

Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 13th September 2024 at 10.00am in SLB/201 Spring Lane Building and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Members:

Prof. Steve King	CS (Sciences) (Chair)
Dr Alet Roux	Maths (Sciences)
Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)
Dr Christian Piller	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS (Arts & Humanities)
Dr Patrick Gallimore	Law (Social Sciences)
Assoc. Prof. Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
Fenella Johnson	York SU, Academic Officer
Gen Andrews	York SU, Union Development Officer

In attendance :

Aimee Yeoman	SCA Secretary & Policy Officer
Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
Richard Andrew	York SU, Advice & Support Manager
Isabel Jagoe	Head of Faculty Operations- Arts and Humanities
Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality
Jess Penn	Interim Head of Inclusive Education

Apologies:

Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
Eddie Cowling	IPC
Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
Jenny Matson	SAAS
Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
Claire Wilkinson	Disability Operations Manager
Prof. Matthias Ruth	Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Research

m24-25/1 Welcome and apologies for absence

Committee members, and those in attendance were welcomed and apologies noted.

SCA Chair thanked Patrick Gallimore for his service as Chair of SCA between 2021-2024, noting his valuable contributions to the work of SCA, and his willingness to remain as a member of the committee to provide continuity.

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m24-25/2 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 21st June 2024 were confirmed as correct.

m23-24/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters arising [log](#)

CLOSED

- m23-24/79 Chair's Report, SCA Chair to inform UTC about issues with the Changing the Academic Work expectations.
- m23-24/79 Chair's Report, SCA Chair to request advance sight of the Guidance on CAW.
- m23-24/79 Chair's Report, SCA Chair to check for guidance on the new process for signing off marks for Progression and Awards and which departments will transition first.
- m23-24/82, Academic Misconduct Policy - Policy Changes, SCA Chair to update the academic misconduct policy to include a definition of 'poor practice' and a clear statement that StAMP panels can refer cases back to departments with a suggestion to re-assess.
- m23-24/82, Academic Misconduct Policy - Policy Changes, SCA Chair to meet with academic misconduct administrators to establish a clear procedure regarding poor practice.
- m23-24/83 Scaling Guidance, SCA Chair to revise the Scaling Guidance.
- m23-24/84 Approval of Assessment Adjustments under Student Support Plans, SCA Chair to remove the list of potential accommodations from the guidance for students.
- m23-24/85 Any Other Business, Eytan Zweig to draft text for an improved Section 17 in the Guide to Assessment , for the Chair to take to UTC

ONGOING

- m23-24/79 Chair's Report, SCA Chair to check with university examiner about CAW guidance.

ACTIONS: Patrick Gallimore to check CAW guidance was shared with Uni EE.

SCA Chair to check with Tracy Lightfoot on whether Becky Huxley-Binns is to continue.

- m23-24/79 Chair's Report, AQ to check for responses about CAW in all external examiner reports as they come in.

ACTION: AQ to start reviewing in coming weeks

- m23-24/82, Academic Misconduct Policy - Policy Changes, SCA Chair to review the Academic Integrity Tutorial and its contents.

It was noted that Eddie Cowling has made changes to the IPC version of the tutorial to introduce AI into it. This was discussed at the UTC AI Working Group Meeting and needs review by SCA.

ACTION: Review the academic integrity tutorial as a priority for SCA this year.

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- m23-24/85 Any Other Business, SCA Chair to revise the Guide to Assessment Section 17 p 60, dealing with viva and oral exams for taught programmes, to make it optional to have two examiners when the presentation is being videotaped.

It was noted that this was raised previously as a matter of Chair's action however there was no clear resolution. The Committee discussed how this is a priority before the upcoming assessment period.

ACTION: Add this to the priority list for SCA this year.

M24-25/4 Chair's Report

SCA **considered** the Chair's report

The Committee noted how the handover between the former and current Chair of SCA was taking place and that many of the revised assessment-related policies had been approved by the former Chair. However, the Policy on Assessment is still outstanding to be reviewed.

Changing the Academic Work (CAW) and the effect on assessment

A focus of work has been on implementing the CAW objectives to increase efficiencies, reduce staff workloads and account for the reductions in staffing levels.

The Chair acknowledged Committee members' concerns about CAW changes and the level of consultation with SCA, which was a result of needing to make urgent decisions regarding efficiencies in assessment.

An analysis of CAW outputs, reported to UEB and Council, showed an overall 9% reduction in assessment, with the removal of 139 assessments, 148 assessments having had their word count reduced and double blind marking being removed, which would have significant impact on professional services staff processing assessments and supporting students.

The Committee considered how this has impacted on the student experience and how departments had been asked to consider if they were over-assessing students. It was noted that new guidance has been written for AY 25/26 which looks at assessment at programme level as opposed to module level. JW and AL are working together to bring this into policy.

The Committee considered how the new guidance had been disseminated, noting that the guidance was released in the summer and perhaps not widely read. The Committee acknowledged some issues with the effectiveness of the communication and dissemination of this and JW will arrange for clearer communication to go out, with a note made to send this to HoFOs and Student Service Managers.

ACTION: JW to arrange clearer communication of CAW Guidance document, send this to HoFOs and Student Service Managers also.

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m24-25/5 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that they had just had PG arrivals week and that they were busy planning for the upcoming Welcome Week.

FJ had two manifesto points that are relevant to the work of SCA: ensuring that academic misconduct procedures and communications are clear to students and that this information is accessible for all students, and looking at solving the issue of bunching of assessments for students.

Following the recent merger of YUSU and the GSA, York SU now has one single advice service, York SU Advice and Support, which will be a single point of contact for both UG and PG students. York SU asked that their new name be used in policies and guidance and that the Union would be promoting the new service for which it welcomed the Committee's offer of support.

ACTION: RA to share digitised versions with committee.

York SU Advice and Support was currently busy with results coming out from the August assessment period. A review of last year's advice cases and the nature of the advice needed had also been undertaken, with academic appeals especially on the grounds of exceptional circumstances being the biggest issue, alongside academic misconduct, mental health issues and academic complaints. Examining the GSA caseload from last year, there was a disproportionate number of international PG students seeking advice.

York SU was pleased that Artificial Intelligence is an SCA priority, as AI and false authorship are areas of confusion for students on acceptable use.

The Committee discussed whether York SU material is promoted on 'Staff Supporting Students' pages, via Jo Hardy. RA will check this with JH.

ACTION: RA to check with JH how SU material is promoted.

The Committee noted the importance of having RA on the committee, as someone on the ground working with students who need advice.

m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25

The Committee **considered** and **approved** the ToRs and membership.

The Chair had edited the ToRs to make clearer where responsibilities lie: with the Chair, with individual SCA members or the committee as a whole.

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The Chair had recorded the scope of SCA as covering all education provision that leads to credit and/or awards of the University. The Committee discussed whether a more inclusive alternative phrase might be more suitable.

The Committee noted that responsibility for the monitoring of assessment related projects is a UTC matter and that the Chair UTC may delegate authority of commissioning and monitoring of projects to SCA.

The Committee discussed how moving forward there needs to be explicit referral to PGR issues and points of communication in the ToRs.

The Committee discussed additional wording in the ToRs surrounding SCA members being assigned to StAMP panels.

The Committee noted that overall responsibility for external examiners fees is not in SCA's remit and that the Academic Quality team manages this. The Chair agreed to find out where responsibility lies for setting fees and for what the process of appointing an external institutional examiner is.

ACTION: SCA Chair to find out who has responsibility for finalising external examiner fees.

ACTION: SCA Chair to check the process for appointing an external institutional examiner.

The Committee discussed the SCA Signing off process on behalf of Senate and issues with access to documents and responsibilities were raised. It was noted that this process is under review and that the SCA Chair, SCA Secretary and Progression and Awards Managers are to meet to discuss this.

SCA Chair noted in relation to ToR 12 that the SCA Committee is not responsible for all PSRB reports, just those issues that relate to assessment.

The Committee agreed upon the deletion of ToR 13.

The Committee discussed that there needs to be more consideration of inclusive practice within ToR 15.

ACTION: SCA Chair to look into phrasing of inclusion/inclusive practice within ToRs.

Membership

SCA Chair noted how, following consultation with the PVC Teaching, Learning and Students, he had streamlined the professional services side of the committee to better balance with academic representation and acknowledged that it was useful to have extra York SU voice on the committee this year. Further, that the Dean of YGRS position is currently vacant, therefore PVC Research is

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standing in.

SCA Chair is to appoint a SCA Deputy Chair before the next SCA meeting.

ACTION: SK to appoint Deputy Chair.

The Committee requested that the names of people 'in attendance' be added to the full SCA membership list (which includes term dates), as opposed to solely job titles.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to update this

The Committee discussed the voting rights of members and those 'in-attendance' at SCA, taking into account [Ordinance 9](#). The Committee's preference was to make all members equal with regards to voting rights, but acknowledged that sign-off on behalf of Senate would have to be taken into consideration.

ACTION: SK to look at this document and amend the voting rights of the group accordingly via Chair's action

m24-25/7 Schedule & priorities 24/25

The Committee **discussed** a list of priorities which had been identified following discussion between the past and current Chair and UTC's preference to direct SCA's activities more to support strategic activities.

The Assessment and Feedback Project is a substantial piece of work and SCA would need to work with the A&F project group to bring changes into policy.

The current compensation rules in the Progression and Award Rules do not have unambiguous criteria that implicitly provide for condonation, which needs to be reviewed in line with sector best practice and clearly defined in assessment policy.

ACTION: SCA committee to review the current rules and to discuss further how to best align this with sector practice and discuss whether to change minimum credit requirement for award.

The Committee noted that UTC is going to review the modularisation and semesterisation project, which SCA will feed into. The Committee discussed feedback from Professional Service staff and External examiners surrounding insufficient timeframes to turn progression and award activities around before deadlines, particularly under the 25 day feedback rule.. It was also noted graduation needs to be factored into discussion of structural timing issues.

The Committee also noted that the ongoing 'progression at risk' aspect of work needs to be worked around progression timelines, taking into consideration workload and extensions. The

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Committee discussed how this is more than an assessment issue and therefore it is also a UTC matter.

The Committee discussed exam timetabling and issues surrounding this, such as increased numbers of Student Support Plans, decrease in available space on campus etc.

The Committee also discussed how a review of the repeating first year policy needs to be undertaken.

The Committee noted, that as part of CAW, discussion is needed about the efficiency and effectiveness of PGR TAP/Progression meetings

SCA Chair thanked the committee for their contributions to this discussion, noting that he and the SCA Secretary will revise the priorities list for discussion with the Chair UTC.

ACTION: SK and AY to revise priorities list

m24-25/8 Oral progress update on Assessment & Feedback Project

JW updated the committee on the Assessment & Feedback project, highlighting that the principles have been agreed and signed off, with the aim of having the new policy signed off by Feb 2025 by UTC.

The Committee noted that:

One purpose of the project is to split out what is policy, guidance and procedure within the University's Assessment Policies and Procedures.

There will be an update given to UTC on this project in Dec 24 before the final policy approval in Feb 25.

The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring the Assessment and Feedback project aligns with other ongoing projects, such as the Student Support Plan project, AI Working Group and student retention projects.

The Chair, JW and AL meet to discuss a timeline for the different projects.

ACTION: SK, JW and AL meet to discuss a timeline for the different projects and to provide an update to the Committee in November on A&F project progress.

m24-25/9 Any Other Business

n/a

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CATEGORY II

To note, all of the following have been approved by Chair's action since the previous meeting.

m24-25/10 Copy of Revised Scaling Guidance (Section 1 within Additional guidance on assessment 24/25)

m24-25/11 Copy of Revised Policy on Exceptional Awards

m24-25/12 Copy of Revised Exceptional circumstances policy

m24-25/13 Copy of Revised Academic misconduct policy

m24-25/14 Copy of Revised Glossary of Assessment, Standards, Marking & Feedback Terms and Acronyms

m23-24/15 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 25 October 2024 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in SLB/207

RESERVED BUSINESS

m24-25/16 Individual Examination Arrangements

It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m24-25/17 Appointment of External Examiners

It was **noted** the appointment (or extension to appointment) of external examiners (UG and PGT), approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m24-25/18 Results Lists

Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.