

Standing Committee on Assessment



Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27 January 2024 at 10.00am in HG17 Heslington Hall 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
	Eddie Cowling	IPC
	Dr Jasper Heinzen	History
	Dr Christian Pillier	Philosophy
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics
	Dr Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Dr Eytan Zweig	LLS
	Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD Social Sciences

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
	Angela Lipscomb	DHoFO - Biology
	Jenny Matson	SAAS
	Sarah Maynard	DHoFO - Social Sciences
	Claire Pinder (Minutes)	Academic Support Coordinator
	Cyntherea Shen	GSA

Apologies:	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Nic Streatfield	Student and Academic Services
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
	Dr Jen Wotherspoon	Head of Student Administration

m23-24/39 Welcome and apologies for absence

Members and those attending were welcomed.

Apologies were received from Daisy Bowen, Nic Streatfield, Claire Wilkinson, and Jen Wotherspoon

Standing Committee on Assessment

m23-24/40 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 8 December were confirmed as correct.

M23-24/41 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members noted items listed on the Matters arising log

CLOSED

- m23-24/7 - YUSU to work with SCA on informing students about assessment changes/rules brought about by Modularisation and Semesterisation.
- m23-24/7 - Arrange communications to students and staff about implications of progression and awards, and assessment changes

ONGOING

- m22-23/86 - Chair to ensure that SBS have assessment processes in place regarding the probationary policy.
- m22-23/86 - Secretary and YUSU/GSA to discuss the wording of guidance around Academic Misconduct to be made available to students.
- m23-24/29 Chairs Report - SCA Chair to discuss the University's strategic vision of exam resourcing with UTC Chair.
- m23-24/30 Reports from Students - Meely Doherty and SCA Chair to discuss exam assessment.
- m23-24/31 SCA Priorities - SCA Chair to discuss process improvements for 2024/25 SCA priorities with UTC Chair.
- m23-24/32 Exceptional Circumstances Policy Update - SCA Chair will speak to Biology and Natural Sciences students about a new EC process.
- m23-24/32 Exceptional Circumstances Policy Update - SCA Chair to speak to Head of Student Administration about who should own the new EC process and resource implications.
- m23-24/33 YUSU proposals for provision of dictionaries in examinations - YUSU Student Rep will arrange a pilot of the initiative. Meeting suggested.
- 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.
- m23-24/34 Turnitin contingency planning for the assessment period discussion paper - The moderation pack was found by staff to not be supportive enough, it can be used as part of the moderation process in their interaction with Turnitin. To pass to VLE transformation project. To be reviewed in the next meeting

NO LONGER NEEDED

- m23-24/18 - Jen Wotherspoon to send SCA Chair a copy of the communication to Departments about Institutional Exam Board Contingency

M23-24/42 Chair's Report

Reintroduction of Payment for Resits

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of reintroduction of payment for closed assessment resits. It was noted that:

- Student and Academic Services had decided to reintroduce a £30 fee per resit exams. The fee contributed to additional administration, printing, stationery and invigilation cost. This had been removed due to the shift to online examinations in the pandemic. The wording of the policy whereby students pay for resits had not changed at any point, and was visible to students on the University website.
- SCA members considered the adverse impact of resumption of this policy in addition to the increased cost of living, and mid academic year introduction of resumption of payment for closed assessment resits. The concern was that it would adversely affect students, and potentially widen the attainment gap as it could disproportionately impact students with lower income backgrounds.
- The majority view of the committee was that examinations have a cost associated but students should not need to pay extra, especially when only for one type of assessment (closed exam). It was highlighted that the cost of resits had been passed on to departments during the pandemic. The committee agreed these concerns should be reported to Student and Academic Services.

ACTION: SCA Chair to contact Tom Banham to raise SCA concerns about resumption of payment for resits.

Capstone Modules Marginal Fail clarification

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of capstone module marginal fail clarification. It was noted that:

- A clarification to the Policy on Assessment was noted in consultation on implementation of capstone module marginal fail rules with Tribal. A marginal fail of capstone module is judged at module mark level rather than component level and a student may only resit the dissertation/report component before having their module mark recalculated. It was agreed that SCA should clearly communicate this with Chairs of Boards of Examiners and it should be noted in student guidance.

Industrial Action/MAB Update

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of Industrial Action/MAB Update. It was noted that:

- Missing marks from the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) were now ready to be entered, and go through Progression and Awards. The Progression and Awards team were finding ways to implement the no disadvantage award rules.
- Most marks had been received, however, where marks were missing, the Progression and Awards team- were working out how best to capture the average.
- The Progression and Awards team were thanked for their work.

Guide to Assessment Update (Includes Exceptional Circumstances update)

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of Guide to Assessment Update. It was noted that:

- The Chair of the University Teaching Committee (UTC) had confirmed

reprioritisation of SCA priorities. The main priority for 2023/24 would be changing Exceptional Circumstances (EC) processes. Focus on changes to the Guide to Assessment would run into the next academic year, 2024/25 as a longer-term project area.

- SCA Chair has met with colleagues to discuss EC, and has collated a spreadsheet report. Working groups would further reflect on the change of EC processes.

Semester 2 UG Exam board and PG continuation board timing:

SCA **considered** the Chair's report of Semester 2 UG Exam board and PG continuation board timing. It was noted that:

- The SCA Chair is looking at clarifying the timing of summer exam boards, particularly the PGT continuation board in Semester 2 as departments are concerned about these falling at the same time as UG boards. It was **agreed** that clarification is needed.

Action: SCA Chair to clarify timing of summer exam boards with Progression and Awards

m23-24/43 Report from Students

GSA **noted** that:

- GSA had created a video about Exceptional Circumstances Policy to share with students to raise awareness of the policy. This is on the GSA website, newsletter and social media.

YUSU **noted** that:

- YUSU would update SCA regarding work undertaken on support for assessment at the next SCA meeting. Meely was working with Sally Quinn regarding integrated programmes.
- The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) had crashed which had meant that students in one Department did not get their scheduled exam on time.
- YUSU were working on supporting students with transition between UG and PG and PGT to PGR study.

m23-24/44 Summary of Undergraduate External Examiners' Reports 2022-23 (NOT PGR)

SCA **considered**, and **approved** the summary of undergraduate external examiners' reports 2022-23 (NOT PGR). It was noted that:

- The Committee agreed to all three recommendations in the summary of undergraduate external examiners' reports 2022-23 to review the scaling guidance/policy, marking practices - including moderation, and have a specific question on feedback on the External Examiner Report form.
- It was agreed that where external examiners were not fully satisfied that standards have been fulfilled on programmes, and where external examiners identify specific issues relating to the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), this should be investigated.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to share information about this external examiner feedback to SCA Chair who will investigate, and consider a response.

- Moderation and scaling have been a consistent issue in external examiners reports in the past but this may have been exacerbated by MAB.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to canvas SCA member opinions of suitable wording on a

m23-24/45 YUSU Proposals for SCA: Scaling of assessment marks proposal (NOT PGR)

SCA **considered** YUSU Proposals for SCA: Scaling of assessment marks proposal (NOT PGR). It was noted that:

- The Committee endorsed YUSU's revised proposals to have a clear policy and guidance on scaling. The committee had an in-depth discussion on scaling and noted the issue was that we do not have clear policy, only guidance.
- It was noted a distinction should be drawn between scaling to address errors in assessments and scaling routinely. The policy must be clear and transparent to boards, external examiners and students, and could include reporting requirements so that students understand where scaling has occurred, and why. The committee agreed a working group should be formed to review the current guidance and develop policy.
ACTION: SCA Secretary to convene a working group.
- The Departments of Economics and Maths, which scale assessment marks could be among the Departments consulted by the working group and used as examples of best practice.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to arrange for guidance about scaling to be put on the University website.

m23-24/46 Chairs of Boards of Examiners Handbook (NOT PGR)

SCA **considered** Chairs of Boards of Examiners Handbook (NOT PGR). It was noted that:

- The Committee endorsed the Chairs of Boards of Examiners Handbook to be sent to CBoE's, PSS and Professional Programmes Group for feedback. Once feedback has been received, this document will be further reviewed in the April SCA meeting, before being made available to Chairs of Board of Examiners.
- The Chairs of Boards of Examiners Handbook would include guidance for Chairs of Board of Examiners about their role.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to respond to feedback and consult CBoE Forum on the Handbook.

CATEGORY II

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.

m23-24/47 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 22 March at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in HG/17 Heslington Hall.

RESERVED BUSINESS

m23-24/48 Individual Examination Arrangements

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

m23-24/49 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.

m23-24/50 Results Lists

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