

H/02/27/02
CSPC: 23.11.17

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)
held on Thursday 23 November 2017 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSCE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Ms Alexandra Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)
Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President Education Students' Association
Ms Ellie Tudhope	Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development
Mrs Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback

In attendance:

Ms Esther Dominy	Students' Association Vice-President Welfare (items 8-17 only)
Ms Roshni Hume	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services (items 8-17 only)
Professor Dave Robertson	Head of the College of Science and Engineering (items 1-4 only)
Mr Scott Rosie	Head of Timetabling Services (items 1-3 only)
Professor Mike Shipston	Centre for Integrative Physiology items 1-5 only)
Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Mr Stephen Warrington	Director of Teaching, School of Engineering

Apologies for absence:

Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team

Prior to the formal meeting, Committee members received a presentation from Mr Scott Rosie, Head of Timetabling Services, which summarised the Global Timetabling Modelling Project.

The Committee agreed to re-order the agenda for the meeting to allow for discussion of academic year dates, and lecture recording/timetabling (an item that was due to be raised under Any Other Business) at the beginning of the meeting.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 21 September 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Electronic business had been conducted by the Committee between 27 September 2017 and 4 October 2017. The Committee had approved a paper from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine regarding an articulation proposal between the BVM&S programme at the University of Edinburgh, and selected North American pre-vet programmes.

3. Academic Year Dates 2019/20 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2020/21

The Committee approved the academic year dates for 2019/20 and provisional academic year dates for 2020/21 as presented.

It was noted that current projections meant that in 2020/21 a potential induction start date of 14 September 2020 would have a knock-on effect on the revision/examination period in semester 1 of 2020 with a truncated revision and examination diet. Initial discussions with Accommodation Catering and Events had suggested that there was no flexibility in the induction start date for 2020/21, because of the need for sufficient time to prepare the University's accommodation and other facilities following the end of the Festival.

This would lead to a situation that was similar to that which occurred in 2015/16, when the Committee agreed to a reduction in the revision period for students to three working days, in order to have enough time to accommodate the December examination diet. Even if both Saturdays were used for examinations, and the revision week was curtailed by two days to three working days in the week beginning 7 December 2020, there would still only be a maximum of 10 days available for examinations. In December 2017, 11 days were required for examinations, and by 2020/21, more days would possibly be needed due to potential increases in timetabled examinations, December sittings, student numbers and special arrangement examinations. If 11 or more days were required, the revision period could be less than 3 working days.

It was agreed that further modelling of examinations, and further discussion of options to mitigate pressures on the revision period, would be required before academic year dates for 2020/21 were fully approved by the Committee next year.

ACTION - Mr Scott Rosie to undertake further examination timetable modelling, to see how many days would be required for examinations in the December 2020 examination diet.

ACTION - Mr Scott Rosie and Mr Tom Ward to discuss estate related constraints further with Accommodation Catering and Events (and the Learning Spaces Technology team), and to explore possible options for mitigating pressures on the revision period.

4. Data Science, Technology, and Innovation Distance Learning Programme (CSPC 17/18 2 A)

Professor Dave Robertson presented this paper. Responsibility for managing the suite of Distance Learning Programmes in Data Science, Technology and Innovation had transferred from the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences to the College of Science and Engineering. It was noted that these arrangements for managing programmes at College level were non-standard in some ways in terms of University regulations, which was why the Committee was being asked to approve the proposals.

Committee members discussed the proposed governance and operating model for the programmes. Members identified two main areas that they felt should be kept under review; the student support angle, and the proposals in relation to the handling of academic misconduct. Administrative aspects of student support would be delivered by dedicated administrative staff in the College of Science and Engineering Online Learning Team with support from College Office staff. While the Committee had some concerns regarding the adequacy of this support, Professor Robertson indicated that to date the majority of student support issues were addressed at course rather than programme level. In relation to academic misconduct, the Programme Director was to act as the School Academic Misconduct Officer (the implication of this arrangement being that the Programme Director would not be a marker for the dissertation). The Committee had some concern that this may not provide sufficient separation of roles. It was agreed that both of these aspects should be closely monitored, and that the College should report back to the Committee in one year.

The paper was approved by the Committee. The Committee noted that it was likely that, as the University developed new types of provision and placed increased emphasis on interdisciplinary activities, other proposals for non-standard models of programme and course management may emerge; approval of the DSTI programme arrangements would not set a precedent for any future proposals.

5. Dual award 4 year PhD degree programme in Integrative Biomedical Sciences with integrated study (CLOSED B)

This paper contained a proposal to create a dual award, 4 year PhD degree programme in Integrative Biomedical Sciences with courses for integrated study taught entirely in English. The programme would be delivered at the Zhejiang Edinburgh Institute (ZJE) in China. The programme was due to start in September 2018.

The proposal required Committee approval for the opt-out from the Taught Assessment Regulations with regards to the single resit opportunity that would be offered for each of the level 11 or 12 courses with 20 or less credits on the programme (10 credits in Year 1, 20 credits in Year 2 and 10 credits in Year 3). This would allow the students to redeem failure in these courses, therefore mitigating against the possibility that exit from the PhD would be required due to the unexpected failure of very small components.

It was noted that, generally for taught programmes within the University, where the University did not allow resits (e.g. for honours and postgraduate taught courses), it did allow credit on aggregate. Therefore the University did have a mechanism already for making sure that failure of small components did not have a disproportionate effect, and the Committee agreed that the same principle should be applied here.

The Committee's approval was also being sought to offer this as a dual award, in line with the University's Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy. The Committee was satisfied with the rationale for offering this programme on a dual award basis.

The expectation of the Quality Assurance Agency was that institutions offering dual awards would state the joint nature of the award either on the degree certificate or the transcript. The University did not currently provide transcripts for PhDs but this was one of the planned deliverables of the Service Excellence Project (SEP). If the SEP was unable to deliver this in time for the first awards then the ZJE would produce its own transcript which would state the joint nature of the programmes.

This paper was approved by the Committee. The Committee also indicated that it might be sensible to consider a review of policy in this area for PhD with integrated study, so that the need to request opt-outs for the resit element, to mitigate against potential failure due to a small component of the taught component, would not be required.

6. Proposal for Dual Award at Doctoral Level between the University of Edinburgh and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (CLOSED C)

Mr Tom Ward presented this paper. The Committee approved the dual award aspect of the programme, should it also be formally approved at School and College level (it was recognised that the proposal had not yet been through the standard School and College programme approval processes, and this would need to be done before the programme could be launched).

7. Service Excellence Programme - Student Administration and Support Update (CSPC 17/18 2 D)

This paper provided a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, and was formally noted by the Committee.

8. Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions Update (Verbal Update)

Mr Stephen Warrington provided a verbal update to the Committee on the special circumstances, extensions and concessions strand of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP). The paperwork that had been considered at the relevant Service Excellence Student Administration and Support Board on 20 November 2017 had represented a series of interim proposals. The programme was working to a final business case deadline of 15 February 2018. Mr Warrington informed the Committee that proposals may include some policy changes:

- Students would self-certify requests for coursework extensions of up to 7 days, with no expectation of providing any supporting evidence; and
- The operation of Special Circumstances Committees at College level.

Mr Warrington confirmed that CSPC would be responsible for approving any policy changes, once the SEP Student Administration and Board had firmed up its proposals. A more detailed and formal paper was expected at the 22 March 2018 CSPC meeting.

9. Acceptable Reasons for Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Employment Commitments and Caring Responsibilities (CSPC 17/18 2 E)

The Committee discussed the recommendations in the paper and agreed:

- i) that the following be added to the list of valid reasons to request a coursework extension, from the 2018/19 session onwards:

“exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student’s control”.

- ii) that the following be added to the list of valid reasons to request a coursework extension or consideration of Special Circumstances, from the 2018/19 session onwards:

“exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities”

The Committee did however ask that Academic Services develop some guidance explaining what ‘exceptional and significant’ changes in employment commitments means in practice, in order that students and staff can differentiate them from commitments which students could reasonably have anticipated and therefore should have planned for.

10. Academic Misconduct - An Overview and Future Planning (CSPC 17/18 2 F)

Ms Roshni Hume presented this paper which provided an overview of current practices and preventative measures taken in relation to academic misconduct and discussed the recent recommendations provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in relation to contract cheating.

It was noted that the College of Science and Engineering Learning and Teaching Committee had already had some discussion of the issues outlined in the paper.

The Committee welcomed the paper, and agreed that the University should consider further action to address the issues highlighted. This action was to include broad discussion across the University regarding the issues outlined, and the development of a plan of action. The Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group (convened by Professor Susan Rhind, and reporting to the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee) would take responsibility for developing this plan of action. This would then be brought back to CSPC for further discussion.

11. Timing of Boards of Examiners for Semester 1 Course (CSPC 17/18 2 G)

The Committee approved the recommendations outlined in the paper, as follows:

- Boards of Examiners to be held following the end of Semester 1 to ratify results for all courses whose assessment is complete during, or immediately following Semester 1; Schools will be expected to comply with this recommendation for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses during the 2018/19 session.
- The deadline for entry into EUCLID of ratified course results for Semester 1 courses to be adjusted to accommodate those PGT programmes struggling to meet the current deadline.
- Academic Services (Dr Adam Bunni) to discuss with Fees and Student Support whether there is any possibility of delaying the 31st January deadline for partial fee refunds for students.

ACTION - The Committee agreed that Academic Services should communicate the position once it had clarified the deadline for entry of ratified marks and the deadline for partial fee refunds.

12. Universities UK Degree Algorithm Report (CLOSED – H)

Universities UK in collaboration with GuildHE had recently published the final report of a project exploring the approach to undergraduate degree classification algorithms in UK higher education institutions. This paper summarised the recommendations from the report, and considered how the University's approach to degree classification stood in relation to these recommendations.

The Committee agreed to publish the statement regarding the rationale for the University's approach to degree classification. It also agreed in principle to work towards greater consistency in this area, and asked Academic Services to work with Colleges to explore options. It also agreed that any Schools operating approaches to borderlines for classification which involved automatically awarding the higher classification to all students whose final outcome falls within a certain range under the boundary, should take immediate steps to curtail these practices (it understood that one School was already taking steps to address this issue)

13. CMVM: MSc Transfusion, Transplantation and Tissue Banking Programme Revision (CSPC 17/18 2 I)

Dr Sheila Lodge introduced this paper, which sought the Committee's approval for a new MSc in Transfusion, Transplantation and Tissue Banking which had a structure which varied from the Models for Degree Types. The paper was approved by the Committee, on the understanding that the proposed model involved 60 credits of study broadly equivalent to a research project / dissertation, albeit tailored to the nature of the programme and its professional cohort.

14. Senate Committee Planning (CSPC 17/18 2 J)

This paper invited the Committee to input into the planning round. It was noted that the Service Excellence Project plans needed to be carefully factored into the planning round, as they unfolded at the key stages.

15. Concessions Report 2016/17 (CLOSED – L)

This closed annual report on University level student concessions 2016/17 was received by the Committee for information.

16. Any Other Business

Mr Scott Rosie and Ms Anne-Marie Scott presented this item, and tabled a briefing paper. As the Committee were responsible for the Timetabling Policy, it was felt to be appropriate to seek the Committee's views on an issue that had been raised in the Lecture Recording Programme, which was felt to be a student experience matter rather than an IT matter.

The briefing paper indicated that academic colleagues had raised concerns that the cut-off after 50 minutes of lecture recording could result in a messy end to the recording, as lectures

sometimes required a slight overrun to conclude the discussion. There was concern that vital information might not be captured in the recording. It had been suggested by some academic colleagues that an additional five minutes 'safety net' be routinely added to the end of scheduled recordings, e.g. that recordings were 55 minutes long. This was not to say that there would be a change to the current 50 minute teaching time laid out in the current Timetabling Policy; colleagues would continue to be expected to ensure that they adhered to strict time management principles.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

- There was a distinction between a lecture that may have overrun due to poor time management and one that had suffered the knock-on effect from an earlier instance, and that a class impacted in this way by a knock-on effect would still expect to be able to deliver all planned content and not be unduly penalised from a pre-determined automatic recording cut-off point.
- There was already significant pressure on our teaching estate, and staff and students had expressed frustration with late/overrunning classes, which was felt to be having a negative effect on the student experience.

It was agreed that the official teaching period would remain a standard 50 minute teaching slot, and colleagues would be reminded that it was essential that they kept to time.

It was also agreed to introduce some recording contingency, with an extra five minutes recording to be added to allow for some cushioning, which would mean that recordings would be 55 minutes long. This would be carefully monitored, and if it was not felt to be working well, then the issue could be revisited by the Committee at a later date. For example, if five extra minutes recording was felt to be excessive and beyond what was required, this could be shortened if necessary.

Mrs Lisa Dawson updated the Committee on the assessment and progression tools project, with reference to Student Systems staffing, support and training plans, communication with Schools, and the planned programme of work ahead of the main summer diet and beyond. It was anticipated that a scaled back version of the Assessment and Progression Tools project board would also be re-established, with meeting dates to be scheduled between now and December 2018.

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, 30 November 2017