

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
held at 2.00pm on Thursday 23 January 2020 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart
House**

Present:

Dr Jeremy Crang (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research (CMVM)
Stephanie Vallancey	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gemma Riddell	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Faten Adam	Incoming Extensions and Special Circumstances Team Manager (present for Paper A and B)
Bethany Fellowes	Vice President Activities and Services, Students' Association (present for Paper A)

Apologies for absence:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Rayya Ghul	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Students' Association: Wednesday afternoon teaching (APRC 19/20 3A)

Bethany Fellowes presented this item. The Committee had received a paper on Wednesday afternoon teaching in March 2019 (CSPC 18/19 4A), and this paper was a follow-up from the Students' Association. The Committee were invited to discuss whether the relevant timetabling policy was being upheld rigorously enough, and whether the policy should include an undergraduate/postgraduate distinction.

The Committee welcomed the analysis that had been provided by the Students' Association. The following comments were made by the Committee:

- It was helpful for the Committee to see the analysis of the differences in experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and it was believed that these distinctions would be worthy of further investigation. However, members of the Committee were wary of making distinctions that could be seen to disproportionately advantage or disadvantage certain groups, given that some of the relevant issues affected both postgraduate and undergraduate students (e.g. family and caring responsibilities, and financial commitments such as paid work).
- It was agreed that more research by the Students' Association into the postgraduate experience of Wednesday afternoon teaching might be helpful, particularly to understand whether distinctions could be made between postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) experience.
- When Colleges had approached Schools about Wednesday afternoon teaching in 2018/19, feedback had shown that there were very few instances of core (whole class) teaching during this period. For undergraduate students, there were teaching placements, dissertation meetings etc. but not much core teaching. This was reflected in the data from the Timetabling Unit which suggested that in 2018/19 3.9% of undergraduate students were affected by 'core' teaching (core lecture or class slots) on a Wednesday afternoon.
- It was suggested by Committee members that a potential compromise could be found by looking at wording in the policy itself around the elements that were compulsory in nature. Again, this would require more detailed consideration by the Committee and relevant parties if it was believed to be a desirable outcome of any further investigations.

It was agreed that College representatives on the Committee would approach Schools to remind them of the policy. In order to do this, the Timetabling Unit would be asked to provide updated information regarding courses teaching on Wednesday afternoon for 2019/20.

ACTION: Academic Services to contact the Timetabling Unit to ask for updated information for 2019/20, for forwarding to College representatives.

ACTION: Upon receipt of updated statistics, College representatives to contact Schools to remind them of the current policy in this area.

ACTION: Students' Association to consider further research into the postgraduate experience of Wed PM teaching.

4. Service Excellence Programme: Special circumstances (APRC 19/20 3B)

Sarah McAllister presented this item. The Committee provided some amendments to the draft Special Circumstances Policy as presented. The Special Circumstances Policy and any related updates to text within the assessment regulations would come back for final approval to the Committee later in the academic year.

5. Honours Degree Classification: Weighting of Honours Years (APRC 19/20 3C)

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item, which was approved as presented (subject to the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine raising no objections with Dr Bunni within seven days of the meeting).

ACTION: Dr Bunni to request that Student Systems amend the relevant honours years algorithm to take effect from the beginning of the next academic year (2020/21).

6. PhD with Integrated Study: resit assessment (APRC 19/20 3D)

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item. The paper was approved by the Committee. This would allow PhD with Integrated Study programmes (and other PhD programmes with compulsory taught elements) to offer resit assessment for taught courses at SCQF level 9 or above, without seeking additional approval from the Committee. The detail of how exactly this would operate was for Colleges and Schools to determine locally as part of normal programme approval processes.

7. CMVM: 4-year PhD in Translational Neuroscience (APRC 19/20 3E)

This paper was approved by the Committee.

8. CAHSS: MSc Mathematical Economics and Econometrics (APRC 19/20 3F CLOSED)

Dr Paul Norris presented this closed paper.

This paper was discussed by the Committee in some detail. Members raised concerns about the non-standard elements of the proposed programme, with particular emphasis upon the compressed duration of the programme and risks this could pose to the overall student experience, as well as possible reputational risks. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that they were unable to approve the paper as presented. Representatives from the Committee from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences were asked to make contact with the relevant staff at College and School level in order to outline both the Committee discussions on this matter, and provide feedback with regard to suggested alternative options for consideration. Alternative options for consideration included re-modelling of the programme into one of the following programmes:

- a two-year Masters;
- an Integrated Masters;

- a Postgraduate Diploma.

9. Knowledge Strategy Committee (APRC 19/20 3G)

This paper was received for information.

10. Any Other Business

There was no further business.