

Standing Committee on Assessment

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 31st January at 10.00am in VN/123 and via Zoom online video conferencing.

Attendance and apologies for absence:

Present:	Prof. Steve King	Computer Science (Sciences), APVC-TLS (Chair)
	Dr Alet Roux	Mathematics (Sciences)
	Dr Sue Faulds	Health Sciences (Sciences)
	Dr Eytan Zweig	Language & Linguistic Science (Arts & Humanities)
	Prof. Jill Webb	AD-TLS Social Sciences
	Dr Mathilde Péron	Economics (Social Sciences)
	Dr Jeremy Airey	Education (Social Sciences)
	Fenella Johnson	York SU, Academic Officer
	Dr Daniel Morgan	Philosophy (Arts & Humanities)
	Assoc. Prof. Anna Sotiriadou	CITY College
	Dr Patrick Gallimore	Law (Social Sciences)
In attendance :	Aimée Yeoman	SCA Secretary & Policy Officer
	Dr Zara Burford	York Online
	Richard Andrew	York SU, Advice & Support Manager
	Richard Firth	Student Administration Manager for Progression and Awards
	Dr Adrian Lee	Policy Manager, Academic Quality & Development
	Jess Penn	Interim Head of Inclusive Education
	Daisy Bowen	Special Cases
	Claire Wilkinson	Disability Services Manager
	Diane Atkinson	Student Services Manager, School for Business & Society
	Jan Ball-Smith	Interim Head of Academic Affairs
	Dr Juliet James	YGRS
	Isabel Jagoe	Head of Faculty Operations- Arts and Humanities
Apologies:	Prof. Paul Wakeling	Dean of YGRS

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m24-25/49 Welcome and apologies for absence

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

SCA Chair noted that Christian Piller and Jasper Heinzen were both on research leave. Daniel Morgan is to cover for Christian Piller until the end of the academic year.

SCA Chair welcomed new members Daniel Morgan and Paul Wakeling to the committee.

SCA Chair noted that Richard Firth was covering for Jenny Matson at this meeting as she could not attend.

SCA Chair noted that it was Isabel Jagoe's last meeting as Sarah Finch will be taking over her membership on SCA from the March meeting onwards. SCA Chair thanked Isabel for her contribution to the committee.

m24-25/50 Declarations of Interest

N/A

m24-25/51 Minutes of previous meeting (SCA 24-25/21)

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 22nd November 2024 were confirmed as correct.

m24-25/52 Matters arising from the previous minutes

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

CLOSED

- **m24-25/27 Any Other Business**, SCA Chair to speak to Petros Kefalas about ongoing work across the University looking into AI for marking, with City College using AI to assist in developing feedback points for students.

Completed.

- **m24-25/27 Any Other Business**, SCA Secretary to liaise with UTC GenAI Working Group to gather case studies.

Completed, these are to be brought to the March SCA meeting.

- **m24-25/38 Report from Students**, FJ to raise issues with electronic submission receipts with the VLE Team.

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Completed.

- **m24-25/38 Report from Students**, FJ to bring feedback from students on new calculator policy to SCA.

Completed, in this January SCA agenda.

- **m24-25/38 Report from Students**, SCA Chair to speak to PG about history of calculator policy change.

Completed.

- **m24-25/41 SCA Priorities for AY 24-25**, SCA secretary to ask members not present at the November meeting which areas on the A&F project they want to get involved with.

Completed, list updated.

- **m24-25/42 Statement of use of AI in marking and feedback**, edits to be made by SCA Chair & sent to UTC AI working group

Completed, SCA Chair reported that the Statement had been discussed at the UTC AI WG, where it was broadly supported. However, it was also discussed at the Educational Technology Steering Group, where there had been a strong view that the university's position on AI tool usage in Teaching and Learning was not yet clear enough, and that the Statement would raise more issues that it would solve. It was therefore decided to shelve it, for the time being.

ONGOING

- **m24-25/25 PGR Use of Turnitin**, SCA Chair and Isabel Jagoe to read through PGR AIT tutorial.

Responsibility now transferred over to the SCA Priority Group on AIT.

- **m24-25/39 Academic Misconduct from YorkSU Perspective**, AR to lead work on StAMP guidance with other members of the committee (including an SU rep)

Ongoing, group to be set up to work on this.

ACTION: SCA Secretary to support set-up of StAMP guidance working group

NO LONGER NEEDED

- **m24-25/41 SCA Priorities for AY 24-25**, EC to speak to PG about the work on the policy on acceptable assistance in assessment

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EC no longer at UoY to discuss with him.

m24-25/53 Chair's Report

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

Issues with calculators in exams have been resolved for the January CAP and for the upcoming Semester 2 CAP. The email explaining the resolution to schools/departments was shared with the Committee.

The External Examiners nomination form has been updated to close the gap in ensuring that taught elements of PGR programmes and taught programmes/modules taken by groups of PGRs, are appropriately covered and that issues are brought to the attention of department PGR chairs and PPPC. This new form is on the External Examiners webpage.

m24-25/54 Report from Students

York SU **noted** that:

GTAs had raised a number of concerns about expectations on them regarding marking and issues relating to payment of their work. The Chair stated the need for departments to follow the GTA policy, which is currently under review led by TL and MP

ACTION: AL to check if YorkSU are involved in the review of the GTA policy

York SU are researching digital poverty and will be reaching out to students to understand the impact of this during assessment.

The York SU Academic Leadership Team had recently raised a number of concerns about assessment, marking and feedback. The SCA Chair was aware of some of the issues and proposed solutions. He had requested a report from the Computer Science CBoE regarding errors in their case and of planned future mitigations.

It was suggested that the Chair discuss with the Digital Education Team issues that have arisen to preempt challenges during upcoming online exams that involve Gradescope.

ACTION: SCA Chair and Digital Education Team to discuss issues reported by York SU

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m24-25/55 EPA monitoring group update (Oral)

JB-S presented an oral report on End Point Assessments (EPAs) within apprenticeship provision, noting that normally a third-party organises the EPA for students, however if it is an integrated apprenticeship, UoY oversees the EPA.

JB-S noted that the EPA Monitoring Group has been created to oversee the development, quality assurance, and outcomes of apprenticeship EPA in line with University processes. The Group is accountable to the Apprenticeships Monitoring Board, which has the strategic oversight of all the apprenticeship programmes.

JB-S noted that the group should be instrumental in triangulating evidence for OfS QA processes, Ofsted inspection, and other audits. The Group will liaise with departmental apprenticeship committees so that decision-making is transparent.

The Committee agreed that there should be SCA representation in this group and the Chair volunteered to take on this responsibility.

ACTION: SCA Chair to be SCA rep. on the EPA monitoring group

m24-25/56 A&F project update (Oral)

The Committee **noted** the report:

AL noted that the A&F Project group had taken the proposed structure for the Assessment Policy & Procedures (which was approved by SCA), noted gaps in policy and started to draft revisions following the process agreed with UTC/ESLG.

AL updated the committee on Working Group 1 - Policy, Procedure and Codes of Practice Development:

- Writing Group, Consultation Pool and Reviewers (SCA member, UTC member & member of ESLG) have been established and have been underway from the 6th of January 2025
- Work continues to review all policies for the March 2025 UTC.
- AL noted that the Working Group appreciates the Reviewers' constructive feedback so far. In the context of tight time scales, they are asked to promptly review documents and provide their feedback.
- Procedure review time frame - Procedures with material changes will be completed by May 2025, procedures updated into the new format will be completed by the end of August 2025

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JW thanked the writing group for this project for their extensive work on re-writing policy. The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that updated policy is easily searchable on the University's website for ease of access/reference.

JP updated committee on Working Group 4 - Reasonable adjustments and alternative assessments:

- Currently developing a Reasonable Adjustment policy to be brought to UTC for approval in March 2025, with close consideration of how this work impacts other projects such as the Student Support Plans (SSPs) project and Exceptional Circumstances project.

The Committee discussed that potential issues may arise during the Summer CAP period for students who do not yet have SSPs (in the light of the Abrahart ruling). It is therefore important that there is clear guidance developed for those who support students during this period of time.

The Committee discussed how it is important that there is a holding statement on how to support students whilst the working group works towards the final policy.

ACTION: JP to report back to WG 4 on SCA's support for a holding statement to be in place for the Summer CAP.

JB-S updated the committee on Working Group 5 - Technical proficiency in English language (linking to OfS B conditions)

- The current focus is on developing a high-level policy that will go to UTC for approval - a suggested date of March 2025.

ACTION: PG to join Technical proficiency in English language Working Group as SCA representative

JB-S updated the committee on Working Groups 2 (Development of guidance and web-based resources) and 3's (Student-facing Guidance and Student Charter Development) progress: Planning for these working groups to start in early February.

m24-25/57 Calculator policy student feedback (Oral)

The Committee was reminded that the revised calculator policy, previously agreed by SCA, stated that instead of the University providing calculators for closed exams for students, students would be expected to provide their own, with this change due to happen in the AY 24-25.

SCA Chair noted that as a holding position for the most recent CAP, the University had ensured that there were spare calculators available for students in case they did not have one. However, from

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the upcoming Summer CAP onwards, the previously agreed calculator policy would be fully implemented.

FJ noted that she had received mainly negative feedback from students regarding the change in calculator policy, as follows:

- The calculators on the approved list are more basic models than those used at A-Level study.
- Questions as to why the policy was decided years ago but is only being enacted now.
- There is the possibility that it is now easier for students to cheat in exams as a result of the policy change
- Questions as to what would happen in the future if students brought the wrong calculator to an exam.
- The new policy has a detrimental financial impact on students in the cost of living crisis.
- York SU did not feel in a position to, or that it was appropriate for the Union to take on a suggested responsibility for providing a calculator loan service.

The Committee noted that there was a financial motivation which drove the policy change, however if there was a strong argument for the list of appropriate calculators to be changed, then this could be considered.

The Committee discussed how the majority of students who will need a calculator at degree level will most likely have an A-Level calculator from previous study. These A-Level models are not on the current list of the University's permitted calculators.

The Committee discussed that the list should be aligned with calculator models that students are already familiar with using and that assessment design should reflect this.

ACTION: JM to survey departments that use calculators, and ask if it would be a problem to add A-Level calculators to the permitted list.

SCA Chair, SCA Secretary and Jenny Matson to get feedback from exams team for invigilator view

The Committee discussed the possibility of looking at sector best practice of how to check that calculators are acceptable and noted that the Exams & Graduation team are open to reviewing the calculator policy and that it is also part of work within the Assessment & Feedback project.

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m24-25/58 The purpose of anonymity in assessment (SCA 24-25/22)

The Committee **discussed:**

For the purposes of re-writing policy within the Assessment & Feedback Project, how principles are to underpin University policy on anonymity in assessment and the impacts these could have on the safeguards implemented within assessment and marking processes. It noted that different principles for anonymity result in different consequences and impacts on administration, student confidence, appeals etc.

The Committee considered whether the purpose of anonymity in assessment is to protect students from markers' unconscious bias affecting their marking or to protect students from intentional bias/ discrimination; by reducing the risk of markers' conscious biases negatively/positively influencing their marking.

The Committee discussed the distinction between staff being unconsciously biased versus staff being actively negatively/positively biased against a student, the latter of which can be viewed as staff misconduct. However, the Committee also noted that unconscious bias and the psychological processes that might influence a person's behaviour remain contested concepts.

The Chair reported that he had discussed different purposes of anonymity with the Head of Digital Education, and the possibility of using a public student number as the key for student submissions: rather than improving the administrative burden in process surrounding various submission tools (TFS, Gradescope, BB Ultra, Canvas), his view was that having any key other than student name would continue to cause difficulties.

The Committee discussed how the focus of anonymity is primarily at the point of marking assessed work, rather than on advising students during preparatory or formative stages or in providing feedback after the release of marks. Also, that in principle, anonymity in assessment is related to student confidence and therefore it is important to prioritise student voice in discussing how confidence can be improved in this area.

ACTION: JB-S to discuss anonymous marking with the Student Expert Panel

It was reported that research shows that anonymous marking does not make a noticeable impact on closing awarding gaps for underrepresented students and, therefore, changes to teaching practices need to be considered instead.

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The Committee also considered whether there need to be more processes and practices in place to reduce (un)conscious bias.

The Committee acknowledged that in practice, anonymity is difficult to uphold or inappropriate to require in certain assessments, such as dissertations, performances, presentations, language oral exams etc. and also when there are small cohorts of students on a module.

The Committee discussed the need for guidance to be available for staff on reducing bias when anonymity is not practically feasible. The Committee discussed how effective quality assurance, moderation and second marking could be used to support the reduction of bias in practice, and that the policy on anonymity has to facilitate the related assessment processes and systems to achieve this aim.

The Committee decided that the following wording is important to include within the anonymity in assessment policy:

- 'To reduce bias' as opposed to 'remove'
- Reference to reduction in bias 'at the time of marking'
- 'This is the purpose of anonymous marking ... unless it is unfeasible'

ACTION: JW/AL to feed these SCA discussions on anonymity into A&F Project work

m24-25/59 Department/School Assessment Word Count and Duration Strategy: Template (SCA 24-25/23)

The Committee **considered** and **approved (with minor amendments)** the template for recording department/school assessment word counts and duration that was introduced as part of the Changing the Academic Work for implementation in academic year 2025/26.

The Committee noted that the template would be included in the A&F project policy proposal on assessment design/ scheduling for UTC approval, following stakeholder review that would include an SCA member.

The following minor changes were needed:

- The document is not a strategy or guidance but references to strategy/guidance need to be changed to policy
- The implications of 'pro-rata' need to be clarified within the context of this policy.
- Schools/ departments need to be able to add notes to this document if they have further details to add, eg. Additional assessment types, PSRB requirements etc.

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ACTION: AL to pass changes back to Assessment & Feedback project.

It was not appropriate to publish the school/ departmental word count and duration policies to students. This is to reduce the risk of confusion with module/ assessment component-specific assessment requirements that students would need to refer to.

The policy reflected the strategic decision to limit school/ departmental discretion within policy, but that maximum limits for different assessment types should be determined within disciplinary contexts, rather than setting blanket institutional maximums. This should also include what word counts/ limits include, for example in-text citations, references, footnotes etc.

The Committee noted the link to policy on penalising assessments that have exceeded the word-count and that policy on penalties would be submitted to UTC in February having been revised as part of the A&F Project.

York Online provision could be in scope for being required to have such a policy, but that its content would need to be specific to the York Online delivery context

ACTION: A&F Project to discuss appropriate text to be inclusive of York Online

m24-25/60 Update to acceptable assistance in assessment policy (to incorporate PSRBs) (SCA 24-25/24)

The Committee reviewed a suggested amendment to the acceptable assistance in assessment policy aimed at more sufficiently accounting for professional programmes/ those accredited by PSRBs. SCA decided that the Scope section (p2) still required a clearer definition of a professional programme to cover all courses which have PSRB requirements.

ACTION: SCA Chair to revise the definition via Chair's action.

m24-25/61 Release of Turnitin Feedback Studio (TFS) marks where AM is suspected (Oral)

The Committee noted that this proposal originally went to UTC in July 2024, with a focus on how the use of TFS affected the timing of marks release, particularly where a student may learn that they are being investigated for academic misconduct or where a student has a released mark changed later due to an academic misconduct penalty. Concerns had been raised regarding how this would affect professional programme students when they are on placement. The Committee supported the position that marks should only be released to students at a time where students can be supported in a suitable way.

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The Committee noted that a [briefing note on academic misconduct processes](#) had been sent out in May '24 that advised that all marks should be released to students as scheduled, including in cases of academic misconduct, but highlighting that all marks are provisional until ratified.

Note: The briefing contradicts current policy in AM2.1.3 and AM 2.2.1.v, which was an oversight of the AM policy update in Summer 2024.

The Committee discussed how communications surrounding the release of marks need to be better managed, making it clear to students what it means when stating that marks are provisional until ratified by the BoEs.

ACTION: FJ to get student feedback on student understanding of 'marks are provisional'

The Committee noted that York Online uses the phrasing, 'marks are for informational purposes only and do not reflect any penalties that may be applied'. This phrasing was approved by SCA under Chair Mike Bentley and may be suitable for wider adoption.

The Committee discussed that for the sake of student wellbeing and effective staff management both of assessments and misconduct cases, the case to answer stage of the academic misconduct process needs to be joined up with the release of marks, through looping in appropriate school/ departmental staff.

The Committee noted that marking should be fully carried out even when there is a strong suspicion of academic misconduct, in line with the academic misconduct policy section AM1.3.4.

The Committee discussed whether there is a cutoff for when an academic misconduct case can be opened and noted that there is no policy on this. It was suggested that once an exam board has met and ratified marks it is too late.

The Committee noted that in E:vision there is a code which stops a student from progressing if they are under investigation for academic misconduct, however it is the responsibility of the school/ department to make the student aware.

m24-25/62 Any other Business

N/A

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CATEGORY II

The Committee noted the following Cat II papers:

m24-25/63 EPA monitoring group update supporting documents (SCA 24-25/25)

m24-25/64 Communications re. Calculators in Exams (SCA 24-25/26)

m24-25/65 Amendment to Waseda University credit weighting (SCA 24-25/27)

m23-24/66 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was **noted** as Friday 14th March 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom online video conferencing, and in person in tbc.

RESERVED BUSINESS

m24-25/67 Individual Examination Arrangements

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

m24-25/68 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.

m24-25/69 Results Lists

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