

University Teaching Committee

[Unconfirmed] Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May 2024, 09.30-12.30, in HG/21, Heslington Hall and via video conference.

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Tracy Lightfoot, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching, Learning and Students (Chair)
 Steve King, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning and Students (Deputy Chair)
 Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Quality and Development (Secretary)
 Jan Ball-Smith, Interim Head of Academic Affairs
 Claire Hughes, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Sciences)
 Jill Webb, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Social Sciences)
 Tom Cantrell, Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students (Arts and Humanities)
 Patrick Gallimore, Chair of Standing Committee on Assessment
 Meely Doherty, YUSU Academic Officer
 Cytherea Shen, GSA Vice-President, Academic
 Tom Banham, Director of Student Administration and Academic Affairs
 Jen Wotherspoon, Deputy Director, Student Services
 Kirsty Lingstadt, Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services
 Petros Kefalas, Vice-President Learning and Teaching, CITY College
 Louise Thurston, Associate Director for Careers and Employability
 Michael Bate (representing Sciences)
 Paul Bishop (representing Sciences)
 Simon O'Keefe (representing Sciences)
 Claire Ball-Smith (representing Social Sciences)
 Matthew Perry (co-opted member, Director of the International Pathway College)
 Janine Bradbury (representing Arts and Humanities)
 Lisa O'Malley (representing Business School)
 Scott Slorach (representing Social Sciences)

In attendance:

Caroline Ollier, Academic Quality (Assistant Secretary)
 Sally Quinn, Department of Psychology, UTC.23-24/88
 Lynda Dunlop - Department of Education - UTC.23-24/82

Apologies:

Richard McClary (representing Arts and Humanities)
 Zoe Devlin, Head of Online Partnerships

Section 1: Standing Items

Welcome

23-24/134 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies as recorded above.

1. Janine Bradbury from the Department of English and Related Literature was welcomed to her first meeting of the committee. Janine will be serving on UTC until January 2025 as a representative of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities whilst Michelle Alexander is on maternity leave.
2. The Chair thanked Meely Doherty on behalf of UTC, who was attending her last meeting as YUSU Academic Officer. It was noted that Meely's engagement and contributions have been

invaluable over the last year, and that she has represented undergraduate students in the University very effectively. The Committee wished her every success in her future endeavours.

3. The Committee also thanked Stephen Gow who was stepping down this week as Academic Policy Officer in the Academic Quality and Development Team, and as Secretary of SCA. Stephen's contributions in the areas of assessment and academic misconduct were noted.

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

- 23-24/135 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 14th March 2024 [UTC.23-24/ 79]

- 23-24/136 The Committee **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2024 as an accurate record.

Action tracking and matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda [UTC.23-24/ , Open]

- 23-24/137 The Committee **received** a log of progress on actions arising from the minutes.

It was **reported** that there are a large number of outstanding or open actions. Members are requested to review and prioritise the completion of actions before the next meeting.

Actions - Assistant Secretary to share live actions and update the log

Report of Chair's action [UTC.23-24/81]

- 23-24/138 The Chair **reported** on decisions taken by Chair's action since the last meeting

1. The Chair had agreed to a new partnership agreed between Biology and Northwest University, Xi'an, China as an articulation agreement.
2. The Committee is asked **to note** that in future decisions on partnerships will be reported to the Committee as Category II papers.

Chair's report [oral report]

- 23-24/139 The Chair **reported** that:

1. The APP was endorsed by UEB 23 April 2024, approved by Council 15 May 2024, and will now be submitted to OfS. It was noted that it has been a challenging time to undertake the APP, but also that the exercise was useful and has allowed the University to focus on what it wanted to achieve in the future.
2. In regard to student support and finance, the University is looking at how to introduce Aspire, which will help manage student finance in a different way going forward. Further, in addition to bursaries, the University plans to introduce an intervention fund that will allow resources to be directed to students when they need them the most during their studies. This will be a student-led initiative, co-chaired by representatives from the Student's Union with colleagues from Inclusive Education.
3. Several papers that were due to be presented to the Committee have had to be postponed due to delays in the release of data by external bodies. This includes the B Conditions Assurance Paper and Degree Outcomes Paper which is now likely to come to UTC in September 2024, and an update on complaints investigated by OIA, which it is hoped can be submitted for consideration in July 2024.

4. The University's Student Protection Plan has been reviewed to evaluate whether it remains fit-for-purpose. No changes are recommended at this time, although the SPP will be kept under review through 2024//25 as the University moves into a period of significant change.
5. UEB has approved a recommendation to move to English Academic near miss for all programmes for 2024/25 intake. Specifically, requirements will be lowered by 0.5 across all departments, with no less than 5.5 in individual component parts. The focus here has been to balance student recruitment targets with a concerted effort to join-up English language support across the institution going forward.

Deputy Chair's report [oral report]

- 23-24/140 The Deputy Chair **reported** significant activity in the sector around Generative AI. Of particular interest is a forthcoming meeting of Northern Universities to discuss the issue and how it might be addressed.

Student Representatives' reports [oral reports]

- 23-24/141 Cytherea Shen, the GSA Vice-President (Academic), **reported** on ongoing preparations for the merger of the two student unions.

- 23-24/142 Meely Doherty, the YUSU Academic Officer, further **reported** that:

1. YUSU has been holding its awards ceremonies and UTC members are invited to attend the Excellence Awards which celebrate staff.
2. Attention is currently on handover and induction of new sabbatical officers. The new Students' Union Academic Officer, Fenella Johnson, will be in post from Monday 1 July 2024.
3. Protests have been taking place on campus by students in relation to the conflict in Gaza and Israel, and are being supported by YUSU.

Section 2: Strategic Development, Performance Monitoring and Student Insight– items for consideration and/or decision

Changing Academic Work [Verbal Report]

- 23-24/143 The Chair **reported** that:

1. The Changing Academic Work (CAW) Framework had been released, having been developed out of discussions with the Faculty Executive Boards and other senior leaders. The framework focuses on maintaining a balance between the core activities of research and teaching through introducing effective and standardised ways of working (aligned to a parallel framework for professional services). These ways of work include ensuring activities are being undertaken by appropriate staff at department/school and faculty level.
2. The framework is underpinned by a set of core principles that include setting clear expectations for both staff and students.
3. For 2024/25 certain areas have been prioritised, taking account of regulatory and CMA requirements. These include:
 - a. Stopping double blind marking.
 - b. Reviewing and reducing assessments.
 - c. Reviewing optional modules, in particular those that recruit less than ten students.
4. Work is underway to implement further the principles of CAW through 2025/26 and beyond. Guidance relating to assessment, marking and feedback will be released in due course.

5. Senate has established a task-and-finish group to look at removing Boards of Studies.
6. TAPs and PGR progression will be a further area of review as departments have reported this carries a particularly heavy workload.
7. Understandably there is some anxiety from student groups around the changing work initiative, and therefore the PVC will be meeting with student representatives and a student communications strategy will be developed.
8. To ensure transparency and appropriate and timely communication, a Google site will be constructed to support the changing work initiative
9. In addition, CAW will be added as a standing item to the UTC agenda.

Action: Add CAW standing item to future UTC agendas (UTC Secretary)

23-24/144 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Although concern regarding the CAW framework – particularly in respect to its release and the absence of supporting guidance – was understandable, senior leaders had been fully consulted and made aware that guidance would follow in due course. This guidance will be released imminently. The PVCs TLS and R have also offered to hold weekly drop-ins for HoDs or their nominees to discuss the framework and any questions associated with it.
2. It is important that any concerns over the CAW framework amongst staff are not passed on to students, but should be communicated through appropriate channels.
3. In the event that there are PSRB requirements that prevent full alignment with the CAW framework, it was agreed that the Professional Programmes Forum could be a point of first contact to clarify issues.
4. Module and programme viability recommendations were informed by benchmarking data, noting that departments/schools are able to set higher minimum threshold numbers if they wish. Going forward, the plan is to develop a RAG system and a process to monitor student numbers that will account for new modules / programmes.
5. Some terminology and concepts in the CAW framework, such as ‘continuous assessment’, need to be defined, and further guidance is being developed in this respect which will include a taxonomy of assessment types.

Update on Environmental Sustainability at York [UTC.23-24/82]

23-24/145 The Committee **considered** an update on the work of Environmental sustainability at York (ESAY) by the AD TLS Sciences and ESAY Director of Education. The Committee was asked to **approve** a strategic objective to empower *all* staff to act on the climate and ecological crisis, and a programme of activity for 2024/25.

23-24/146 It was **reported** that

1. ESAY connects work in teaching, research and campus operations to embed environmental sustainability across the University. The work is increasingly important because of the world into which students are entering, as well as the fact that environmental sustainability is becoming an embedded feature in league tables (such as People and Planet, Times Higher Impact Rankings, QS) and in the expectations of PSRBs. Further, despite significant demand from students to be taught about environmental sustainability in their programmes, only a minority currently have the opportunity to do so.

2. There is ongoing work to develop environmental sustainability within the University's portfolio. York currently does not have a climate programme, but ESAY are developing an MSc in Global Climate Challenges, as well as sustainability microcredentials.
3. Moreover, ESAY is endeavouring to influence external policies and activities around sustainability education. A blog article on how universities can contribute to green workforce transformation has recently been submitted, and the team are planning to respond to a recent call for emerging climate related topics that the UK Parliament should be investigating.

23-24/147 The Committee **observed** that

1. Approximately 150 students from the Department of Environment and Geography, and 25 students from other departments, engaged with the Sustainability Clinic 2023/24. Further efforts to engage more students with the Clinic from outside the Faculty of Science will continue in 2024/25.
2. The implementation of the CAW framework provides an opportunity to enhance ways in which environmental sustainability is embedded into curricula given that it asks departments/schools to think carefully about their portfolios, curriculum coverage and assessment practice. Additional mechanisms to support thinking in this area could include adding an appropriate question to the programme approval form, and ensuring that the development of ESAY webpages connects appropriately with ongoing work on the University's learning and teaching pages.

Action: Explore how sustainability can be incorporated into the programme approval form (AQ Quality Manager)

Action: Explore links between the ESAY and the University's learning and teaching webpages (Interim Head Academic Affairs)

23-24/148 The Committee **approved**

1. The strategic objective to empower staff and students to act on the climate crisis.
2. The ESAY programme of activity outlined for 2024 - 2025.

Section 3: Policy and Regulatory Matters

Policy on Award by Exception [UTC.23-24/83]

23-24/149 The Committee **considered** and was asked to **approve** a proposed policy for award by exception, presented by the Chair of SCA.

23-24/150 It was **reported** that

1. The new policy had been written to allow awards to be made in the event of sudden student death (posthumous Awards). Currently this is dealt with by the EC policy under Aegrotat Degrees. As well as allowing posthumous awards to be made, the policy would allow for an *In Memoriam* certificate in recognition of a student's time at the UoY where the requirements of a posthumous award are not met.

23-24/151 The Committee **observed** that:

1. It is preferable that when the award of a degree under the policy meets threshold requirements it should receive official confirmation; however, where the policy states '*recommend to SCA ...*' the wording should be changed to '*recommend to Senate*'.

Action: Chair SCA

2. It may not be possible to implement the policy for professional programmes due to PSRB requirements. In such circumstances, where there is not already an appropriate exit award

available, a University of York award may be given, and a paragraph should be added to the policy to clarify this.

Action: Chair SCA

3. At times, the next of kin of students eligible for a posthumous award, ask that the award be classified. Although sympathetic to these requests, it was agreed that this would not be pursued at this time.
4. The use of latin terminology should be avoided and English alternatives used wherever possible. Reviewing the equivalent policies used by other universities may be informative in identifying options.

Action: PVC TLS, APVC TLS, Chair SCA, Student Union Officers to review policies and identify English equivalents to Latin terminology where appropriate

23-24/152 The Committee **approved** the Policy for Award by Exception.

Academic Misconduct Data Analysis [UTC.23-24/84]

23-24/153 The Committee **considered** an analysis of Academic Misconduct Data presented by the Chair of SCA. It was **reported** that:

1. The high number of 'no case to answer' decisions raises a question about how quickly claims are processed. Departments are being advised this year to triage cases internally with StAMP panel members and to liaise directly with the StAMP panel chair who has responsibility for deciding whether there is a case to answer, rather than passing on to the academic misconduct team who then refer to the chair to make a decision.
2. Departments are being encouraged to be more robust and efficient in deciding which cases may be subject to referral. For example, there are instances where cases occurring within probationary modules have been submitted to the Academic Misconduct process. Departments are also being encouraged to submit suspected academic misconduct cases as soon as possible rather than to wait until the end of marking periods.
3. Guidance will be issued on how to release marks where there is a suspicion of academic misconduct in a script because *Turnitin Feedback Studio* does not easily allow selective release. In such cases, departments will be advised to release marks generally, but to make clear marks are provisional.

23-24/154 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The report could be presented in a way that is more informative. For example, we need to understand proportions of increase and decrease of academic misconduct cases rather than absolute numbers. Figures at department/school level will be misleading unless we know the size of the department/school in question, and it would be useful to see graphical representation of trends over successive years.

Action: Chair SCA and Secretary to SCA to devise a plan and template for future reporting of Academic Misconduct to UTC

2. The report could include information on how much time each academic misconduct case is taking, as well as specific insight into academic misconduct on non-standard provision such as online programmes and professional programmes. It will also be important to provide information on professional misconduct and fitness-to-practice cases. To enable more informative reporting, a review of how academic misconduct data is recorded, monitored and analysed should be undertaken, which might involve integrating data on academic misconduct into SITS.

Action: Deputy Director Student Services

3. There appears to be considerable variation in the application of penalties in cases of academic misconduct. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this is a result of inconsistency in the judgement process, but is more likely a reflection of assessment design, format and student training.
4. Given the increase in academic misconduct relating to the use of Generative AI (GAI), and the potential challenges to assessment this represents moving forward, it was confirmed that training and resources for staff in relation to detecting the unfair use of GAI is being developed by the UTC GAI Working Group.

Academic Integrity

23-24/155 The Committee **received** a verbal report from the Chair of SCA on the Academic Integrity Tutorial (AIT). It was **reported** that:

1. Significant numbers of students had not taken the AIT. Specifically, 70 foundation students, 1,771 year 1 students, 903 year 2 students, 651 year 3 students, and 111 other final year students (on ISMs, 4-year placement/year abroad programmes etc.).
2. Over the last few years, completing the AIT as a progression expectation has not been enforced, although it is stated as compulsory in regulation 5.7a and 6.5c. Whilst the Guide to Assessment states that the AIT should be a progression hurdle from year 1, it does not currently appear in the progression and award rules.

23-24/156 It was **agreed** that:

1. It would not be appropriate to stop students progressing who have not completed the AIT. However, further attention needs to be given to how we embed completion of the AIT into regulations, policies and rules, and how the expectation to complete the AIT is communicated to students.

Action: Deputy Director Student Services and Chair SCA to recommend for approval how AIT should be embedded into regulation, policies and rules.

Section 4: Quality Assurance Processes

PGT External Examiners' Reports: summary of key issues [UTC.23-24/85, Open]

23-24/157 The Committee **received** a summary of PGT External Examiners' Reports from the Chair of SCA.

The Committee **observed** that:

1. Communicating guidance centrally with external examiners about changes in marking and moderation practices in light of the CAW framework would enable consistency of messaging.

Action: Chair SCA to compose a communication to external examiners.

2. Improvements to the external examiners reporting template are being finalised that will allow external examiners to comment on additional requirements for Professional programmes (for example commenting on visits to students in placement).

Updated York Online: Computer Science 3 Year Review Action Plan

23-24/158 The Committee **received**, and was asked to **consider**, an update of the Computer Science action plan from Simon O'Keefe (Deputy HoD Computer Science).

23-24/159 It was **reported** that:

1. There are still some actions outstanding, in particular the creation of the pre-enrolment module which has been delayed due to a lack of resource in the York Online Partnerships

Team. The module is currently being reviewed by HEP, and Computer Science should be in a position to build it soon.

23-24/160 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The issue around resourcing, particularly in the York Online Partnerships Team, has been a recurring feature in reports from Computer Science Online, and reflects a disparity between student growth predicted in the agreed resourcing model and actual growth, alongside the way online programmes are resourced compared to other taught programmes. Looking forward, the University is looking at the distribution of activities between York and HEP.
2. The action plan now includes revised dates to individual actions, which was a concern when it was last considered by UTC. The plan is currently being reviewed by the Quality Review Group for York-HEP online programmes.
3. Current complaints from students predominantly relate to assessment and to information distributed prior to students joining the programme. In respect to this, there is an ongoing issue with HEP providing incorrect information.
4. A further update on the action plan should be brought to UTC in October or November 2024, and should include details on the status of the pre-enrolment module and progress made towards completing actions.

Action: UTC Secretary to add the UTC annual cycle of business for 2024/25.

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

Update/outcomes of the Generative AI Working Group [UTC.23-24/87]

23-24/161 The Committee received an update from the APVC TLS in his capacity as Chair of UTC's Generative AI (GAI) Working Group and was asked to **consider** progress to date and to **approve** six recommendations for next steps on the institutional approach to GAI for learning and teaching. To note, a seventh recommendation to consider AI literacy training for staff and students was added verbally during the meeting.

23-24/162 The Committee **observed** that:

1. There is evidence for the use of GAI during pre-registration recruitment processes to professional programmes (for example in online interviews). UCAS has some useful guidance on this. Similarly, GAI is being used in the writing of job applications, and the Careers and Placements Team have recently been awarded £5,000 by JISC to explore employer views on the use of AI in recruitment and how they are responding to this, as well as what employer views are of the skillsets related to GAI they expect of graduates.
2. There is a student GAI Society that may be a useful point of contact for involving students in ongoing discussions around the institutional approach to GAI.

23-24/163 The Committee **approved** six written recommendations, and one verbal recommendation, for developing the institutional approach to GAI.

Update on Interdisciplinary Teaching Initiatives [UTC.23-24/88]

23-24/164 The Committee **considered** a report on the development of interdisciplinary teaching at York by the Director of Interdisciplinary Teaching and was asked to **endorse** next steps for further development in 2024/25.

23-24/165 It was **reported** that:

1. Collaboration and sustainability are cross-cutting principles in the University strategy and interdisciplinary teaching features in the Faculty Strategies. Key priorities include developing interdisciplinary suites of programmes, sharing modules across academic units and providing more opportunities for students to study outside their home departments/schools.
2. Interdisciplinary teaching aligns well with the requirements of the CAW framework in that it allows the construction of efficient programme suites with shared components, and the sharing of resources across units thereby reducing risk and spreading workload. It will also help to realise the plans for delivering modules with less than 10 students by opening modules up to students across departments.

23-24/166 The Committee **observed** that:

1. Integration of the electives into SITS is currently included on the SITS project list. Although it has been identified as significant, it is not a priority given the pressure on the SITS team because of CAW. A phased approach to implementation may be appropriate to allow some early progress to be made, and it would therefore be useful to identify what a phased approach would look like, and to liaise on this with the SITS team.

Action: Director of Interdisciplinary Teaching.

2. A timetabling project is underway looking at teaching constraints as well as how we timetable. This will make it easier to ringfence time for interdisciplinary modules and facilitate access to electives in the future.
3. In moving towards a curated list, the ability to search a full list of electives will remain available.

The committee **endorsed** next steps:

1. Integrate the application and approvals process for electives into SITS and move to a curated list of electives.
2. Create a central unit for delivering YIMS, informed by the approach adopted by ESAY.
3. Create a webpage to support IDT programme development.

Proposals from the Supervision Working Group [UTC.23-24/89]

23-24/167 The Committee **considered** proposals from the UTC Supervision Working Group, presented by Lisa O'Malley. It was **reported** that:

1. The University is operating an interim supervision policy approved in 2022/23. It is timely, in light of CAW and the need to become more efficient in our activity, to move to a more sustainable and fit-for-purpose policy.

23-24/168 The Committee **observed** that:

1. The delineation between academic and pastoral supervision is sensitive and contentious. It is therefore essential in progressing the project that appropriate senior leadership within faculties (ADs TLS) are fully involved.
2. One or more students should be included on the Project Board. Likewise, in light of ongoing work around student support and wellbeing and the implications of CAW for Professional Services working, it would be useful to consult with Jamie Holliday (Head of Faculty Operations, Social Sciences) on Faculty Professional Service representation.

Action: Lisa O'Malley and Jill Webb (AD TLS Social Sciences)

3. A timeline for the project, identifying interdependencies with other projects and key reporting points, should be developed and submitted to UTC.

Action: Lisa O'Malley and Jill Webb (AD TLS Social Sciences)

4. There are aspects of the interim supervision policy that need to be reviewed as a matter of priority to ensure that it is as resource-efficient as possible, while allowing students to be appropriately supported. For example, the policy currently indicates that departments should record supervision for all students through evision. This is a time-consuming process and, with the exception of students holding visas, is something that could be paused pending development and approval of the new policy.

Action: Lisa O'Malley and Jill Webb (AD TLS Social Sciences)

5. Principle 6 uses the word 'consistently'. It is unclear what this word means in the context of supervision and a clearer definition is necessary.

Action: Lisa O'Malley and Jill Webb (AD TLS Social Sciences)

6. Some amendments to the principles as articulated in the paper were suggested, Specifically:
 - a. In Principle 6, re-construct the second clause as follows: '*...to ensure all students are receiving opportunities to reflect on their individual learning experience in meetings with academic staff.*
 - b. Principle 5 should be rephrased as it doesn't make sense in relation to the stem '*Personal Supervision should...*'

Action: Lisa O'Malley and Jill Webb (AD TLS Social Sciences)

23-24/169 The Committee **approved:**

1. The Principles for Supervision Policy (subject to the caveats identified above)
2. Next steps for implementation (subject to identifying a timeline for UTC noted above)

The Committee **endorsed:**

1. the Project Board membership, subject to including student and Faculty Professional Service representation.

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.]

23-24/170 **Future arrangements of sabbatical officers to capture student voice [UTC.23-24/93]**

23-24/171 **SCA summaries 22 March 2024 and 19 April 2024 [UTC.23-24/94]**

23-24/172 **Notes from Social Sciences FLTG 14 February 2024 [UTC.23-24/95]**

Caroline Ollier, Academic Quality Team