last meeting [UTC.24-25/70]**

24-25/132    There were no actions to report from the Chair.

24-25/133    The Deputy Chair has taken the following action on behalf of UTC:

1.  **Approved** the International Year One (IYO) Business and Management articulation initiative for 2025/26 enrolment. The IYO subject, academic skills and English language programme is designed by Kaplan, and students complete the year either with Kaplan online, Kaplan International College in London, or at the IPC in York. Students completing the IYO equivalent of stage 1 will then be eligible to transfer with the equivalent of 120 credits into stage 2 of the following York School for Business and Society degrees in 2026/27:

    a.   BA Business and Management
    b.   BA Business and Management (with a year in industry)
    c.   BSc Business and Management
    d.   BSc Business and Management (with a year in industry)
    e.   BA Business and Society
    f.   BA Business and Society (with a year in industry)

2.  **Approved** the International Year One Computer Science articulation initiative (as above) for 2025/26 enrolment. Students completing the IYO equivalent of stage 1 will be eligible to transfer with the equivalent of 120 credits into stage 2 of the following York Computer Sciences degrees in 2026/27:

    a.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science
    b.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science (with a year in industry)
    c.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Cyber Security
    d.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Cyber Security (with a year in industry)
    e.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence
    f.   BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence (with a year in industry)
    g.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science
    h.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science (with a year in industry)
    i.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence
    j.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence (with a year in industry)
    k.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science with Cyber Security
    l.   MEng (Hons) Computer Science with Cyber Security (with a year in industry)

3.  **Approved** the following Assessment and Feedback policies after revisions made following UTC's meeting of 13 February 2025:

    a.   Allowable Penalties in Assessment
    b.   External Examiners Policy

4.  **Approved** the following CITY ULE programmes for implementation in September 2025 after validation meetings:

    a.   LLM in European and International Business Law (in English)
    b.   LLM in Business Law (in Greek)

**Chair's report [oral report]**

24-25/134   The Chair **reported**

1.   Peter Bazira, who was intending to join UTC as a co-opted member from HYMS, is now leaving the institution and thus will not be joining UTC. UTC membership will be reconsidered in due course after the appointment of a new Associate Dean TLS for Sciences.

2.   Student and Academic Services has been replaced by two new Directorates:

     a.   *Student Education and Experience* (comprising Academic Quality and Development; Student Administration; Student Systems; Student Success; Careers and Placements; and York Online Partnerships)

     b.   *Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing* (comprising Content and Open Research; Engagement and Customer Experience; White Rose Libraries; Archives and Research Collections; Student Life and Wellbeing; Digital Education; and Academic and Digital Skills)

3.   The following staff members' titles have changed:

     a.   Tom Banham's title is now Academic Registrar and Director of Student Education and Experience;

     b.   Kirsty Lingstadt's title is now Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing;

     c.   Jan Ball-Smith's title is now Head of Student Success.

4.   Vikki Goddard has joined the University as Chief Academic Services Officer.

5.   A recent application has been made to the Greek Government by the University and City College to create a new University Legal Entity. The same relationship will be maintained in terms of validation, but it also may create opportunities to grow provision and for UTC to think strategically about how the partnership may be developed.

6.   The Chair gave an update on the ongoing work of the Senate Board of Studies Task and Finish Group:

     a.   At its next meeting, Senate will be asked to approve indicative membership of, and a set of terms of reference for, Department/School Education Committees, which are designed to encourage innovation and strategic thinking. The paper will also include some examples of how policy is to be implemented at School/Department level. This will be shared with UTC.

                         **Action:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students

     b.   The new Department/School Education Committees will be introduced for 2026/27; however guidelines will be produced for Schools/Departments that wish to pilot the new structure in 2025/26. Pilots will be evaluated on quality assurance and staff and student engagement.

     c.   As Schools/Departments differ in their governance arrangements, 2025/26 will be used to establish  a standardised and consistent model across the institution (acknowledging some variation will still be needed).

     d.   Further work will also be undertaken to reflect on the remit of Boards of Examiners in light of the move to Department/School Education Committees.

7.  Applications are being received for the International Year One, and the Chair thanked Steve King and the teams involved for the efficient approval and processing of changes, which enabled prompt marketing.

**Deputy Chair's report [oral report]**

24-25/135    There were no items to report from the Deputy Chair other than the actions already noted.

**Student Representative's report [oral report]**

24-25/136    Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb, York SU Activities Officer, **reported:**

1.  Nominations for the Excellence Awards will be open from 14th April to 16th May and announced on 29th May. York SU will be promoting the awards on social media and to key contacts in Schools/Departments.

2.  Sabbatical Officer elections are currently underway.

3.  Recruiting for student representatives for 2025/26 will begin in April.

4.  Students have reported concerns that they are being allocated supervisors without relevant knowledge of dissertation topics. The Committee **observed** that senior academic staff should have the ability to supervise across a broad range of subjects. However, if there are specific concerns about staff not having supervision expertise, this should be raised with the School/Department.

5.  Students have reported dissatisfaction with the administration of dissertation modules, particularly with the release of deadline dates varying across Schools/Departments.

6.  In collaboration with the Politics Department, York SU is launching a focus group event entitled "Equality, Inclusion and Diversity in the Classroom". This is in response to students reporting that they would like to see more support and initiatives around EDI in teaching practices. The Committee requested that feedback from the event be shared with the Inclusive Education team.

**Action:** York SU

7.  Some recent communications have referred to York SU with an incorrect name or abbreviation. "York SU" should be the only name or abbreviation used, and the Communications Office should be reminded of this.

**Action:** York SU

**NSS update**

24-25/137    Claire Hughes, Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Associate Dean (TLS) for Sciences, **reported:**

1.  The latest response rate was 58%, compared to 50% at the same time last year.

2.  York SU is creating another promotional video to encourage participation towards the end of the fieldwork period.

3.  The Steering Group has now met three times. Work so far has included:

    a.  Improving the response-rate emails that have been going out to Schools/Departments, including sharing examples of good practice in promoting the survey. These have been well received.

      b.   Guiding further analysis of the 2024 data in order to identify the subject influence on overall institutional NSS scores. This analysis has highlighted that combined programmes are an area of concern, particularly in the theme of organisation and management.

      c.   Defining priority areas for action within the NSS recovery plan, which will be shared at the next UTC meeting.

24-25/138    York SU **reported** that some students who had taken Leaves of Absence did not appear to have been invited to take part in the NSS, and requested this be investigated.

**Action:** Head of Academic Quality and Development

24-25/139    The Committee **noted** that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students is attending the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in September to give an update on plans to mitigate any negative impact of NSS results.

24-25/140    The Committee **noted** the work undertaken by the Strategic Insight and Analysis team and how useful it has been in highlighting trends and areas for improvement.

**AI update**

24-25/141    In his capacity as Chair of the UTC AI Working Group, Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, **reported:**

1.   The Working Group is considering other institutions' positions on AI and how a York-specific position could be developed. A draft will be produced for the next meeting of the AI Working Group and then submitted to UTC for consideration.

**Action:** Chair of the AI Working Group

2.   The Working Group would like to create an AI information hub on the University website; however, this would require additional investment. Exploring the resources provided by other institutions may assist with this.

24-25/142    The Committee **observed** that the Professional Programmes Forum recently discussed the use of AI within professions, details of which could be shared with the Working Group.

**Action:** Chair of the Professional Programmes Forum

**Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight**

**Support for Interdisciplinary Teaching Update [UTC.24-25/71]**

24-25/143    The Committee **received** a report from Sally Quinn, Director of Interdisciplinary Teaching, and Sam Hellmuth, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities). It was **reported** that:

1.   New systems and processes for applying for and approving elective choices in e:Vision were successfully launched at the start of 2024/25 semester 2.

2.   A centralised unit to develop new YIMS has not been established due to resource constraints; however, an Interdisciplinary Humanities at York cost code (IHAY) has been created, which can support YIMS and Liberal Arts modules.

3.   Guidance for IDT has been drafted and will be consulted upon before being launched as a web page. Further resources for promoting IDT have also been released or are in development.

4. A new task and finish group should be convened to explore how common issues with combined honours undergraduate programmes can be addressed. The group should report by July 25 and include student representation.

5. It would be useful to collate and document all the interdisciplinary learning opportunities available across the institution, and evidence the impact of these.

> **Action**: Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)

6. Timetabling is an ongoing obstacle to the further development of interdisciplinary teaching, and any future changes to timetabling should consider how interdisciplinary teaching provision can be facilitated.

24-25/144 The Committee **approved** the following recommendations:

1. To conclude the work of the UTC Working Group on electives.

2. To form a short-term Task and Finish group from March to July 2025 on combined honours undergraduate provision. The terms of reference and membership of the group will be approved by the Education Senior Leaders Group, and the group will report back to the NSS Steering Group.

> **Action:** Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)

3. That Sam Hellmuth, as a member of the Board of Studies Task & Finish Group, ensures that the views of UTC are represented with regards to options for future governance of interdisciplinary modules and programmes.

**Special Cases and Complaints Annual Report [UTC.24-25/72]**

24-25/145 The Committee **received** a report from Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director: Student Services. It was **reported** that:

1. The backlogue of appeals has reduced from around 500 to around 200, with many resolved within weeks; however, there remains residual risk for those still awaiting outcomes.

2. Programme failures account for the majority of appeals (58%), of which there were 470 in 2023-24. 12% of these were upheld.

3. There is some evidence that PGT students (non-online) are more likely to appeal than UG students and that international students (particularly Chinese students) are more likely to appeal than home students.

4. 10% of appeals (47) come from York Online.

5. 60 formal complaints were received in 2023/24 (representing a 26% decrease from 2022/23), but there remains a backlog in the process of these. The OIA received 36 complaints in 2023/24 (compared to 38 in 2022/23)

6. There is high correlation between recognised achievement gaps and the likelihood of appeal.

7. There are no apparent trends in the topics of complaints, suggesting they do not represent systemic or consistent problems.

8. Additional support is needed from the Strategic Insight and Analysis team to provide a more comprehensive review of the appeals and complaints data.

24-25/146 The Committee **observed**:

1. It would be useful to disaggregate both undergraduate and postgraduate student data, and Covid-19 from Industrial Action data (although the former no longer applies).

2. Appeals relating to failure of professional programmes should decouple the academic award from the professional standards.

3. Work undertaken around the Access and Participation Plan should be joined up with this work, to further understand failure risks in specific student groups and if any institutional barriers are in existence.

4. The Special Cases and Complaints team could provide useful insight into the intersection between multiple University policies and their effect on students, but may not be the appropriate team to conduct analysis of the data. In the future, separate appeals and complaints reports should be submitted, and they should be service-focused in nature.

5. An institutional approach to data collation and analysis should be fed through the Data Strategy Group.

**Action**: Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students

6. It would be useful to spend some time as a Committee considering what data is required to ensure robust monitoring of York educational provision, and what processes need to be in place to allow this data to be routinely collected. Resolving these issues will support the production of high-quality reports to UTC, Senate, UEB and Council.

**Action**: Head of Academic Quality and Development

**VLE Licensing [UTC.24-25/73]**

This report is classified confidential.

24-25/147

24-25/148

24-25/149

**Assessment and Feedback Project Update [presentation]**

24-25/150 The Committee **received** a verbal presentation from Jan Ball-Smith, Head of Student Success. It was **reported** that:

1. Working Group 1 is updating the format of university policy and procedures on assessment and feedback to clearly separate policy, procedure and guidance documents.

2. The updated policy and associated procedure will be developed into web pages that provide a clear, accessible and usable format.

3. Updates resulting from the Changing the Work process are being incorporated into the updated policy.

4. An overarching policy on reasonable adjustments in teaching, learning and assessment will be presented to the next UTC meeting. Detailed work on the policies that sit beneath this will follow in due course.

5. A working group has been convened to consider the assessment of technical proficiency in the English language.

6. An update document is being produced, noting each policy change for reference.

24-25/151    The Committee **observed** that reasonable adjustments may need to distinguish between, and take account of, campus-based academic work and work relating to professional settings and standards. The Russell Group ITT network is currently putting some guidance together that may be helpful to share with the project team.

**Action:** Chair of the Professional Programmes Forum

**Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters**

**Assessment and Feedback Policy [UTC.24-25/74]**

24-25/152    Adrian Lee, Academic Quality Policy Manager, **reported** a summary of the progress made thus far on updating Assessment and Feedback Policies, and asked the Committee to **approve**:

   a)   Policy on Academic Judgement;
   b)   Policy on Standards in Marking;
   c)   Policy on Assessing Students on Study Abroad Programmes;
   d)   Policy on Assessing Visiting Students;
   e)   Policy and Procedure on Boards of Examiners for Taught Provision;
   f)   Policy on Setting Assessments;
   g)   Policy on Students' Responsibilities in Assessment;
   h)   Policy on Submitting Assessments [Electronically];
   i)   Policy on Markers and Internal Examiners;
   j)   Policy on How to Undertake Marking.

24-25/153    The Committee was asked to **note** that the proposals are a re-framing of existing policy for 2025/26 in line with the requirements of the Institutional Policy Framework, updated as appropriate to incorporate changes introduced by the Changing the Work framework and to clarify areas of ambiguity. The proposals otherwise do not constitute material changes to existing policy. A spreadsheet was provided to capture suggestions for future policy enhancement or review (ie beyond 2025/26).

24-25/154    The Committee **observed** that:

   1.   The *Policy on Academic Judgement* has a broader scope than just assessment, and whether policies relating to assessment and feedback is its most appropriate provenance should be considered.

**Action**: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students

   2.   York Online programmes are not taught in stages and have their own checkpoints. How these programmes fit with the *Policy and Procedure on Boards of Examiners for Taught Provision* should be reviewed.

**Action:** Head of Online Partnerships; Deputy Director: Student Services

   3.   It is important for policies to be inclusive of non-standard provision, including programmes that are not taught in semesters. Clear and consistent wording around any exemptions is required, and this may need further consideration outside of the meeting.

**Action**: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students

   4.   The wording of the *Policy on Submitting Assessments [Electronically]* implies that work that can be submitted electronically must be submitted electronically. This may preclude students from submitting handwritten work (which technically could be scanned), and would therefore represent a change to current policy. Clarification on this issue is required.

**Action**: Head of Student Success

5.  The definition of "markers" in the *Policy on Markers and Internal Examiners* may not be inclusive of external assessors of professional programmes. Clarification is required.

**Action**: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students

6.  Further clarification on the definition, purpose and scope of anonymous submission, as referenced in the *Policy on How to Undertake Marking,* would be useful, particularly as anonymity may be compromised by submission software.

**Action**: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students; Director of Library, Learning, Archives and Wellbeing

7.  References to second marking in the *Policy on How to Undertake Marking* should be cross-checked with Changing the Work documentation to ensure consistency.

**Action**: Head of Academic Quality and Development

24-25/155   The Committee **approved** the policies in principle subject to:

1.  The satisfactory resolution of queries noted in 24-25/154.

2.  The satisfactory resolution of comments noted in the documents and on the associated spreadsheet.

3.  A consistency review across all proposals.

24-25/156   Final approval of all Assessment and Feedback policies submitted for 2025/26 would be undertaken by Chair's Action.

24-25/157   The Committee was also asked to **consider** and provide feedback on two draft proposals:

a)  Assessment Definitions;
b)  Template for School/Department Maximum Assessment Word Count and Duration Policy.

24-25/158   The Committee **observed** that:

1.  The assessment definitions will be further developed and submitted to the May 2025 UTC meeting for review, and the June 2025 meeting for approval.

2.  Student representatives have raised concerns about word counts and open exams, which should be forwarded to the project team.

**Action**: York SU

3.  Feedback should be shared with the project team by 10 April. It was noted that departments/schools are able to edit/add rows and columns to the Word Count and Duration Policy template.

**Action**: All members

**Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes**

**Undergraduate External Examiners Report [UTC.24-25/74]**

24-25/159  The Committee **received** for consideration and comment a report from Becky Lloyd-Jones, Academic Quality team, summarising the University's Undergraduate External Examiners' reports for 2023/24. It was **reported** that:

1.  Standards at York are being appropriately upheld in the vast majority of cases.

2.  Two external examiners from two departments identified issues with scaling.

3.  Examiners praised York's assessment of student work, with the variety of assessment and its authenticity highlighted in several departments.

4.  Marking and moderation were considered robust in most cases.

5.  Examiners noted increased use of the full marking scale, although there remains work to be done in some cases.

6.  Feedback quality was praised in many reports, although in some an inconsistency in quality and/or volume was noted.

7.  Feedforward was identified as in need of improvement in some areas.

8.  Administration of the examination process was seen to work well, although some examiners noted University systems are burdensome and placed pressure on administration teams.

9.  There were some comments on Generative AI, including the suggestion to review assessment for vulnerability to misuse of AI.

24-25/160  The Committee was asked to **approve** recommendations from the Standing Committee on Assessment that:

a.  Schools/Departments are reminded of the University's scaling procedure and guidance.

b.  Schools/Departments are reminded to use the full marking scale.

c.  Schools/Departments are reminded of the University's assessment and feedback principles and the expectation that their practices meet the expectations of the principles; particularly regarding feedback.

d.  FLTGs and the NSS Steering Group reflect on the External Examiner feedback around assessment feedback to students, particularly feed-forward feedback, and propose appropriate actions to schools/ departments based on External Examiners' comments.

e.  Heads of Faculty Operations monitor the effectiveness of exam board and external examiner administration and raise any concerns to SCA via Sarah Finch in her role as a Head of Faculty Operations and member of SCA.

f.  Academic Quality notes any comments on administrative effectiveness when reviewing the 24/25 External Examiner reports.

24-25/161  The Committee **observed** that:

1.  The work of the Assessment and Feedback project seeks to address many of the areas identified for potential improvement, including producing enhanced institutional guidance on scaling.

2.  It may be useful to investigate the use of AI to assist in the central review of External Examiner reports, noting that School/Department staff will still read all reports relating to their provision.

**Action**: Chair of the UTC AI Working Group

3.  The Assessment and Feedback project group would be best placed to address recommendation (d), in collaboration with FLTGs and Boards of Examiners.

    **Action**: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students; Associate Deans

4.  It would be useful to check with the Heads of Faculty Operations if they have capacity to address recommendation (e).

    **Action**: Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment

24-25/162   The Committee **approved** the recommendations subject to the resolution of the observations noted in 24-25/160.

**Section 5: Sub-committee Summaries and Meeting-related information**

*No Items*

**Section 6: Category 2 Items**

**Items for Information**

[Secretary's Note: With regard to its Category II agenda, UTC was provided with the following Category 2 Agenda Items which were provided for: [a] information only, where UTC discussion is not required or anticipated, unless a request is made to escalate an item is from Category II to Category I for consideration OR as [b] supplementary information and data for items on the Category I agenda.]

24-25/163       CITY College Validation Decisions:

a)      LLM European and International Business Law (in English) [UTC.24-25/76]
b)      LLM Business Law (in Greek) [UTC.24-25/77]

24-25/164       Standing Committee on Assessment:

a)      Summary of the meeting held on 14 March 2025 [UTC.24-25/78]

24-25/165       Faculty Learning and Teaching Group: summary from the following meetings:

a)      Arts & Humanities, 18 February 2025 [UTC.24-25/79]

24-25/166       Professional Programmes Forum Annual Review [UTC.24-25/80]

24-25/167       Validated Provision Update [UTC.24-25/81]

24-25/168       CITY College Approved Teaching Appointments [UTC.24-25/82]

**Sally O'Connor, Academic Quality**

**March 2025**