

# Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 25th October 2024 at 10.00am in SLB/207 Spring Lane Building and via Zoom online video conferencing.

## Attendance and apologies for absence:

<b>Present:</b>	Prof. Steve King	Computer Science (Sciences) (Chair)
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics (Sciences)
	Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History (Arts & Humanities)
	Dr Eytan Zweig	Language & Linguistic Science (Arts & Humanities)
	Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
	Fenella Johnson	York SU, Academic Officer
	Eddie Cowling	IPC
<b>In attendance :</b>	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
	Jenny Matson	Deputy Head of Student Administration (Student Lifecycle)
	Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality
	Jess Penn	Interim Head of Inclusive Education
	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Diane Atkinson	Student Services Manager, School for Business & Society
	Dr Juliet James	YGRS
<b>Apologies:</b>	Dr Patrick Gallimore	Law (Social Sciences)
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
	Prof. Matthias Ruth	Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Research
	Assoc. Prof. Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Dr Christian Piller	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)

## m24-25/19 Welcome and apologies for absence

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

SCA Chair noted that Alet Roux had agreed to be Deputy Chair for SCA for the upcoming year.

# Standing Committee on Assessment

## m24-25/20 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 13th September 2024 were confirmed as correct.

## m23-24/21 Matters arising from the previous minutes

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

### CLOSED

- **m23-24/79 Chair's Report**, AQ Team to check for responses about Changing the Academic Work in all external examiner reports as they come in.
- **m24-25/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes**, AQ to start reviewing external examiner reports in coming weeks

AQ are reviewing reports and have been asked to note any CAW related comments.

- **m24-25/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes**, SCA Chair to check with Tracy Lightfoot on whether Becky Huxley-Binns is to continue as institutional external examiner

The institutional external examiner has been confirmed for the AY 24/25 as Becky Huxley-Binns.

- **m24-25/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes**, SCA 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.

Paper on examiners for non-PGR vivas brought to SCA Oct 24.

- **m24-25/5 Report from Students**, Richard Andrew to check with Jo Hardy how York SU material is promoted on 'Staff supporting students' pages

RA has spoken with Jo Hardy and shared digital resources and information about York SU Advice & Support to be incorporated into existing staff-facing guidance and signposting information.

- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Chair to look into phrasing of inclusion/inclusive practice within ToRs

Phrasing approved by UTC.

- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Chair to appoint Deputy Chair

Alet Roux has confirmed her acceptance as Deputy Chair of SCA.

- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Chair to look at Ordinance 9 and amend the voting rights of SCA Committee on ToRs accordingly via Chair's action

Approved by UTC.

# Standing Committee on Assessment

- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Chair to check the process for appointing an external institutional examiner

This is the responsibility of UTC.

- **m24-25/7 Schedule & priorities 24/25**, SCA Chair to review the current rules on compensation/condonation and to discuss further with TL on how to best align this with sector practice and discuss whether to change minimum credit requirement for award

This has been added to the SCA priorities list for 24-25.

- **m24-25/8 Oral progress update on Assessment & Feedback Project**, SCA Chair, Jill Webb and Adrian Lee to discuss a timeline for the different A&F projects.

[Timelines explained on this spreadsheet](#)

## ONGOING

- **m24-25/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes**, Patrick Gallimore to check CAW guidance was shared with Institutional EE.
- **m24-25/3 Matters arising from the previous minutes**, Review the academic integrity tutorial as a priority for SCA this year.
- **m24-25/4 Chair's Report**, Jill Webb to arrange clearer communication of CAW Guidance document, send this to HoFOs and Student Service Managers also
- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Chair to find out who has responsibility for finalising external examiner fees
- **m24-25/6 SCA Terms of reference and membership 24/25**, SCA Secretary to add names of people 'in attendance' be added to the full SCA membership list (which includes term dates)
- **m24-25/7 Schedule & priorities 24/25**, SCA Chair & SCA Secretary to revise priorities list

## m24-25/22 Chair's Report

SCA **considered** the Chair's oral report. It was noted that:

The Google Form for the 2024/25 declarations of interests exercise is now available, and all committee members are asked to complete it.

**ACTION: SCA Secretary to circulate the link to the Google Form to committee members.**

## m24-25/23 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that they had just had their first Academic Leadership Team (ALT) meeting of the year, with a further meeting planned for the following week.

FJ updated the committee on progress with her manifesto point of ensuring Academic Misconduct

## Standing Committee on Assessment

procedures are clear and accessible. FJ noted that she had been reviewing template emails to students for first instances of Academic Misconduct, noting that these gave mixed messages and the tone was not appropriate. FJ noted that she had been consulting sector peers on their SU Academic Misconduct webpages and letter templates to students. FJ noted that YorkSU will be preparing to change the template for a first instance Academic Misconduct offence notification, to make it easier for students to access information and to ensure that signposting to relevant support services is clear.

DB noted that the Special Cases team is looking to work on the process stages for the academic appeals process and would welcome input from YorkSU on this.

RA noted that YorkSU had seen hold-ups with Academic Misconduct cases recently, but through liaisons with the Academic Misconduct Administration Team and senior members of SAAS, these had been resolved. RA also noted that the SCA Secretary and AL had met with YorkSU Advice Team recently to discuss how they can work collaboratively together in future and to discuss current issues.

RA noted that a paper from YorkSU will be coming to the next SCA meeting to present trends, themes etc. with Academic Misconduct cases from the perspective of the Advice Service's interactions with students.

JJ noted that the PGR Academic Misconduct Policy needed development and that YorkSU involvement with this would be welcome.

### **m24-25/24 Degree Outcomes Statement (UG bachelors only)**

The Committee **considered** and **endorsed** the Degree Outcomes Statement:

AL noted that there is no mandatory requirement for the University to produce the Degree Outcomes Statement, but that there is an agreement in the HE sector that institutions should produce an annual statement in response to OfS concerns on grade inflation.

AL noted that minor amendments had been made from the current statement covering 21-22 data and thanked Niall Booth for providing the 22-23 quantitative data needed for the revised statement. AL noted that the statement covers the context of the University, University rules and regulations, Bachelor level outcomes and attainment gaps (noting work to reduce these). AL also noted that reference is made to the University's position in comparison to the Russell Group and broader HE sector.

AL noted that since SCA papers were circulated, TL has added comments which will inform the proposed Degree Outcomes Statement to be submitted to UTC in the next week.

The Committee discussed whether it would be useful and appropriate for the Access and Participation Plan (APP) group to feed through to SCA. It was agreed that JP would bring an item to the next SCA meeting discussing APP work from an assessment angle.

# Standing Committee on Assessment

AL noted that the Degree Outcomes Statement would be taken to the upcoming UTC, informed by SCA's feedback. The report is due to be published before the New Year.

## **m24-25/25 PGR use of Turnitin**

JJ presented the PGR Turnitin paper to the Committee, noting that as an institution we are behind the curve of sector peers with the use of Turnitin as a formative tool to reduce instances of plagiarism and to submit final theses for PGR students. JJ noted that recently there have been a number of PGR Academic Misconduct cases and the use of Turnitin in a formative manner could have prevented these.

The committee **considered** the following proposals:

- To endorse a soft launch of the Academic Integrity Tutorial (AIT) modified for PGRs
- To endorse the principle that a PGR's final thesis should be submitted to Turnitin, with the Turnitin originality report being looked at by their supervisor and then shared with examiners
- Do we require PGRs to submit their Turnitin originality report/s for progression points or is that at the discretion of departments?

The Committee discussed at what point in a PGR journey should students start engaging with Turnitin, and agreed that this should be from the start point of their PGR journey.

The Committee discussed the potential implications this could have for current PGR students and the appropriate timeline of when to introduce this new requirement. The Committee discussed how the proposed implementation date of the 1st September 2025 could create equity issues for students and put pressure on PSS colleagues. SCA supported a more staged approach, to be informed by YorkSU consultation on the best approach for students. The Committee noted that it might be prudent to consider the deadline for January graduation when designing the timeline.

The Committee discussed where responsibility lies in submitting a final thesis to Turnitin. It was noted that practice varies across the sector and that consideration needs to be given to the widening digital provision at the University when managing this.

The Committee discussed the potential implications that Turnitin requirements could have on PhD supervisors, discussing whether training would be needed to support staff to interpret Turnitin reports and to be able to cross-reference these with the PGR Academic Misconduct and Research Misconduct policies. It was also discussed whether supervisors would be required to write a detailed Turnitin report review, with this requirement not being envisaged.

**ACTION: JJ to have a conversation with BRIC surrounding additional training.**

# Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee also discussed that in the flowchart presented in this paper, it needs to be made clear that Turnitin is available to examiners, clarifying that the onus is not solely on the supervisor to identify issues.

**ACTION: JJ to make this clearer within the flowchart diagram.**

The Committee discussed whether examiners would have access to the PGR's history of Turnitin reports and JJ confirmed that this would not be the case, so as to not influence the examiners' final assessment of the PGR's thesis.

The Committee advised that any soft launch should include an opportunity for staff feedback. JJ would provide a formative feedback form.

The Committee advised that support needs to be available for students, and that students should have sufficient notice of this upcoming change to alleviate anxieties.

The Committee **agreed** and **endorsed** a soft launch of the following:

- The Turnitin originality check and PGR AIT tutorial to refer to Turnitin use (date tbd)
- ACTION: SCA Chair and IJ to read through this.**
- Final theses to be submitted to Turnitin, with the supervisor checking this report (implementation date tbd)
  - PGRs have to submit work through Turnitin for formal reviews of progress (implementation date tbd) but not TAP meetings

JJ would revise the proposal for consideration at the forthcoming PPPC meeting.

## **m24-25/26 Oral examiners for (non-PGR) vivas**

The Committee **considered** a proposal concerning section 17 of the University Policy on Assessment, Examiners, Marking and Feedback 2024/25 to:

Relax the current policy on the minimum number of examiners for non-PGR vivas, to one single examiner alongside recording, to be used for moderation and appeals purposes. The proposed change would come into immediate effect after consideration by UTC.

SCA Chair noted that he had consulted the Equalities team who raised concerns of the potential for examiner bias. It was noted that this could be alleviated through bias training for examiners or that an observer such as a GTA could be present.

SCA Chair noted that UTC Chair had given feedback on this proposal and had noted that any issues arising from SSPs should be taken into account with this new change. She was also concerned about the specific proposal to allow students to request two examiners if they were concerned about bias.

# Standing Committee on Assessment

The Committee discussed the impact that this proposal could have on underrepresented groups and students with SSPs. Concerns were raised that the onus is put on the student to ensure that this process is robust and therefore maintaining two examiners would be best practice in inclusivity terms, but this has to be balanced with efficiency pressures.

The Committee discussed difficulties across faculties in having sufficient resources to provide two examiners for every oral examination. FJ noted that she has consulted student department reps on this and they echoed the point about insufficient staffing (and its effect on exam timetabling), especially during resit periods. They also noted that it would be less stressful to have fewer examiners in the room. Conversely, the Committee discussed how it may be intimidating for students to be examined on a 1-2-1 basis.

The Committee discussed the risk of increased complaints from students, therefore moderation would have to be tight and protections put in place for academic staff.

The proposal discussed appeals on grounds of inappropriate bias. The Committee agreed that the wording should be changed to more broadly refer to 'in case of an appeal'.

The Committee also discussed how retention of recordings should be in line with OfS expectations. The Committee agreed that section 17 should refer to the retention section in the University's policy on assessment.

The Committee noted how the recording of assessment is positive and useful for appeals processes.

The Committee decided that the section of the proposal where students are allowed to raise concerns about bias was deemed to be unnecessary and did not align with other University policies.

The Committee **agreed** and **approved** the following:

- To run this as a pilot scheme for the remainder of the AY in two departments (Language & Linguistic Science/Health Sciences), without the option of students raising concerns in advance of examination about bias, with the caveat of mandatory recording and consideration for students with SSPs.
- Clarification that recordings can only be used for appeal purposes by the student and for marking and moderation (including review by external examiners).

## **m24-25/27 Any Other Business**

SCA Chair asked the Committee for views on the use of AI for marking, noting that the UTC AI Working group had raised the issue of whether it is good professional practice to use AI in this way.

The Committee discussed how marking is a nuanced exercise and therefore AI does not offer sufficient interpretation of work to be able to mark it. It was noted that there are potential built-in

# Standing Committee on Assessment

biases within AI systems and this could amplify inequalities.

It was noted that there has been ongoing work across the University looking into AI for marking, with CITY College and IPC using AI to assist in developing feedback points for students.

**ACTION: SCA Chair to speak to Petros Kefalas, CITY College about this**

The Committee discussed the issue of double standards surrounding AI, i.e. students are penalised for using AI under Academic Misconduct but staff would not be penalised for using it to aid their marking. The Committee discussed the need for a 'Statement of Use' if AI is to be used in marking to aid transparency, privacy and data protection.

**ACTION: EC to share IPC's AI 'Statement of Use' with committee**

The Committee discussed that the statement needs to consider and be clear on the following:

- What is meant by AI and what types of AI are included
- Which aspects of the assessment, marking and feedback processes are included i.e. there is a difference between the exercise of academic judgement in assigning a mark vs AI supporting a marker to produce useful feedback text
- PSRBs' views on use of AI in marking to ensure adherence to requirements

**ACTION: SCA Chair to lead on creation of 'Statement of Use' to bring to the next SCA using these points**

The Committee noted it would be useful to have a bank of cases where academics have effectively used AI within marking practice, which could be shared with colleagues as examples of best practice.

**ACTION: SCA Secretary to liaise with UTC GenAI Working Group to gather case studies.**

## CATEGORY II

### **m24-25/28 Assessment Policies Briefing Note**

### **m23-24/29 Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 22 November 2024 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in DL/003.

## **RESERVED BUSINESS**

### **m24-25/30 Individual Examination Arrangements**

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



# Standing Committee on Assessment

## **m24-25/31 Appointment of External Examiners**

It was **noted** that various new appointments (or extension to appointments) of external examiners (UG and PGT) have been approved on behalf of the Committee since its last meeting.

## **m24-25/32 Results Lists**

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