Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 19 April 2024 at 10.00am in SLB/204 Spring Lane Building and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:

Dr Patrick Gallimore	York Law School (Chair)
Dr Jeremy Airey	Education
Prof. Kate Arnold	Dean of York Graduate Research School
Dr Daniel Baker	Psychology
Dr Kevin Caraher	SBS
Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences
Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
Dr Christian Piller	Philosophy
Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
Dr Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS

In attendance :

Dr Stephen Gow (Secretary)	Assessment and Academic Integrity
Jan Ball-Smith	Apprenticeships and Inclusive Learning
Dr Zara Burford	Online Programmes
Meely Doherty	YUSU
Isabel Jagoe	DHoFO - Arts and Humanities
Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality
Angela Lipscomb	DHoFO - Biology
Claire Pinder (Minutes)	Academic Support Coordinator
Cytherea Shen	GSA

Apologies:

Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
Eddie Cowling	IPC
Jenny Matson	SAAS
Sarah Maynard	DHoFO - Social Sciences
Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
Dr Jen Wotherspooon	Head of Student Administration
Nic Streatfield	Student and Academic Services

m23-24/62 Welcome and apologies for absence
Committee members, and those in attendance were welcomed, apologies noted.

It was noted that SCA Secretary Stephen Gow would be leaving the University, and that this would be his last SCA meeting. SCA Chair thanked Stephen for his extremely valuable contributions to the work of SCA.

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m23-24/63 Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 22 March 2024 were confirmed as correct.

M23-24/64 Matters arising from the previous minutes
Members noted items listed on the Matters arising log.

CLOSED

- M23-24/42 Chair's Report, SCA Chair to clarify timing of summer exam boards with Progression and Awards.
- m23-24/55 Assessment and Feedback Project - Principles and next steps.
- m23-24/56 Adjustments for Student Media and Candidates during Elections and Roses.

ONGOING
- m23-24/31 SCA Priorities - SCA Chair to discuss process improvements for 2024/25 SCA priorities with UTC Chair.
- m23-24/33 YUSU proposals for provision of dictionaries in examinations, YUSU Student Rep will arrange a pilot of the initiative.
  Update - A pilot would be implemented in the next academic year.
- m23-24/33 YUSU proposals for provision of dictionaries in examinations, SCA Chair and YUSU Student Representative to meet Jenny Matson to discuss the implementation of dictionaries in examinations.
  Update - A pilot would be implemented in the next academic year.
- m23-24/44 Summary of Undergraduate External Examiners' Reports 2022-23, SCA Secretary to canvas SCA member opinions of suitable wording on a feedback specific question for the External Examiner form.
- m23-24/44 Summary of Undergraduate External Examiners' Reports 2022-23, SCA Secretary to share information about this external examiner feedback to SCA Chair who will investigate, and consider a response.
- m23-24/45 YUSU Proposals for SCA: Scaling of assessment marks proposal (NOT PGR) - SCA Secretary to convene a working group.
  ACTION: Stephen Gow, SCA Secretary to share the summary of the Chair of Board of Examiners with the SCA Committee
- m23-24/46 Chairs of Boards of Examiners Handbook - SCA Secretary to respond to feedback and consult CBoE Forum on the Handbook.
- m23-24/53 Abrahart Case implications
  ACTION: SCA Chair and Jeremy Airey to discuss Abrahart case implications.
- m23-24/54 Students report - dissertation supervision
  ACTION: GSA Rep to discuss with Tracy Lightfoot, UTC Chair.

M23-24/65 Chair's Report

SCA Update
SCA **considered** the Chair's report of SCA Update. It was noted that:
1. There is currently an ongoing University project to review Student Support Plans

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(SSP). There are four working groups, such as exams and assessment. The SSP project overall was now in the solution phase. Members of SCA had been requested to join the working groups, and were encouraged to contact the SCA Chair if they wished to put their name forward.

ACTION: SCA Chair to circulate list of SSP working groups to SCA Committee members.

2. Assessment and Feedback project and Guide to Assessment work may be reassessed, and projects integrated where possible, in light of the recent "Changing the Work" instruction received from Charlie Jeffrey, Vice Chancellor. Changes would be carefully considered with relation to the impact on staff workload, and on Professional Support staff in particular, and also with relation to monitoring the assessment load for students.

3. Patrick Gallimore's term as SCA Chair, and Daniel Baker's term as SCA Deputy Chair would end on 1 September 2024, and that a replacement SCA Chair, and SCA Deputy Chair had not yet been appointed. SCA Committee Members were encouraged to submit their interest in either role to SCA Chair who would communicate that interest to Tracy Lightfoot, UTC Chair.

4. The remit of SCA may change in the 2024/25 academic year, any emerging details about this would be communicated to SCA members in due course.

SCA Sign-off

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of SCA Sign-off. It was noted that:

5. SCA Chair has spoken with Jen Wotherspoon, Head of Student Administration, and Tracy Lightfoot, UTC Chair, about changing the process for SCA members to sign off awards, and sector practice has been explored. SCA Chair suggested ideas to UTC Chair Tracy Lightfoot who will explore them further. It is hoped that any changes will result in a more efficient process for the sign off of lists from Progression and Awards.

Chair of Board of Examiners (CBoE) Forum Update

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of CBoE Forum Update. It was noted that:

6. Semester two board dates had been discussed at the forum. SCA members discussed a change in student engagement caused by semesterisation date changes, which some members observed led to time not being well used by students in January, and increased queries to YUSU from students experiencing feelings of stress during January. It was suggested that moving teaching forward by one week could be helpful. It was also noted that the semester dates had led in some cases to a drop in student engagement toward the end of term, and that this could impact exam results.

ACTION: Jenny Matson to speak to Tracy Lightfoot UTC Chair about the impact of semester dates on student engagement.

ACTION: SCA Chair to review feedback from committee

members about semester dates.

7. The CBoE forum had discussed Turnitin feedback, and that a summary of discussion would be provided to FLTG groups to review. It was noted that issues included an understanding of the system by staff and students, and system capability

> **ACTION: Meely Doherty YUSU, to provide information to Stephen Gow SCA Secretary about queries received from students which related to Turnitin.**

Exceptional Circumstances update - including Roses
SCA **considered** the Chair's report of Exceptional Circumstances update - including Roses. It was noted that:

8. CBoE's would be notified by SCA Chair about the revision to Exceptional Circumstances (EC) text which had been adjusted to allow for EC Claims to be approved on the grounds of participation of media students in recording Roses.

> **ACTION: SCA Chair to notify CBoE's about revision to Exceptional Circumstances (EC) text**

9. The EC Working Group would consult Tracy Lightfoot UTC Chair about the process and timeframes involved in this project, and would reflect on the content of the form. SCA Chair would report on the progress of this group at the next SCA meeting.

Timing of Exam Boards after Semester 2 (S2)
SCA **considered** the Chair's report of Timing of Exam Boards after S2. It was noted that:

10. UG exam boards were scheduled to be held in the two weeks leading up to 3 July, and PG exam boards would be held in the two weeks leading up to 10 July.

m23-24/66 Report from Students
YUSU **noted** that:

1. YUSU elections had taken place, and a new team had been elected. Both Meely Doherty YUSU and Cytherea GSA would be replaced by one academic officer, due to the merging of YUSU and GSA into York Students Union (SU). Meely was setting up meetings to induct the academic officer. Although Meely's term would finish in June 2024, Cytherea's term would finish in September 2024, and so Cytherea could complete the academic officer's induction. The academic officer would be invited to shadow SCA meetings before the commencement of their term.

   The academic officer will have a greater remit, so they will be paid a salary. They will be supported by eleven student representatives, and options were being explored to see how the student representatives could be used to support committee workloads, and attend working groups and project boards, on behalf of the academic officer, which would streamline student representation in those groups. These student representatives will be paid a stipend for their committee work.

> **ACTION: Adrian Lee, Academic Quality to link with Rachael Barbour YUSU, and York SU to support new membership and support structures.**

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2. Meely Doherty YUSU and Sally Quinn had been working on a series of workshops about assessment design in elective modules.

3. YUSU encouraged SCA Committee members to promote YUSU Excellence Awards, which were awards for academic staff.

GSA **noted** that:

4. GSA had launched a student survey about academic feedback forms and had received many responses. Cythera Shen GSA, and Meely Doherty YUSU were working to get more students involved, and once the survey closed, would arrange to discuss any issues raised by students in the survey in departmental meetings.

m23-24/67 PGT External Examiners summary report (not PGR)
SCA **considered** the PGT External Examiners summary report (not PGR) (SCA23-24/25). The paper summarised the assurance of quality and standards within the PGT external examiners' reports for 2022-23, alongside issues and good practice contained in the reports. The summary report would be considered at the 16 May 2024 UTC meeting and passed on to FLTG's for consideration.

The 2023-24 iteration of the report form would contain an extra question about feedback. The committee noted that although the quality of feedback was consistently praised by external examiners, YUSU said that feedback could be improved to always include detailed instruction to students about how they can improve their work, and that feedback should always include detail about both strengths and weaknesses of the submission. The committee highlighted that a significant problem with marking and feedback was the amount of time markers had to mark assessments and that the very tight turnaround time in Semester 2 could also have a negative impact on quality of marking and feedback. It was also noted that inexperienced markers, e.g. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA's), could result in lower quality feedback if they are not properly trained and monitored. There was discussion around the use of GTA's in marking assignments, which was outlined in the Guide to Assessment, and currently under review. The Guide to Assessment policy was agreed to provide an appropriate definition of good use of GTA's. The structure of the second semester was also flagged in the meeting as a potential barrier affecting quality of feedback for SCA to consider.

In relation to External Examiners that reported concerns about the removal of the double blind and second marking requirements. It was also noted that any potential bias in feedback is mitigated by robust moderation processes including clear marking criteria rubrics, and that these processes had also been praised by external examiners in their reports.

m23-24/68 Proposal for Awards by Exception (inc PGR)
SCA **considered** and **endorsed** the Proposal for Awards by Exception (aegrotat and posthumous awards - inc PGR) subject to consultation with Nic Streatfield and partner provision (SCA23-24/26). This proposal had been considered by PPPC at the York Graduate Research School (YGRS) Board. This proposal would be subject to consultation with collaborative provision and professional bodies before going to a UTC meeting for endorsement.

> **ACTION: AQ to consult all partners, including Hull York Medical School (HYMS), and Juliet James,**

Graduate Student Association (GSA).

Awards by exception had been comprehensively discussed in a SCA working group, which had put together this new, specific policy for Posthumous Awards, and supported a move away from the use of Aegrotat Award, which alluded to illness, rather than death. The policy also introduced an option of an In Memoriam Award which could be requested by the next of kin of a student who dies during studies.

It was noted that there was guidance on the University website about what should happen when a student dies, and that these pages and guidance had been drafted by the Health and Wellbeing team. A clear definition of next of kin could be beneficial to Departments with relation to the administration of the In Memoriam Award. It was agreed that the University should take a compassionate approach to the awards, and that Nic Streatfield could advise about guidance for Departments regarding how award processes should be initiated, including in the context of no known next of kin.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to speak to Nic Streatfield Health and Wellbeing Team Student and Academic Services, about how award processes should be initiated.

It was also noted that in respect of next of kin, the PGR and PGT policies should be aligned and revised into a consent and agreement policy, which would consider allowing a supervisor to collect an award on behalf of a student who dies during studies.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to define next of kin in the policy

m23-24/69 Academic Misconduct Data Analysis Report (not PGR)
SCA **considered** and **approved** the Academic Misconduct Data Analysis Report (not PGR). SCA considered data from the 2022/23 academic year which it compared with data from previous years, and considered whether a University-level response or action would be appropriate, and considered if further analysis of the factors impacting academic misconduct should be undertaken. It was noted that data from International Pathway College (IPC) was included in 2022/23 for the first time, and that although as an average across all departments, there was a slight rise in cases of academic misconduct in 2022/23, there were many outcomes of no case to answer, or poor practice, rather than an increase in proven instances of academic misconduct.

SCA Committee members considered the introduction of proctoring software (such as HonorLock software) which is used by other Universities to reduce academic misconduct as a member of the committee had been working with the OFS on a project and reported a vast improvement in the software. It was noted that the costs associated with in-person exams are high and that if proctoring worked for online exams, these could be considered. YUSU reported that students would be against proctoring online exams. It was also noted that proctoring presented data protection challenges, and there could be Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) regulations around proctoring to be compliant of.

ACTION: SCA Chair to speak with Sue Faulds and Tracy Lightfoot, UTC Chair about the possibility of

the introduction of proctoring software for online exams.

It was also noted that there could be a cultural aspect to academic misconduct cases, where international students were not aware that collaboration was not permissible, for example.

ACTION: SCA Chair to work with Cytherea Shen on guidance around Academic Misconduct for overseas students.

SCA members noted that although students were required to take an Academic Integrity tutorial, compliance with meeting this requirement could be better policed, and the Academic Integrity tutorial could be updated to include Artificial Intelligence issues.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to speak to the Learning Enhancement team about including Artificial Intelligence guidance in the Academic Integrity tutorial.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to update CITY College Greece about the Academic Integrity tutorial.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to communicate with Chairs oF Board of Examiners about ensuring that the requirement of students to take the Academic Integrity tutorial is met.

m23-24/70 Any Other Business

SCA **considered** the following matter of any other business:

Changing The Work Framework

The Changing the Work Framework document which was released to all University staff by Vice-Chancellor Charlie Jeffrey on Tuesday 23 April was discussed. It was noted that a new Assessment objective, " each module will have no more than one individual summative assessment including component parts" should be explored and defined.

It was noted that the Marking and Feedback objective "no double-blind marking for all taught summative work" could have implications for issues of anonymity and bias, and it was wondered if Capstone projects could be exempt from this objective. It was further noted that departments should consider Office for Students (OfS) compliance regulations around assessments when introducing new ways of working.

ACTION: SCA Chair and Jill Webb to speak with Tracy Lightfoot UTC Chair about mechanism for feedback on proposals.

CATEGORY II

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Note: approval of Category II business will be assumed unless a member indicates that they wish to bring forward an item to Category I business.

m23-24/71 Date of the next meeting
The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 21 June 2024 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in DN/104

RESERVED BUSINESS

m23-24/72 Sociology Marking Criteria
It was **noted** that Sociology Marking Criteria has been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m23-24/73 Individual Examination Arrangements
It was **noted** that individual examination arrangements for students have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

m23-24/74 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.

m23-24/75 Results Lists
Notification was **received** of recommendations for the award of degrees approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.