STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 30 November 2018 at 2.00pm in HG17, Heslington Hall.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

**Present:**
- Prof Mike Bentley  Physics (Chair)
- Dr Patrick Gallimore  York Law School
- Dr Francesco Bravo  Economics
- Simon van der Borgh  TFTV
- Dr John Stringer  Music
- Dr Anita Savage Grainge  Health Sciences
- Dr Daniel Baker  Psychology
- Dr Danijela Trenkic  Education
- Charlotte Chamberlain  GSA
- James Hare  YUSU

**In attendance:**
- Valerie Cotter  Dep Academic Registrar/Dir Student Service
- Dr Jen Wotherspoon  Deputy Registrar: Student Progress
- Cecilia Lowe  Head of Learning Enhancement
- Dr Martin Cockett  Chair of Special Cases Committee
- Claire Shanks  Disability Adviser
- Stephen Gow (Secretary)  Academic Integrity Coordinator
- Angela Ranson  Academic Support Coordinator

**Apologies:**
- Robert Simpson  Special Cases Manager
- Dr Louise Jones  Biology
- Prof Tom Stoneham  Dean of York Graduate School

**Visitors:**
- None

**18-19/30  Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**18-19/31  Minutes of previous meeting**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26 October 2018.

**18-19/32  Matters arising from the minutes of 26 October 2018:**

- **17-18/10: Update on the Assessments and Retention Projects**
  The Chair and the Academic Quality team leader have discussed training for new Chairs of the Board of Examiners which would include guidelines on providing samples to external examiners. The Chair will discuss CBoE Briefing with relevant colleagues during this academic year. [OPEN]
17-18/0: Proposal for standard Sticker Scheme for certified disabilities
This will be discussed as item 18-19/20 in the meeting [OPEN]

17-18/100: Assessment Rules for Masters Degrees with Partner Institutions
The rules were amended and made available online.¹ [CLOSED]

18-19/16: Chair’s Oral Report
The Chair is still discussing the 20-day feedback rule with departments. The Deputy Registrar reported that alerts to late feedback can be created on SITS but has not yet been completed. Monitoring will continue. [OPEN]

[ACTION: MB/JW]

18-19/18 Confirmation of Priority Areas for action
Original mitigating circumstances data cannot be located. Initial meeting has been arranged for the academic misconduct policy review. [CLOSED]

18-19/20: LLS/LFA Oral Examinations: Procedures for individual arrangements and emergency situations
The Chair reported that the department were satisfied with SCA’s agreed solution to their issue.

[CLOSED]

18-19/23: Summary of assessment issues raised via NSS
The Chair will consult with the Associate Faculty Deans (TLS) and brief the committee.

[OPEN]

[ACTION: MB/SG]

18-19/24: Report – Resit CAP exam issues
A working group, including Maths, Economics, Chemistry, Electronic Engineering and Computer Science will discuss exam errors in their meeting next week.

[OPEN]

[ACTION: MB/SG]

18-19/33 Chair’s Oral Report
The Chair noted that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has published a new quality code² including sections on assessment and external examining. The Chair, the Secretary, and the Head of the Learning Enhancement team will examine it to ensure that York is compliant. A summary will be presented at the next meeting. The Chair also noted that the Office of the

¹ https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/procedure/examinations/guide/
² http://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance
Independent Adjudicator (OIA) has published guidance on disciplinary procedures treats academic misconduct as a disciplinary matter rather than an academic issue. This has implications for York’s approach, so it will be considered in the general review of the Academic Misconduct Policy taking place this year. The pilot of the new electronic system for signing off assessment results in several departments was also discussed, members agreed this was working well and should be rolled out to all departments in June. The Chair, however, noted that the SCA role in this process should be considered.

[ACTION: MB/SG/CL]

18-19/34 Report from Students

YUSU: The Students’ representative reported that they conducted Study Smart week, which did not have as great an impact as YUSU/GSA had hoped. The representative asked for suggestions for improvement. The committee suggested a name change, to further define what ‘smart’ means in this context. It also suggested that the week be used to advertise what assistance is already available, rather than simply present workshops, and provide a video by students about academic integrity.

18-19/35 Annual Report – Undergraduate External Examiners 2017/18 (ASO)

The Committee considered the Annual Report for Undergraduate External Examiners 2017. They approved the new format because it allowed them to easily identify areas which required further attention from the SCA. This involved:

- **(1) Feedback not being tailored to the marking criteria:** This concern was identified in the NSS as well. The Chair will discuss this with the Associate Dean (LTS).
  
  [ACTION: MB]

- **(4) Step marking:** The committee discussed the value of step marking, such as offering clarity to markers and students. It allows a wider range of marks and provides transparency, and it has been implemented in several departments, including Philosophy and TFTV. The Chair suggested a report be considered at the next meeting to clarify where and how this practice is being used. This could include a presentation of the practice from a representative in a department where stepped marking has been used.
  
  [ACTION: MB/SG]

- **(6a) Transparency and clarity in moderation/second marker processes.** The committee discussed the current guidance (Appendix D and E of the Guide to Assessment) and suggested that clarity needs to be provided to students by departments. The Chair will discuss this with the Chairs of the Board of Examiners.
  
  [ACTION: MB]

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• (6b) Providing examiners with cohort level reports on mark/degree-class distributions, to place the assessment results in context. The committee discussed this and agreed that the SCA would consider this more formally later in the year. The Chair asked the Deputy Registrar to submit a paper at the next meeting about the cost and benefit of providing said reports.

[ACTION: JW]

• (6c) IT support for IPC is urgently needed. This is not really an issue for the SCA, but the Chair will raise this matter with the Head of IPC.

[ACTION: MB]

• Appendix: the Committee noted that some External Examiners have not submitted annual reports for a few years in a row. The Chair will discuss this with the Academic Quality team.

[ACTION: MB]

18-19/36  Proposal for First Class Degree with Distinction criteria
The Committee considered the proposal for First Class Degree with Distinction criteria. This proposal includes:

• a compulsory criterion for First Class with Distinction, which is an award mark of 75 or above
• three optional criteria, any or all of which can be implemented by the relevant department
• the expectation that all criteria must be decided in advance and published in the student handbook

The Committee agreed the criteria were clear and represented an improvement on the current criteria. The Chair will send it to the Chairs of Boards of Studies and Boards of Examiners for their input; SCA will consider their input before sending the proposal to UTC for consideration.

[ACTION: MB]

18-19/37  Academic Misconduct Annual Report – UGT
The Committee considered the report on Academic Misconduct for 2017/8. The results were static, for the most part, and overseas students are still over-represented. There was an increase in ‘no case to answer’ results in cheating cases, and the Deputy Registrar noted that this has already been addressed by a change in the cheating policy. The Disability Advisor requested that the annual statistical analysis include information about how many students with disabilities are involved in academic misconduct cases, and the Deputy Registrar agreed to include that in the data collected for the 2018/9 academic year.

[ACTION: JW]

18-19/38  Update on ‘sticker’ scheme for identification of SpLD in examinations and assessments
An update was given on the ‘sticker’ scheme for identification of SpLD in examinations and assessments. It was reported that the Disability Network has not yet engaged with this issue, and the report concluded that the current guidance seems sufficient. It was suggested in the course of discussion, however, that as practices differed between departments that more guidance on this (in the GTA) would still be beneficial. Issues that SCA agreed required clarification include the different ways that stickers should, or could, be used depending on how spelling/grammar relates to the learning outcomes and competency standards for particular disciplines. In addition, some guidance could be provided on how the stickers could influence how a marker gives feedback. The Committee agreed that the current wording in the Guide could be augmented with some guidance on these issues. The Chair asked the Disability Advisor to consider new wording and report back at the next meeting. The Disability Advisor also reported that a new project on *Inclusive Teaching and Learning* is beginning on 18 December, and invited SCA members to attend its first meeting.

**[ACTION: CS]**

**18-19/39** 
SSP, Sits as if for the first time and ECA applications: standard wording for SPSS

The Committee *considered* a change in the wording of SSPs so that if a student cannot sit a closed exam due to a previously known condition or related disability they could defer the examination, rather than apply through exceptional circumstances. There are 137 current students to whom this applies, and the Deputy Registrar *requested* that the committee approve the implementation of this change immediately. The committee *approved* this request, once the wording has been altered to clarify that this deferral does not apply to situations where the student has begun the exam (i.e. seen the paper). The Disability Advisor will alter the wording and report back to the Chair and the Deputy Registrar before this change is implemented.

**[ACTION: CS/MB/JW]**

**18-19/40** 
Grade Conversion Table – University of Sheffield at Thessaloniki

Psychology in Education students do not have the option of studying abroad, however, they can take a placement with a satellite campus of the University of Sheffield in Greece. The Committee *considered* and *accepted* the proposal for the grade conversion.

**[ACTION: SG]**

**CATEGORY II**

**18-19/41** 
Chair’s Approvals

None

**18-19/42** 
Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Friday 25 January 2019 at 2pm in Room H/G17, Heslington Hall.