

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee  
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 31 May 2018 in the Board Room, Chancellor's  
Building, Little France**

## **A G E N D A**

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2018 and exceptional meeting held on 13 April 2018** Enclosed
  2. **Matters Arising**
    - a) **Electronic Business 23-27 April 2018 (remit and membership of CSPC concessions sub-group)**
- For discussion**
3. **Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances Update** Verbal update
  4. **Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance** CSPC 17/18 6 A
  5. **Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group Report** CSPC 17/18 6 B
  6. **Authorised Interruption of Study Task Group Report** CSPC 17/18 6 C
  7. **Timing of Final Assessment for Semester 1 Courses** CSPC 17/18 6 D
  8. **Academic Misconduct – Update Paper and Revised Procedures** CSPC 17/18 6 E
  9. **Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19** CSPC 17/18 6 F
  10. **Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2018/19** CSPC 17/18 6 G
- For information and formal business**
11. **College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences - Assessment Requirements for ANTHUSIA Joint PhD candidates** CLOSED (H)
  12. **Publication of results for Semester 1 Postgraduate Taught courses** CSPC 17/18 6 I
  13. **Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure** CSPC 17/18 6 J
  14. **Programme and Course Handbook Policy- Update** CSPC 17/18 6 K
  15. **Course Organiser: Outline of Role - Update** CSPC 17/18 6 L
  16. **Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Committees** CSPC 17/18 6 M
  17. **Review of the Code of Student Conduct** CSPC 17/18 6 N

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| <b>18. Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2018/19</b> | CSPC 17/18 6 O |
| <b>19. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</b>   | Verbal Update  |
| <b>20. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report</b>   | CSPC 17/18 6 P |
| <b>21. CSPC Meeting Dates 2018/19</b>  | CSPC 17/18 6 Q |
| <b>22. Any Other Business</b>  |                |

Academic Services 24 May 2018

H/02/27/02  
CSPC: 22.03.18

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)  
held on Thursday 22 March 2018 in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

**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
Ms Alexandra Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)
Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President Education Students' Association
Ms Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, Students' Association
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Mrs Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems

**In attendance:**

Dr Gerhard Anders	School of Social and Political Science (Paper C-E only)
Mrs Jackie Barnhart	Service Excellence Programme
Ms Esther Dominy	Vice President Welfare Students' Association
Mr Neil McGillivray	Service Excellence Programme
Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Mr Stephen Warrington	Service Excellence Programme

**Apologies for absence:**

Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development
Dr Juliette MacDonald	Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 25 January 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

**2. Matters Arising**

**a) Concessions arising from industrial action approved by correspondence**

Mr Tom Ward reported on this item. A series of concessions arising from industrial action had been approved by correspondence by the Committee, and by Convener's Action, between the last meeting on 25 January 2018 and this meeting.

These concessions to regulations and related policies referred to the operation of Boards of Examiners, and were designed to mitigate the impact upon students of the strike action, whilst maintaining academic standards. Concessions had therefore been granted in relation to a range of activity, including, for example:

- External examiner review of examination papers;
- coursework extensions;
- quorums at Board of Examiners;
- membership of Boards of Examiners;
- weighting of assessment components;
- progression.

Now that the impact of the industrial action was becoming clearer, further requests for concessions were expected. These would be sent on to Committee members, as required, for approval over the coming weeks. The impact of the University and College Union (UCU) request to External Examiners to resign and to not accept any new posts until the dispute was resolved needed to be thought about carefully, and some more minor aspects were also expected to require concessions.

**b) Acceptable grounds for special circumstances and coursework extensions: harassment/assault (CSPC 17/18 3 E)**

Dr Adam Bunni reported on this item. At the last meeting on 25 January 2018, the Committee had approved amendments to relevant policy and regulation, as proposed in Paper E. This had been subject to a further amendment to list experience of harassment separately to sexual harassment or assault, as relevant grounds for seeking special circumstance/coursework extensions. Since that meeting, further discussion had taken place between Academic Services and the Students' Association about the specific wording on this. It was proposed that "experience of other forms of harassment" should be added to the list of acceptable circumstances for coursework extensions and special circumstances, in addition to "experience of sexual harassment or assault". The Committee approved these changes for insertion in the relevant policy and regulations from 2018/19.

**c) Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group (CSPC 17/18 3 F)**

Dr Adam Bunni updated the Committee on progress made by the Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group. Formal proposals arising from the deliberations of the group, and related consultation, were expected to be brought to the 31 May 2018 meeting for further discussion.

**d) Knowledge Strategy Committee Report/ Bulk email investigation (CSPC 17/18 3 G)**

At the last meeting on 25 January 2018 the Committee had requested further information from Student Systems in relation to the outcome of a bulk email investigation. Mrs Lisa Dawson had provided an update prior to the meeting by email on 21 March 2018; it was further noted that this information was not confidential, and could be shared with other staff as required. In addition, if interested staff parties wished to see the quality

assurance matrix that had been created as a result of the investigation, this could also be shared. Interested parties were invited to contact Mrs Lisa Dawson on [lisa.dawson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.dawson@ed.ac.uk)

### **3. Service Excellence – Student Administration and Support Update (CSPC 17/18 4 A)**

Mr Neil McGillivray gave an update on the student administration and support strand of the Service Excellence Programme. The update that had been provided in the paperwork for the CSPC meeting was now slightly out of date. The Service Excellence Board had met on 9 March 2018, and had now approved business cases for Work and Study Away and the Student Immigration Service, therefore work had now begun on the implementation phase. A new suite of tools had been approved for formal communications from the Service Excellence Programme, and planning was now underway for the next year of the programme.

### **4. Service Excellence – Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions Update (CSPC 17/18 4 B)**

Mr Neil McGillivray introduced this item with reference to robust but constructive feedback that had been received by Service Excellence from CSPC in relation to this item at the last meeting. Since 25 January 2018, Service Excellence had held meetings across all three Colleges, communicating with School colleagues and academic and professional services staff, as well as with the Students' Association. Feedback received had centred around issues of high capacity/volume of special circumstance applications, and the requirement for final decisions regarding outcomes in individual cases to be made by academic staff.

Mr McGillivray highlighted the following specific points that had emerged during recent discussions between Service Excellence and colleagues in Schools and Colleges:

- There appeared to be a common view that academic staff needed to be involved in the discussion and decision-making in relation to special circumstance cases, and a preference in some areas for this to continue to take place in special circumstance committee meetings (as per the current model).
- There was a concern raised by colleagues that a dedicated professional services model could generate different special circumstance outcomes, and a view in some quarters that student cases were more likely to be rejected if considered outside of the academic community (or academic special circumstances meeting).
- Colleagues had expressed concern about the 'centralising' of this responsibility, noting that distance from the School could disadvantage and confuse the student.
- There was a concern that the student voice was not being heard sufficiently in discussions at College and Senate Committee level regarding special circumstances – instead, feedback appeared to focus on what academic colleagues felt worked well in their School, and the type of decisions that they were qualified to make.
- The Service Excellence Team were working to defined Service Excellence Programme Design Principles, whereas arguments and proposals from Schools and Colleges seemed to be framed on the basis of past experience/local culture/expectations.

The major change following the feedback received was that decisions regarding the validity, level of impact and timing of special circumstances would be made by professional services staff in a University-level unit, while decisions about the appropriate outcome in the event that those professional services staff found that special

circumstances had occurred and impacted on assessment, would continue to be made by Boards of Examiners.

Service Excellence colleagues reported that full consultation on these revised proposals would continue to take place from now until the next CSPC meeting on 31 May 2018. The Committee raised concern that it may not be possible to undertake sufficiently broad and deep consultation during this period, particularly given the industrial action.

CSPC highlighted some issues that it would want clarity and reassurance on when considering the policy dimensions of final proposals:

- How the interface between the central unit and Boards and Examiners would operate in practice; CSPC members wished to understand how decisions made centrally regarding validity, timing and impact of circumstances would be transmitted to Boards of Examiners, and how these would inform decisions regarding final outcomes. It was suggested that the determination of outcomes would take place in a “pre-Board” stage, before the full Board of Examiners meeting, but it was understood that there were many different approaches to pre-Board activities in operation within Schools.
- Timelines for implementation of this strand, given the stage that the proposals were at currently, and the significant policy, regulatory and system work that was needed. Service Excellence Programme colleagues noted that they were beginning to reach a view that implementation at the beginning of 2018/19 was not achievable, and with this in mind, the Service Excellence Board had requested that they consider whether delivery in semester 2 of 2018/19 was feasible. CSPC members suggested that they had some serious concerns about introducing such change mid-year – such a major policy shift in the middle of an academic year had not been tackled before, and presented significant policy and regulatory issues. There were significant risks to take account of in relation to the student experience. Staff development would also be an issue, and CSPC members would require reassurance that such a pace of transition was absolutely necessary, given the risks involved.
- Whether the proposed approach would lead to any efficiencies. At the moment, CSPC members were not clear about what the overall gains were. It was clear that there were some gains to be achieved through having an online workflow system, whereby students were directed to a single location in order to submit their special circumstances applications. However, after this, the benefits of the proposals were much less clear. Certainly, evidence pointed to student requests for greater consistency of process and outcome – but the perceived inconsistency at the moment was understood to be to do with the final outcome, as opposed to the decision about the validity of special circumstances. Staff reported that they were overloaded in dealing with the volume of special circumstances applications and would be keen to see that the new process would bring efficiencies and reduce the time allocation. However, it was difficult for members to evaluate what the overall efficiencies would be in the absence of clarity regarding what would happen in the interface between the decision about validity and the outcome at the Board. Members encouraged Service Excellence to ensure that arguments in favour of the new plans, in terms of both consistency and efficiencies, be better articulated across the University.

The Committee also emphasised that, if the proposed change was agreed, it would be essential to test its operation with mock student cases in order to ensure it delivered consistent, fair and appropriate decision-making, before operating it with real student cases.

In summary, it was agreed that the Service Excellence Programme would need to provide clarification over the following:

- what would the central team communicate to Boards of Examiners; what would occur in the interim period after the validity of the special circumstances had been determined, and before the Board of Examiners meeting took place?
- what the timescales for implementation were; CSPC members cautioned very strongly against mid-year rollout;
- what the overall benefits/efficiencies of the proposals were.

#### **5. Service Excellence – Work and Study Away Update (CSPC 17/18 4 C)**

It was agreed that further drafting of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 would be required in the light of discussions that had taken place at the most recent Service Excellence Board meeting on 9 March 2018; at the Board it had been confirmed that the new Work and Study Away Service was not expected to be in operation until 19 January 2019, and that there would be a single Progression Board for Optional Study Abroad operated at University level and supported by the planned new Service. Careful consideration would need to be given to the wording of the relevant Degree Regulations (proposed regulations 27-34 in the Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19) to accommodate these developments. CSPC members gave their approval for the degree regulations to be amended by Academic Services as required, to account for these developments.

It was also anticipated that amendments would be required to the Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19 to account for the developments in this area, and there would also need to be revised Terms of Reference for the College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad. The Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19 were due to be finalised at the 31 May 2018 CSPC meeting, which was the last meeting of the 2017/18 session.

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf)

CSPC members noted that greater clarity was required at the earliest opportunity about the respective responsibilities of Schools and the Work and Study Away Service once the Service was established, particularly with regard to implementation of Learning Agreements, and liaison about academic content and exchange partners.

**ACTION: Mr Tom Ward to discuss relevant text for the Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 further with Mrs Jackie Barnhart. Any amendments required to the degree regulations would be made and sent to University Court on 9 April 2018 for approval alongside the rest of the degree regulations for 2018/19.**

**Mr Ward and Ms Barnhart were also asked to consider implications for the Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19 and the Terms of Reference for College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad.**

#### **6. Authorised Interruption of Study Policy (CSPC 17/18 4 D)**

It was agreed that further consultation on this item would take place with Directors of Teaching and Senior Tutors. The Task Group would bring final proposals to CSPC for formal approval at a future meeting.

**7. CAHSS – Anthusia (CLOSED - E)**

Dr Gerhard Anders introduced this closed paper. It was agreed that further discussion between Mr Tom Ward and Dr Anders would take place after the meeting in relation to any non-standard assessment aspects of this proposal.

**8. Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 (CSPC 17/18 4 F)**

Subject to minor amendments and clarifications from Academic Services (who had not been able to review all aspects of the proposed changes prior to the meeting due to the industrial action), and some adjustment to account for further discussions about the timing of implementation of the Work and Study Away Service, the Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 were agreed as presented.

**9. Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 (CSPC 17/18 4 G)**

Subject to minor amendments and clarifications from Academic Services, the Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2018/19 were agreed as presented.

**10. Higher Degree Regulations 2018/19 (CSPC 17/18 4 H)**

The Higher Degree Regulations for 2018/19 were agreed as presented.

**11. Senate Committee Planning 2018/19 (CSPC 17/18 4 I)**

Mr Tom Ward presented this item, noting that the paper invited Committee members to identify its full set of priorities for 2018/19. The Committee agreed that items listed in the paper were appropriate and necessary, but members queried whether it was all achievable in the timescales outlined, especially given the current focus on supporting outcomes from the Service Excellence Programme. It was also recognised that further priorities could emerge from the consideration of planning round submissions.

It was further agreed to look to set up a short-life task group in 2018/19 to complete some work on undergraduate degree programme transfers (e.g. a single application form, a set of guidance and unified processes, possibly a website). This work would also involve consultation with Student Recruitment and Admissions.

The Students' Association made some comments about student experience in relation to the University's complaints process, which would need to be taken up directly with Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience.

The Committee recognised that, in addition to considering the Support for Study Policy and the Code of Student Conduct, it would be valuable to take a broader look at policy regarding student support arrangements. However, the Committee recognised that it would not be appropriate to undertake a broader review in 2018/19 given that significant related developments (e.g. within Service Excellence) would also be happening during that period.

**12. Progress with Committee Priorities 2017/18 (CSPC 17/18 4 J)**

This item was received by the Committee for information.

**13. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report (CSPC 17/18 4 K)**

This item was received by the Committee for information.

**14. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, 29 March 2018

H/02/27/02  
CSPC: 13.04.18

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Exceptional Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee  
(CSPC) meeting  
held on Friday 13 April 2018 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)
Ms Nicola Crowley	Head of Medical Teaching Organisation Administration (CMM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President Education Students' Association
Ms Claire Thomson	Academic Adviser Advice Place, Students' Association
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Mrs Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems
Ms Anne Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web

**In attendance:**

Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience

**Apologies for absence:**

Dr Juliette MacDonald	Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations

**1. Mitigating the academic impact on students of the industrial action while maintaining academic standards – guidance and concessions (CSPC 17/18 5 A)**

Mr Gavin Douglas and Mr Tom Ward presented this item. Paper A summarised the steps taken to date to mitigate the academic impact on students of the industrial action while maintaining academic standards and the value of the University's awards, including setting out the concessions approved by CSPC to date. The paper included proposed comprehensive guidance for Schools, which replaced the initial guidance issued to date. The guidance was designed to provide Schools and Colleges with an understanding of the options available to address any disruption to date, and any elements that could be ongoing. Some elements of the guidance might not be required in practice, depending on the outcome

of the pending announcement (expected later in the day) from UCU on any further round of planned industrial action. Schools and Colleges were to take all reasonable steps available to them within these guidelines to ensure that their students' ability to learn, progress and graduate had not been compromised by the impact of the industrial action.

The University's Assessment and Degree Regulations for Taught and Research programmes, and all other University academic policies, regulations and guidelines, continued to apply, and the guidance highlighted how this regulatory framework provided Schools (e.g. Boards of Examiners) with the flexibility to manage the disruption from the industrial action. A small number of temporary concessions to the regulations had been proposed which provided a greater degree of flexibility for Schools to manage teaching, learning and assessment during this period.

These temporary concessions took account of the particular ways that the industrial action had affected learning, teaching and assessment at the University of Edinburgh. They were accompanied by a range of mechanisms to ensure that academic standards were not compromised, taking account of Quality Assurance Agency guidelines. Schools were only to activate these concessions in the event that their activities were significantly disrupted as a result of the industrial action and that it was not possible to mitigate this disruption using the existing provisions of the University's regulations. When Schools utilised any of these concessions, they were to accompany them with the mechanisms set out in the guidance to ensure that academic standards were maintained.

CSPC members discussed the draft guidance and the concessions thoroughly. Committee members were satisfied that the proposed approach to dealing with any disruption as a result of the industrial action was appropriate and proportionate and robust. The Committee confirmed that it continued to be content with the concessions that had already been approved, and also approved two additional temporary concessions as presented in the paper. The Committee agreed to the planned arrangements for reflecting on the effectiveness of these arrangements in due course.

It was agreed that the guidance would be finalised subject to some amendment before circulation, including clarification of the following:

- **Summary for students after the Board of Examiners by Schools** - after Boards had met, Schools were to provide students with a summary of how they had taken account of the disruption when determining course and programme outcomes.
- **Interpretation of sufficient evidence of performance against relevant learning outcomes** - Boards were to avoid being unduly rigid in interpreting the stated learning outcomes for a course where it was not in a student's interest to do so.
- **Choosing between options** - where Boards had options regarding the appropriate way to take account of the impact of the disruption when determining course and programme outcomes, they were to choose the course of action which was most likely to be in a student's interests while maintaining academic standards. In exceptional circumstances (for example, where the choice between awarding credit on aggregate for a course affected by industrial action and allowing a student to retake the course was likely to affect a student's degree classification) it may be reasonable for Boards to offer a student the choice. Further guidance would however be required on this.
- **Reweighting unreliable components** – while this could be done in exceptional circumstances, in general it was more appropriate for Schools to disregard unreliable components altogether.

- **Progression status for a postgraduate taught student** – where it was not possible to determine progression to dissertation, Schools should allow students to progress on a provisional basis.
- **Progression status for an undergraduate student** - where a Board was unable to determine the progression status of an undergraduate student as a result of the industrial action, either because insufficient information was available to make a formal decision, or a Board had been unable to meet as scheduled, the Convener of the Board should inform the senior administrator in their College. They would discuss the situation with a formal group constituted by CSPC, which would be authorised to consider the case for any additional concessions required to enable the student to progress.

The Committee agreed that the Convener would finalise the version of the guidance to issue to Schools, taking account of these comments.

It was noted that the constitution of the formal group of CSPC members to consider any further individual concessions arising from industrial action would be approved by correspondence. The Committee noted that, while the group would have responsibility for making these decisions, in practice the Convener also had the power to agree student concessions as required under the Committee's terms of reference.

The Committee agreed that any further modest amendments to the guidance that were necessary as circumstances evolved would be delegated to the academic administration subgroup and to Mr Tom Ward for action.

## **2. Any other business**

There was no further business.

Ailsa Taylor Academic Services 23 April 2018

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance**

**Executive Summary**

*Presentation of a proposed update to the current Shared Academic Timetabling Policy & Guidance, which was last updated in 2013.*

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

*Policy sits within the University's mission to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning and aligns with the Leadership in Learning strategic objective.*

**Action requested**

*CSPC is asked to approve the proposed updated version of the policy.*

*The proposed updates to the policy have been driven by:*

- *Evolution of process and service during the intervening period*
- *The need to reflect institutional change*
- *Additional business change introduced through the Service Excellence Programme*

*Key policy changes to note are:*

- 1) *The inclusion of a clear commitment for the provision of a personalised timetable service to taught student (section 1)*
- 2) *Inclusion of additional Principle of Operation (section 3.3) to confirm the policy for allocating students to course activities*
- 3) *That, in accordance with SEP Timetabling Blueprint, all space used for teaching in centrally managed/supported (section 3.7)*
- 4) *Update to the timetabling planning cycle (section 3.8) that reflects the evolution of service scope and scale, and that recognises valid variations to the standard planning timescale*
- 5) *Room Conflict Resolution (section 3.11) updated to include link to map outlining escalation process*

*The core 'timetable' elements of the policy (e.g. teaching hour, day, Weds pm, work/life balance commitment, etc) remain unchanged, with change focusing on the process and cycle for delivering the timetable.*

*Appendix A contains link to current policy*

*Appendix B details the Service Excellence Programme rationale (from the Target Operating Model Blueprint) for policy change.*

*Appendix C contains full draft of proposed updated policy*

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

*If this version of the policy is approved, it will be updated immediately on the Timetabling Unit policy page, with an accompanying communication to alert Schools, who are primarily impacted by the changes proposed.*

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

*No resource implications other than those being managed by the Service Excellence Programme as part of process change around timetable planning*

**2. Risk assessment**

*No notable risks associated with this paper*

**3. Equality and Diversity**

*EIA has been conducted, with no additional impacts identified*

**4. Freedom of information**

*Paper is open*

### **Key words**

### **Originator of the paper**

*Scott Rosie*

*Head of Timetabling & Examination Services*

*18/05/18*

### **Appendix A – link to current policy**

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/timetabling/staff/timetabling-policy>

## Appendix B – Service Excellence Timetabling Blueprint – policy extract

Policy ref.	Purpose of Policy	Proposed Policy Adjustment	Anticipated Benefits
<p><b>A</b></p>	<p><b>3.2 Governance and Operational Management</b>  <i>– “The Senior Vice-Principal, in conjunction with the Director of Estates , determine the escalation path for matters relating to room conflict resolution arising from the timetabling process that cannot be resolved at a local level, or by the Head of Timetabling &amp; Examination Services”</i></p> <p><b>3.11 Room Conflict Resolution</b></p>	<p>Reflect and reference the recent escalation policy where the highest level of escalation rests with SSG/USG.</p>	<p>Clear rules for escalation, especially in respect to the use of Large Lecture Theatres.</p>
<p><b>A</b></p>	<p><b>3.3 Principles of operation</b></p> <p>Reference to School/locally managed rooms</p> <p><i>P2 – “Room allocation prioritizes the use of either School/locally managed or Centrally managed rooms within the same Timetabling Zone as that requested.”</i></p>	<p>Amend to state all local space used for learning and teaching becomes centrally managed, but in some cases, still School supported in terms of room attributes and technology.</p> <p>P2 should be updated to be explicit about the use of designated School priority space.</p> <p>Additional point could be included to describe how School supported space will be centrally managed through a Service Level Agreement with the School.</p>	<p>Clarity on the definition and use of priority space (including specialist space) and its room allocation.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></p>	<p><b>3.4 Roles and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>“Supporting schools in the operation of the timetabling system”</p> <p>“Ensuring the successful, clash-free, allocation of students to teaching activities for Timetabling Unit managed sub groups (e.g. tutorials, workshops, laboratories)”</p> <p><b>Role descriptions: School Timetabling Coordinators, Teaching Staff, School DoPS, Heads of School, Student</b></p>	<p>This will need updating to be more explicit about the exclusive operation of the timetabling system for data management by the TTU and the support of viewing the timetabling system by Schools.</p> <p>Mention of sub groups should be expanded to incorporate the new model of default random allocation unless a need for manual allocation is identified.</p> <p>The role descriptions outlined will need to be updated in respect to the agreed ways of working outlined in this blueprint.</p>	<p>There will be simplification and consistency of approaches as staff at all levels will understand their roles and responsibilities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></p>	<p><b>3.7 Room Allocation</b></p> <p><i>“All learning and teaching space, including lecture theatres, seminar rooms, labs and any other spaces used for learning and teaching purposes is included in the Shared Academic Timetabling system”</i></p> <p><i>“All users of the system have read-only access to the schedules of other Schools’ space, allowing for availability analysis and approach as needed. Spare capacity in locally-managed specialist spaces is made available to requests from other Schools/Units, as per individual Service Level Agreements drawn up by the Timetabling Unit.”</i></p> <p><i>“Allocation of rooms is driven by the following factors:”</i></p>	<p>This section will need updating to reflect the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All space will be centrally managed though some may be School/locally supported</li> <li>• All general teaching space is also centrally supported (through LST)</li> <li>• Outline process which makes it essential that all learning and teaching space is represented in the Shared Academic Timetabling system, and accurate recording of activity (limiting of block bookings)</li> <li>• State that Schools now have read-only access to all schedules of space, and that spare capacity in locally supported specialist spaces are made by request to the TTU. The TTU will liaise with the School supporting the space to suitability and, if approved, accommodate the request.</li> <li>• Factors which drive allocation of rooms needs to be evaluated to represent the new proposed processes</li> </ul>	<p>Clarity on the definition and use of priority space (including specialist space) and its room allocation. Enforce the need for room representation and detailed activity recording of on the Central Timetabling System. Updates to local access to the system (read-only).</p>

A	<b>3.8 Planning Cycle for Timetabling</b>	This section will need to be more explicit about timescales in relation to College need. Currently this only applies to Schools that conform to the standard teaching semester pattern. After the evaluation of each of the Colleges needs and timescales has been identified in the implementation phase of this project, the planning cycle should be reflective of all university considerations.	The policy will appropriately reference timescales to reflect local agreement and suitability for the whole Institution.
A	<b>3.13 Changing/Cancelling Bookings</b>	Reference to locally managed space needs updating to reflect the change to locally supported TTU managed space.	Clarity on the definition and use of priority space (including specialist space) and its room allocation.
A	<b>3.14 Equality and Diversity</b>	<p>The disability section will need updating in respect to new processes and PEEP responsibilities.</p> <p>The sex section will need updating to state that the standard random allocation process should provide adequate gender balancing, though Schools reserve the right to request manual allocation to ensure this criteria is accommodated for.</p>	There will be clearer advice on how timetabling data is used for determining PEEP accessibility requirements. The policy will clarify its continued commitment to equality and diversity in respect to gender balancing.
A	<b>Student Allocation – Additional Section</b>	<p>An additional section should be added to cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The definition of what constitutes a need for manual allocation</li> <li>• Who is responsible for collating the information for manual exceptions and the process that supports it</li> </ul>	There will be simplification and consistency of approaches that clarifies staff roles in student

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The commitment to ensure comprehensive personalised timetables, and the use of bespoke or other systems in respect to student allocation</li></ul>	allocation and ensures that students receive accurate and comprehensive timetables.
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# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## **Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance**

**Version 4  
May 2018**

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Shared Academic Timetabling Project has developed a timetabling policy as part of the transition to a common shared timetabling solution across the University. The policy has been developed with reference to comparable institutions in addition to current practice across schools and support units.

This document states the proposed timetabling policy that governs the allocation of timetabled learning and teaching activities, and ad-hoc bookings for space that is used for learning and teaching. It covers the aims of the timetabling policy, its governance within the University, and the principles of its operation. The roles and responsibilities of staff and students, with respect to the policy operation, are outlined, as well as the annual timetable of events. The procedures used to allocate spaces to learning and teaching events are stated, along with factors governing the allocation. Performance measures are also presented. In addition, the means of conflict resolution are stated within the policy. In addition to policy, this document also presents guidance on timetable production and maintenance.

The key changes to current/previous practice are:

- Use of a common timetabling solution
- The inclusion of all learning and teaching activities, including those scheduled in School managed rooms
- The inclusion of all rooms, including laboratories, used for learning and teaching in a common room booking system
- The use of a common system for room request/booking for all activities, both recurring and ad-hoc, held in a room used for learning and teaching
- Production of draft timetable information for all learning and teaching activity, including those wholly taught in School managed rooms, is completed during the first quarter of the calendar year
- Visibility of full timetable and room information across The University
- Introduction of a resolution route for timetabling conflicts
- Enabling approved constraints in learning and teaching availability to be considered
- Changes to the Curriculum Framework to introduce a variable lunch hour and removal of the 20 minute afternoon break
- The provision of a personalised timetable service to taught students

## 2 Background

The Shared Academic Timetabling Project introduced a shared system to handle academic timetabling and learning and teaching space booking. The potential benefits of a shared system, some of which may be realised only after a number of years of operation, are identified and prioritised in the White Paper (Hulton, October 2010) and are repeated below:

Benefit 1: Student focused, coherent institutional timetabling which enhances student experience

Benefit 2: Improved management information and tools to support the effective use of University resources

Benefit 3: Improvements to the management of curricula and academic timetables

Benefit 4: More effective provision and use of learning and teaching space

Benefit 5: Greater flexibility in managing staff teaching time

Benefit 6: More effective use of administrative staff resources

Benefit 7: Supporting family-friendly policies

Benefit 8: Improved curriculum planning

Given the clear benefits of adopting a common approach to timetabling it is essential that the University decides upon and agrees a Timetabling Policy. Such policies are increasingly common at institutions that have effectively deployed timetabling solutions including other Russell Group institutions such as: University of Liverpool, Kings College London, University of Leeds and University of Warwick. The policies adopted by these institutions were consulted in the initial production of this document.

### 2.1 Document Construction and Approval

#### 2.1.1 Contributors

The Shared Academic Timetabling Project Board and Project Team

Wider University community:

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)\*

Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC)

Space Strategy Group (formerly Space Management Group)

Learning and Teaching Space Advisory Group (LTSAG)

Estates Committee

Timetabling Unit

School staff with a role in producing/administering timetables

School administrators

Estates Dept

Accommodation Services (and other users of learning and teaching space e.g. IALS for Summer Schools)

Student Disability Service

Information Services and Learning Spaces & Technology

Support Groups and Directorates

\*Approval group

### **2.1.2 Approval**

The policy was initially approved by C&SPC in November 2011, with a subsequent update approved in April 2013

## **2.2 Document Structure**

The policy is defined in section 3, with associated guidance documentation presented in section 4. A glossary of terms used within the policy is presented in section 5.

## 3 Timetabling Policy

### 3.1 Aims

The document defines University policy, procedures and responsibilities in respect of:

- Production of the shared timetable
- Use of space for learning and teaching activities
- Use of learning and teaching space for other activities

The Timetabling Policy covers the scheduling of all learning and teaching activities, including tutorials, labs and other practical sessions, on University programmes of study delivered across the University estate.

The long-term aims of the Timetabling Policy are to:

- Generate student-focused, coherent institutional timetables which enhance student experience
- Improve management information and tools to support the effective use of University resources
- Improve the management of curricula and academic timetables
- Enable more effective provision and use of learning and teaching space
- Create greater flexibility in managing staff teaching time
- Make more effective use of administrative staff resources
- Support the University flexible working policy
- Improve curriculum planning
- Ensure equality of provision in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the general equality duty and the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012

### 3.2 Governance and Operational Management

Timetabling Policy is overseen by the **Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)**. **CSPC** have responsibility for maintaining the policy and addressing feedback on the policy from across the University.

Student Systems & Administration within the University Secretary's Group (USG) has overall responsibility for the day to day management of the Shared Academic Timetabling system.

Timetabling Policy and its implementation is a key aspect of University operations and will be regularly reviewed, initially on an annual basis, by governance groups and committees across the University.

The majority of the learning and teaching spaces are part of the University's estate. Any matters relating to space allocation and utilisation of these spaces at a strategic level are determined by the Senior Vice-Principal and Director of Estates, guided as appropriate by the Space Strategy Group and Estates Committee. The Senior Vice-Principal, in conjunction with the Director of Estates, determine the escalation path for matters relating to room conflict resolution arising from the timetabling process that cannot be resolved at a local/College level, or by the Head of Timetabling & Examination Services.

### **3.3 Principles of operation**

P1 - All learning and teaching activities (e.g. lectures, tutorials, labs, workshops, etc.), excluding centrally arranged examinations, are timetabled within the timetabling system, including activities taking place in centrally or School/locally managed rooms, learning and teaching outside of "normal" teaching times, learning and teaching that forms part of the Degree Regulations and Programme of Study (DRPS) and non DRPS activity.

P2 – Room allocation prioritises the timetabling zone requested across all centrally and locally managed teaching space.

P3 – The allocation of School-owned teaching space will be centrally supported through a Service Level Agreement with the School.

P3 – Out with designated mid-morning and lunch-time breaks, movement between Timetabling Zones (by students and staff) across consecutive teaching slots will be minimised, but may be necessary in exceptional circumstances.

P4 – If booked learning and teaching space is no longer needed, it is cancelled at the earliest opportunity. Charges may be levied for late cancellations or non-use of booked space.

P5 – Except in exceptional circumstances, staff and students should have at least one hour free of learning and teaching commitments between 12:00 and 14:00.

P6 – Student requests for study space (and other ad hoc requests for use of learning and teaching space) are prioritised for a selection of spaces, and supported but subject to restrictions and approval, for other learning and teaching space.

P7 – The setup of all learning and teaching activities (including exams) within Timetabling Systems aim to enable the inclusion of these activities in student and staff personalised timetables.

P8 - TTU will allocate all whole class activities. This process will be carried out as part of a daily allocation exercise in accordance with the TTU Planning cycle. Student Allocation to sub group activities will be conducted in relation to the set out SLAs with individual schools. TTU will use Random allocation as standard. Alternative methods of allocations will need prior approval from the Head of School.

### 3.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Timetabling & Examination Services is the senior manager within Student Systems & Administration responsible for the day to day operation of the Shared Timetabling system. The responsibilities of the Head of Timetabling & Examination Services and the supporting Timetabling Unit include:

- Data management within the shared academic timetabling system
- Liaising with Information Services for software maintenance and upgrade
- Issuing detailed timetabling guidance to Schools
- Supporting schools in the submission of timetable requirements
- Publishing draft and final versions of the shared timetable
- Ensuring the successful, clash-free, allocation of students to all teaching activities, using a standard random and even allocation method, except in circumstances where a manual allocation has been identified and approved
- Advising on resolution of conflicts over room bookings
- Ensuring that all learning and teaching room information and availability (for both Centrally and School/Locally managed space) is accurate and up to date
- Ensuring that maintenance requirements and use for non-learning and teaching events are accurately reflected in room availability
- Reporting to CSPC, TSOG , Space Strategy Group, Estates Committee and other interested parties on the effectiveness of Timetabling Policy and implementation
- Collecting, measuring and reporting accurate data on space utilisation. Offering/seeking guidance on more efficient use of learning and teaching space and predictions of required space provision
- Ensuring flexible timetabling through curriculum-based timetable planning
- Reviewing the timetabling process and outcomes and initiating continuous improvement; which will include a regular review of processes relating to the University's Equality outcomes and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Specific Duties 2012

**School Timetabling Coordinators** are the primary contacts for timetabling within their School responsible for liaising with the Timetabling Unit to confirm timetabling requirements, book centrally managed rooms, and resolve timetable conflicts. The responsibilities of School Timetabling Coordinators include:

- Coordinating timetable design and production across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within their School
- Ensuring that collection, collation and timely recording of information on courses is carried out, including: classes, room requirements and number of students and any constraints on staff availability
- Confirm School student allocation rules to the Timetabling Unit
- Carrying out timetabling tasks as required by the stated deadlines
- Notifying the Timetabling Unit of any changes to the established timetable and room cancellations

- Reporting additions, deletions and modifications in locally-managed learning and teaching room information to the Timetabling Unit

**Teaching staff** within each School have responsibility for fulfilling published timetable commitments and keeping their School Timetabling Coordinators informed of cancellations or other changes. Teaching staff also report any problems with their timetable or learning and teaching rooms they use so that this information can be used to improve the overall operation of timetabling at the University. Teaching staff responsibilities include:

- Providing information for, and reviewing their timetable within designated deadlines
- Fulfilling their published timetable commitments
- Advising their School Timetabling Coordinators of cancellations or other changes
- Reporting any problems with their timetable or the learning and teaching rooms they use

**School DoPS** are responsible for management of resources (e.g. staff, budget, space) within the School. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the School Timetabling Coordinators and support team carries out the timetabling tasks required by the stated deadlines.

**Heads of School** are responsible for academic leadership and overall management and strategy of the School including development of academic and resource plans, promotion of research activity. The responsibilities for Heads of School include:

- Negotiation and agreeing any limitations on staff teaching availability
- Helping to resolve timetabling conflicts impacting on the School
- Heads of School are ultimately responsible for ensuring that disabled students' support requirements are implemented

**Student** responsibilities include:

- Providing details of accessibility requirements as soon as possible. If a student is being supported by the Student Disability Service, these may be communicated via the student's learning profile. The School and the Coordinator of Adjustments have associated responsibilities.
- Reviewing their published learning and taught timetable as soon as possible and alerting their Personal Tutor to review course registrations.
- Adhering to centrally defined procedures for requesting a change to a timetable allocation
- Making appropriate use of any student study spaces bookable through the shared timetabling system

**Accommodation Services (commercial and academic-related booking)** responsibilities include:

- Carrying out their normal duties with relation to events booking and ensuring that the Timetabling Unit is aware of any events booked and kept up to date on any cancellations
- Keeping external customers up to date on any changes/conflicts with their booking

### 3.5 Teaching Times

The standard teaching day is from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. It is recognised that learning and teaching sometimes takes place outside of these hours. For timetabling purposes, 'morning' is defined as any time before 13:00, 'afternoon' is defined as any time between 13:00 and 18:00, and 'evening' is defined as any time after 18:00.

The <u>DAY</u> is divided into 50 minute slots. Within these slots, rooms should be booked for the actual times that they are required (e.g. some may teach for 1.5 hours in a 2 hour slot or for 3 hours in a half-day slot). The existing rule that rooms may not be booked across 11 am and 4 pm except for bookings of at least 3 hours will remain in force.		
Single	Double	Half Day
0900-0950	0900-1050	0900-1300
1000-1050		
1110-1200	1110-1300	
1210-1300*		
1310-1400*		
1410-1500	1410-1600	1410-1800
1510-1600		
1610-1700	1610-1800	
1710-1800		
1830-1920	1830-2020	
1930-2020		

\*variable lunch hour

#### Notes

1. Teaching times indicate when the class is scheduled to begin and NOT five minutes later. (e.g. lectures to start at 0900 **and not** 0905). Students should be in their seats 5 minutes before the advertised time.
2. There is a 20-minute mid-morning break to facilitate movement between Timetabling Zones.
3. Except in exceptional circumstances, staff and students have at least one hour free of learning and teaching commitments between 12:00 and 14:00.

The WEEK is divided into slots each at a given hour of the day and further subdivided into Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday slots for classes requiring two whole-class sessions (WCS). If three WCS are required, the preferred extra day to maximise flexibility is Wednesday (for morning classes) or Friday/Thursday (for afternoon classes).

Single	Double	Triple (a.m.)	More
Mon	Mon/Thur Tue/Fri	Mon/Wed/Thur	Any
Tue		Tues/Wed/Fri	
Wed	Triple (p.m.)		
Thur	Mon/Thur/Fri		
Fri	Tues/Thur/Fri		

#### Notes

1. Only in exceptional circumstances will core lecture or class slots be scheduled on Wednesday afternoon when no alternative can be found. Scheduling such a class at this time must be approved by the relevant College Learning and Teaching Committee. This does not preclude schools from offering classes (e.g. laboratories) on a Wednesday afternoon, provided that alternative times are offered at other points in the week.
2. Classes that are outside of the normal teaching times or for greater duration (for example weekend working) should ensure that there is no more than 4 hours of consecutive learning and teaching without a break.

### 3.6 Teaching Availability

Teaching staff are available for teaching at any time during their contracted teaching day(s) except where restricted by individual agreement with Heads of School in accordance with existing HR guidelines.

Timetabling implementation, through the commitment of staff to the timetabling system can allow the incorporation of constraints to enable staff within specified groups to share teaching-free times, e.g. to enable scheduling of research seminars, and in recognition of the stated flexible working policy.

### 3.7 Room Allocation

The allocation of the University's teaching space is managed in accordance with core principles and specific allocation factors

- All space used for general teaching will be centrally managed and supported
- Specialist space, where appropriate, will be centrally managed in accordance with Service Level Agreement
- Provision and maintenance of specialist space will remain the responsibility of the School
- All users of the system have read-only access to the schedules of other Schools' space, allowing for availability analysis and approach as needed. Spare capacity in locally-managed specialist spaces is made available to

requests from other Schools/Units as per individual Service Level Agreements drawn up by the Timetabling Unit.

The allocation of rooms is driven by the following factors:

Factor	Performance Measure	Priority
School Priority and proximity to School	Allocation/Utilisation of School-priority spaces during Semester-times  Allocation/Utilisation of Centrally managed rooms  Utilisation of rooms within the schools' timetabling zone	Essential
Accessibility	All requirements can be accommodated	Essential
Seating Capacity	% Capacity Allocation	Essential
Essential Equipment	Requested vs Actual	Essential
Layout and Furniture	Requested vs Actual	Essential
Licensing	Licensed activities accommodated in Licensed Rooms	Essential
Travel time	Ensure acceptable travel times between timetabled teaching zones	High
Preferred Equipment	Requests met with required equipment, or mobile alternative	High
Location Preference	Requested vs Actual	Medium

Once the timetable has been set for the year, room bookings are confirmed but the Timetabling Unit retains the right to change room allocations in response to evolving resource constraints: such as changes to course enrolment figures, emergence of significant alternative need, Equality Impact Assessment requirements, or loss of learning and teaching space in the event of an emergency.

### 3.8 Planning Cycle for Timetabling

The planning cycle reflects the need for planning to take place in line with information becoming available from academic planning and our corporate systems.

The table below confirms the business cycle for the majority of teaching that falls within the standard teaching semester pattern. Variations to this cycle will exist where Schools' teaching falls out with the standard teaching pattern

Month	What Happens
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed aspects of the current year's course timetable schedule, but not room allocations, are rolled-forward to enable planning for the following academic year</li> </ul>
November - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Timetabling Coordinators collate the requirements for a draft timetable of their own learning and teaching events, including the requirements for centrally managed rooms</li> <li>The Timetabling Unit offers curriculum planning advice throughout data collation/construction</li> </ul>
April - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centrally managed room requests are submitted to the Timetabling Unit which are then prepared for main room allocation</li> <li>Where applicable, School-managed specialist learning and teaching space is booked via School Gatekeepers upon data creation</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft shared timetable is published based on estimated numbers of students and after associated rooms have been allocated.</li> <li>This version of the timetable is available to view by applicants/incoming students via DRPS and CTB</li> </ul>
July -Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> year course selection available for programmes starting prior to the main September intake, and Postgraduate Enrolment</li> <li>Any required changes to room bookings and staff allocation are investigated and applied</li> <li>The daily student allocation run commences for whole class activities as students feed into the Timetabling system from the EUCLID records system</li> </ul>

Month	What Happens
1 <sup>st</sup> September Onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk of Undergraduate courses and Postgraduate courses are selected during Welcome Week</li> <li>• Student sub-group allocations commence</li> <li>• Any required changes to room bookings and staff allocation are investigated and applied</li> <li>• Changes to class size or course cancellations are monitored to allow space to be released, should it not be required</li> <li>• Rooms for student study become available for student bookings</li> </ul>

Following the creation of the rolled forward timetable for the upcoming academic year, the oldest timetable on the system is archived.

### **3.9 Flexible Learning Week**

Semester 2 is divided into three parts. Teaching blocks 3 and 4 comprise the 11 weeks of standard teaching, and the remaining weeks comprise the exam diet. The Flexible Learning Week, which takes place between Teaching blocks 3 and 4, is booked separately on the Shared Timetabling system according to the following principles:

Priority booking will be given to programmes that have opted out of the Flexible Learning Week, and whose opt-outs have been approved by Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

After opt-out courses have been allocated, all other bookings are considered.

A collection of spaces of different sizes may be blocked-out from an early stage to allow an advance and co-ordinated room allocation process to be conducted as part of the Festival of Creative Learning (in conjunction with colleagues in the Institute for Academic Development).

Booking applications for unique spaces, such as the JCMB Teaching Cluster, are adjudicated by College Deans or their representatives. Once the main co-ordinated allocation process has been run (see above), other bookings are considered on a first come, first served basis.

### **3.10 Course Conflicts**

Conflicts in the timetable due to clashing conflicts in courses are resolved between School Timetabling Coordinators, any academic staff involved in the organisation of courses and the Timetabling Unit. Any timetabling conflict that cannot be resolved is escalated to the Heads of Schools in the first instance.

If required, the Timetabling Unit will suggest potential solutions based on curriculum planning scenarios. Ultimately if the conflict cannot be resolved between Schools and the Timetabling Unit, then the conflict is further escalated to the Head(s) of College.

### **3.11 Room Conflict Resolution**

Where there is a conflict in availability of a centrally managed room this is resolved between the Timetabling Unit and the parties concerned. Irreconcilable conflicts are escalated for resolution to the Head of Timetabling & Examinations in the first instance. Conflicts will subsequently be escalated through College Offices and, if necessary to the designated owner of teaching space (currently Assistant Principal of Research-led Learning)

A detailed escalation path process can be accessed via: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/timetabling/staff/timetabling-policy>

### **3.12 Ad-hoc Bookings**

Non learning and teaching events (such as College and School Committee meetings) and ad-hoc booking requests for learning and teaching spaces can be submitted at any time, but are normally only agreed once the main learning and teaching timetable has been published. A two-stage process runs, with Semester 1 request-status made available at an earlier stage than Semester 2. Timing is decided on an annual basis, allowing for necessary fluctuation in response to annual demands and availability.

During “vacation time” Edinburgh First (including the Festivals Office) has priority for bookings, on a pre-agreed selection of rooms, followed by other users of space in the summer e.g. learning and teaching outside the standard academic year, summer schools, Centre for Open Learning etc.

### **3.13 Changing/Cancelling Bookings**

Late changes to the published timetable are often detrimental to the student experience and should be largely avoided by the construction of a timetable based on timely and accurate data. Following declaration of the annual published timetable, all necessary changes should be managed through the Timetabling Unit. Unavoidable changes are then to be carried out in the Shared Timetabling System and only be made in the following exceptional circumstances: -

- New accessibility requirements become known
- Change in staffing for unavoidable reason (e.g. staff illness)
- Staff double booking
- Student double booking
- Approved change in staff availability
- Actual number of students exceeds room capacity
- Actual number of students is much smaller than expected, hence would fit in a smaller room freeing a larger room for a larger activity which cannot otherwise be accommodated
- Location becomes unavailable

The Timetabling Unit is to be informed at the earliest opportunity if:

- Courses are cancelled
- A room booking is no longer required
- An allocated room is no longer appropriate for the booked event’s requirements
- Learning and teaching cannot proceed in an allocated room as someone else is occupying it (i.e. double booked), there is a lack of required equipment or maintenance is needed.

### 3.14 Equality and Diversity

The construction of learning and ongoing management of teaching timetables is carried out in line with the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan and has been Equality Impact Assessed under the Equality Act:

- **Age:** Timetabling is committed to adopting a proactive approach in helping to meet flexible working policy objectives, in which particular requirements relating to age can be considered. Management of individual cases is carried out by school timetable coordinators.
- **Disability:** The timetabling system will record accessibility requirements including physical access issues and issues relating to hearing and visual impairments against all centrally-managed teaching space [as advised by Estates Department and Learning Spaces Technology] to help ensure the appropriate space allocation to students and staff. The online system(s) must be accessible to disabled users and compatible with assistive hardware and software in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and British Standard BS8878:2010 as far as possible.
- **Religion or belief:** Timetabling will endeavour to accommodate sensitivities relating to religious/belief observance when scheduling classes. This will be achieved through applying automated restrictions and checks as recommended by the University Chaplaincy team and student requests for change.
- **Sex:** Timetabling will enable Schools to manually construct groups of students according to specified characteristics, enabling gender-balancing of group allocation where it is deemed appropriate to do so. Management of individual cases is carried out by school timetable coordinators.
- **Pregnancy & maternity:** Timetabling will make appropriate adjustments in respect to timings and accessibility to ensure this category is covered within the University family leave related policies, and its flexible working policy. Management of individual cases is carried out by school timetable coordinators.

### 3.15 Monitoring and Review

In support of the guiding principles, the following measures must be put in place:

Policy Aims	Measure
End-user satisfaction with the timetabling applications and their ease of use	Feedback mechanisms for staff and students to gauge their satisfaction with the timetabling system
End user satisfaction with quality and function of teaching space	Feedback form inserted within “Bookable Rooms” webpage
Support delivery of high quality learning and teaching	Bespoke allocation sessions during May in advance of Main Allocation Process Monitoring “Requested” vs “Actual” on all building and zone allocations for core learning and teaching activities – to be conducted immediately after main allocation process in June
Learning and teaching takes place in most appropriate accommodation	Same as above
Minimise travel across Timetabling Zones, e.g. between Holyrood and George Square	Study of classes across Timetabling Zones and actual student/staff travel involved in an academic year. Conduct post-allocation analysis to find and rectify broken travel constraint activities Limit cross-campus post MAP allocating to teaching activities longer than 1 hour
Shared repository of timetables, room bookings and room availability	Management information from the system on booking data and Staff survey
Personalised timetables	Level of authenticated access to personal timetables via MyEd Rolling out personalised student and staff timetables
Unified approach to timetabling and room booking	Room booking survey carried out and feedback measured
Optimise utilisation of University estate	Room utilisation survey Booking data analysis Management information to allow planning and what if scenarios. Measure against University-set utilisation benchmarks

Policy Aims	Measure
Aiding in the provision of more efficient, higher quality teaching spaces	Through regular reporting to the University's Space Strategy Group: Information on utilisation, ability to accommodate preferred equipment requests, and timetable planning, to be passed to Estates Department to aid in focusing refurbishment work and as part of Estates Department's annual refurbishment cycle

These measures should be used to drive any improvement initiative to timetabling or changes required to this policy to better reflect the needs of the University.

## 4 Guidance on Timetable Implementation

In order to achieve all of the Benefits identified, the following guidance should be followed by School Timetabling Coordinators and the Timetabling Unit.

### 4.1 Guiding Principles for Effective Timetable Construction

- All learning and teaching activities are to be scheduled in the Shared Timetabling system
- Learning and teaching activities taking place off-site should also be included where:
  - students will benefit from having the activity as part of a personal timetable; and/or
  - recording the activity aids staff in scheduling other activities for clash-free timetabling.
- Any learning and teaching delivery that forms part of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) is scheduled before other non-DRPS requirements.
- Wherever appropriate, timetabling is to match learning and teaching to locally managed rooms or suitable rooms within their priority or requested Timetabling Zones.
- Whole Class Sessions (WCS) where course events are delivered to all students at once are given first priority when allocating learning and teaching space. Additional activities such as tutorials and lab sessions (that are divided into multiple slots to sub-groups of students) are fitted in around WCS.
- As far as possible, the same learning and teaching space is used for recurring classes.
- In order to limit the impact of travel between zones, movement between zones should normally take place during the specific time-slot: 10.50-11.10; and during the lunch period, although travel-time constraints will be monitored against all taught students to help identify flexibility of travel-time throughout the teaching day/week
- When class numbers are known, any booked resource that is no longer required is cancelled as soon as possible.
- By way of ensuring data quality and consistency, normally, all core, course-related timetabled events are carried forward from year to year provided this doesn't restrict efficiency or flexibility in the curriculum.

- Early production of timetable information is strongly encouraged to enable efficient scheduling of courses in different Schools.

## 4.2 Teaching Availability

Schools may decide to establish and incorporate constraints within the system to ensure that wherever possible individual learning and teaching commitments are suitably blocked and not overly dispersed.

The Shared Academic Timetabling system enables all agreed learning and teaching constraints to be recorded with the system by the School Timetabling Coordinators/Timetabling Unit and used to inform timetabling decisions.

## 4.3 Room Allocation

Factor	Description	Priority
Seating Capacity	Learning and teaching rooms are allocated on a 'best fit' basis, with a target seating capacity	Essential
Essential Equipment	Room requests for specialist or essential learning and teaching equipment are allocated to classes requiring that equipment first. Specialist equipment includes lab equipment, IT Networking, specific software etc.	Essential
Locality (Proximity to School)	Rooms managed by the School delivering the learning and teaching are allocated as first preference; then Centrally managed rooms within their zone and then rooms managed by other Schools or outside the School's zone.	Essential
Layout and Furniture	The room layout should match that of the learning and teaching session or be configurable to the requirement of the session.	Essential
Accessibility	Where there is a known disability requirement only appropriate rooms are allocated  Where such information is brought to light late on in the timetabling process changes to the timetable need to be accommodated and existing bookings re-homed	Essential
Licensing	Rooms with specific licensing are only allocated to appropriate event types (e.g. anatomy and research for VAT exempt rooms).	Essential
Continuity	Regular (full-semester or longer) bookings and short fat (e.g. 5 ½ days back to back learning and teaching) take precedence over single or sporadic bookings	Essential

Factor	Description	Priority
Location	Ideally all classes are scheduled in the same Timetabling Zone. Where travel cannot be avoided, the room is to be within a traversable distance of the other classes a student or member of staff is required to attend, given the time constraints for travel between locations	High
Preferred Equipment	Rooms allocated should have the preferred equipment required to allow staff to conduct their teaching.  For example, Wireless Network Access, Audio Visual, White/black Boards, Desktop PCs, lecture capture and clicker response systems.  Where fixed equipment is not available, Schools should liaise with LTSTS regarding possible portable alternatives.	High
Use Type	Priority is given to whole class sessions, then Non WCS Tutorials, Labs and other required activities.	High
Preference	Where a preference has been indicated, and strong justification given, for a specific room, this is booked unless overridden by one of the higher priority factors.	Medium

#### 4.4 Timetable Publication

Timetables are made available on various media and applications to those who need them. The University aims to provide complete, accurate and up-to-date personal timetables, with elements published in advance of the start of the academic year and on course selection. These are maintained and made available through the appropriate University portals.

The Timetabling system will retain 3 years of timetabling information that can be accessed in the normal manner (i.e. the timetable in planning for the upcoming year, the current year's timetable and the previous year's published timetable).

At the end of each planning cycle the oldest year's timetable is archive away from the timetabling system but retained in a format that could be accessed for reporting purposes.

Those who need access to current and upcoming timetables include: -

- Teaching staff
- Students (current and prospective)
- Administrative staff
- Building Managers
- Servitors (so they can open buildings and organise room and AV)
- Premises Managers and other E&B staff for maintenance programming

- Events and conferencing staff in Edinburgh First/Accommodation Services
- EUSA events staff
- Any other user that can request University rooms

Those who need access to previous year's timetable includes:-

- School Timetabling & Gatekeeping staff
- Timetabling Unit staff

Those who need access to archived years' timetable includes:-

- Timetabling Unit staff

## 5 Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Whole class Session (WCS)	A class or learning and teaching event that requires all students to attend.
Class Exam	An examination that is organised within the school and possibly not during the central examination times (i.e. at semester end)
Main diet exam	An examination that is organised centrally and takes place at the end of semester.
Centrally Managed	Room or Learning and Teaching Space that is bookable via the Timetabling Unit
School Managed	Room or Learning and Teaching Space this is bookable via a School/Unit Timetabling Coordinator (or Gatekeeper)
Timetabling Zones	A geographical zone which divides the University Estate into collections of buildings. Zones are defined in such a way that any two buildings, where the travel time between them exceeds 10 minutes, are in different zones.
Sub-group	A course subset of students: e.g. Tutorial, workshop, practical etc.
TSOG	Teaching and Spaces Operations Group
DoPS	Director of Professional Studies
RAP	Room Allocation Process – main annual process of allocating teaching rooms to core academic activities
TTU	Timetabling Unit

## 6 References

Several external references have been consulted in the production of this document, including:

University of Leeds

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/timetable/policy.htm>

University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/timetable/policies/policy/>

University of Warwick

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/centraltimetabling/policy>

Kings College, London

[http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/assets/files/teaching/College\\_Timetable\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/assets/files/teaching/College_Timetable_Policy.pdf)

University of Liverpool

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/orbit/policy/>

Shared Academic Timetabling Project - Policy Analysis Summary

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/106922503/PolicyAnalysis.pdf?version=1>

Shared Academic Timetabling Project – Timetabling White Paper, Nick Hulton, October 2010

[https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/106922512/Timetabling\\_Whitepaper.pdf?version=1](https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/106922512/Timetabling_Whitepaper.pdf?version=1)

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact the Timetabling Unit, extension 509267, [timetabling@ed.ac.uk](mailto:timetabling@ed.ac.uk)

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

## **Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group – Final Report**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper contains the final report and recommendations of the Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group. This paper proposes changes to the University's current practice in relation to resubmission of postgraduate dissertations, Master's programmes without dissertations, and the award of postgraduate Merit and Distinction. The paper also proposes additional guidance relating to the role of the dissertation/research project supervisor.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The recommendations within the Task Group report support the University's objective of Leadership in Learning, particularly with regard to developing flexible study pathways, and equipping students for life after graduation.

### **Action requested**

CSPC are asked to approve the recommendations within the Task Group report. CSPC are asked to note that, should they approve these recommendations, amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations (outlined in Appendix 3) will be required for the coming Academic Year (Academic Year 18/19). CSPC are asked to approve these in conjunction with the proposed recommendations.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services send a New and Updated Policies email to Schools and Colleges in June, which will draw colleagues' attention to all changes in policies for the coming year. Additionally, changes will be made to the Taught Assessment Regulations for the coming Academic Year (2018/19). Academic Services also take part in briefings within each College early in the new session, where they will outline all relevant changes to regulations and policies.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing), risk assessments, and Equality and Diversity considerations are covered in depth within the Task Group report.**
- 2. Freedom of information**

Open

### **Key words**

**Postgraduate Taught programmes, Master's, MSc, Merit, Distinction, progression**

**Originator of the paper**

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Adam Bunni

Academic Services, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

## Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

### Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group

#### Report and Recommendations

## 1. Background

1.1 At its meeting of the 21st September 2017, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) agreed to create this Task Group to consider key issues surrounding the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) provision of the University. This Task Group was remitted to examine -

- how the University handles progression to dissertation stages of PGT programmes;
- whether or not all PGT programmes required dissertation or research project elements;
- issues around resubmission of PGT dissertations; and,
- the role of the dissertation or research project supervisor at PGT level.

1.2 The Task Group met on three occasions (21<sup>st</sup> November 2017, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018).

1.3 Following the second meeting, the Task Group circulated a consultation document, provided as Appendix 1 to this report, to Heads of School, School Postgraduate Directors, College Postgraduate Deans, College Postgraduate Administrators, and Heads of College Academic Administration. This document outlined five proposals relating to how the University handles Postgraduate assessment and progression.

#### Task Group Membership

Professor Anna Meredith, Head of Postgraduate Taught, CMVM (Convener)  
Professor Graeme Reid, Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE  
Dr Richard Jones, Director of Postgraduate Taught Studies, School of Law, CAHSS  
Mr Neil Heatley, Head of Informatics Student Services, CSE  
Ms Katie Urquhart, Administrative Officer (Governance, Learning and Teaching), CAHSS  
Ms Susan Orr, Deputy Manager, Veterinary Teaching Organisation, CMVM  
Ms Sharon Pearson, Administrative Officer, Postgraduate Taught, CMVM  
Ms Bobi Archer, Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association  
Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services  
Mr Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services (Task Group Support)

## **Analysis and Recommendations**

### **A) Masters programmes without a dissertation/research project**

#### **Background**

There is an increasing demand for programmes of this type within the University, particularly within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. The University offers an increasing number of postgraduate taught programmes wholly online. Many students on these

programmes are vocational professionals, who may wish to undertake Master's level study in order to advance their careers, but may not need or want to undertake a research project.

### **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking carried out during the Task Group's work indicated that it was still very much the norm within the Russell Group for Master's to have dissertation or substantial research project elements to them. It is important to note, however, that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the SCQF (Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework) do not stipulate that Master's level work must include a dissertation or substantial research project element. The award of credit at Master's level is based around the attainment of such credit at SCQF level 11. How this credit is subsequently attained (either through taught delivery or by a research project) is not specified. There are a few examples of institutions offering one or more Master's programmes by exception which do not include dissertation or research elements; for example, some of the University of Cambridge's MSt (Master of Studies) degrees are offered on this basis.

### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to respond to the following question:

*Would Schools welcome the opportunity to design new Master's programmes which would not require a dissertation or substantial research project as a matter of course?*

Feelings on whether or not the University should allow new Master's programmes to be designed without a dissertation or substantial research project as a matter of course were split amongst respondents. 50% agreed that this may be beneficial, and 50% disagreed, with strong feeling that the traditional Master's model should remain the standard.

Arguments for the proposed new approach centred on greater flexibility and the ability to respond to changing needs of students undertaking these programmes, as well as the specific aims and outcomes for particular programmes.

Arguments against centred on the fact that undertaking a dissertation was an essential part of higher level training, and developing independent study and research skills were beneficial. Concerns were also raised regarding alignment with SCQF Level 11 descriptors should programmes without dissertation or research elements become more common. It was also mentioned that work at Master's level which included a dissertation or research element helped to assess students' suitability for PhD's, and removing this would be to the detriment of students wishing to pursue PhD's who had not undertaken a traditional Master's. In answering the question surrounding potential risk to the perception of the University's Master's offering, some respondents expressed that this change had the potential to adversely affect the perceived value of the University of Edinburgh Master's.

It is important to note here that the University permitting the formation of new Master's programmes without a dissertation or substantial research project would not change the fact that Master's programmes involving dissertations would remain the norm. In general, those responses which did not support the proposals expressed a view that developing such programmes was not desirable within their area, but did not raise strong objections to the idea that other areas may wish to do so.

### **Recommendation**

**The University should allow the creation of Master's degrees without compulsory substantial dissertation/research project elements, where there is a strong academic**

**rationale to do so. CSPC will approve requests on a case-by-case basis where proposed programmes diverge from the current Master's models in the University's Models for Degree Types policy.**

#### *Rationale*

Allowing the creation of Master's programmes which do not include a substantial research project or dissertation would allow the University greater flexibility and the ability to respond to the changing needs of students. Some areas of the University, particularly in CMVM, believe that there is a strong demand for programmes of this type, particularly among practising professionals. Fully taught programmes may appeal to individuals considering returning to further studies in order to obtain a specific practical qualification to aid career enhancement or advancement, where the need for a substantial research project or dissertation element is not vital to the skills being developed.

Should CSPC approve, it is proposed that CSPC agree individual opt outs on a programme by programme basis for new Master's programmes where these will diverge from the current Master's models in the University's Models for Degree Types policy, and be sympathetic to proposals supported by a strong academic rationale.

**CSPC might wish to consider whether Master's programmes which do not contain a dissertation or research project element should carry a variation of a Master's degree title.**

#### *Risk assessment*

The consultation identified a potential risk to the perception or perceived value of the Master's offerings from the University, should the University move to allow Master's degrees which do not require a dissertation or substantial research projects as a matter of course. This risk is regarded as minimal, not least because such programmes are likely to be confined to specific professional contexts, and can be further managed by CSPC retaining the power to approve programmes which do not reflect the standard models for taught Master's programmes. The vast majority of postgraduate Master's programmes are highly likely to continue to include substantial dissertation or research project components.

No resource, or Equality and Diversity implications have been identified relating to this proposal.

## **B) Resubmission of Masters dissertations/research projects**

### **Background**

At present, the Master's dissertation is the only form of assessment for which failure cannot be addressed in any form (except in special circumstances), since undergraduate programmes permit resits at pre-Honours level, Honours and postgraduate taught programmes allow the award of credit on aggregate, and doctoral degrees allow resubmission in some circumstances.

### **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking carried out during the Task Group's work showed that resubmission of Master's dissertations within Russell Group institutions has become standard practice. The University of Edinburgh is one of two Russell Group institutions, along with Kings College

London, which does not allow resubmission of Master's dissertations or research projects (except in special circumstances).

### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to respond to the following proposal:

*Students being entitled to resubmit dissertations/research projects should they score no more than 10% below the pass mark, within 3 months, whilst being registered as 'Exam Only'. These students would attract no fee for resubmission, and Boards of Examiners would continue to be entitled to offer resubmission to students as a result of Special Circumstances.*

There was widespread support for the proposal to allow resubmission of Master's dissertations under defined criteria.

Arguments in favour of the proposal cited the University being out of line with other Russell Group institutions in this area, and that it would be beneficial to students from less traditional academic backgrounds.

Concerns about the proposal centred on further supervisory demands on staff, extending the supervision and assessment period into the middle of Semester 1 in the subsequent session, and Master's not being comparable to PhD's, hence the facility for resubmission not being necessary.

Among respondents who were in favour, most included the caveat that 'minimal supervision' would need to be very clearly defined in order to manage student expectations.

### **Recommendation**

**Boards of Examiners should offer Masters students one opportunity to submit a revised version of the dissertation or research project. The Task Group recommends the following eligibility rules. CSPC are asked to note that, should they approve this change, amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations (outlined in Appendix 3) will be required for the coming Academic Year. CSPC are asked to approve these in conjunction with this recommendation:**

- Students would have to achieve a minimum mark for the dissertation or research project to be entitled to a resubmission attempt. It is proposed that students gaining a mark of no more than **5% below the pass mark** (i.e. 45% or more) at the first attempt would be entitled to a resubmission attempt.  
*Those students entitled to resubmit would be expected to need only to make minor revisions to their dissertation or research project, rather than undertake substantial further research.*
- Students would be given a three month timeframe as standard in which to resubmit their dissertation or research project following revisions.  
*This should allow ample time for students to attend to minor revisions, even where they are only able to study on a part-time basis;*
- The Board of Examiners would decide whether or not the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a Masters degree; even where they confirm this, the original mark for the dissertation would be retained on the transcript;  
*This avoids relative disadvantage to students who achieve a pass mark at the first attempt, and are therefore not entitled to submit a revised version in order to gain a higher mark.*

- Students would be entitled to minimal supervision. Students would be provided with a statement from the examiners of their dissertation prior to the resubmission period beginning which outlines in which aspects the work was deficient on first submission, and will be offered one meeting with their supervisor to discuss this;  
*Students whose work only requires minor revisions in order to achieve a pass mark are unlikely to require significant additional supervision; this also prevents adding significant additional workload to supervisors.*
- Students would be entitled to library access during this time, but would not be expected to require access to labs etc.;  
*This should be compatible with the fact that only minor revisions are required to the dissertation or research project, rather than additional research.*
- Students who are granted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project would not be expected to attend the University during this time. As a result, the University's obligations as a visa sponsor would not be affected, as students would not need to be physically present during the resubmission period;
- It is proposed that no fee be charged for resubmission;
- Boards of Examiners would continue to be entitled to offer resubmission to students where this was an appropriate response to a Special Circumstances application.

### *Rationale*

At present, Boards of Examiners may only allow resubmission of Master's Dissertations in light of Special Circumstances applications. Increasingly, however, comparator institutions (especially within the Russell Group) have moved to a position of offering resubmission of Master's dissertations as a matter of course based on specified criteria. Currently, the University of Edinburgh is one of only two Russell Group institutions that does not allow resubmission of Master's dissertations except in special circumstances. Significant numbers of External Examiners have suggested in their reports on our postgraduate taught programmes that this is an option which the University should consider.

Moving to a model of allowing resubmission of Master's dissertations where students have failed marginally balances a desire to provide good students with a further opportunity to complete their degree, while avoiding overburdening supervisors with additional workload. Data provided to the Task Group from Student Systems indicated that, in the 2015/16 session, 3,542 students had submitted for an MSc or equivalent PGT level qualification. Of these 3,542 students, only 193 (5.4%) were unsuccessful in achieving their intended award. These numbers amount to one or fewer students failing the dissertation component on most programmes, with the vast majority of programmes reporting 100% pass rates. The proportion of students achieving a marginal fail in the dissertation (i.e. within 5% of the pass mark) will be even smaller than this.

### *Risk assessment*

Should the University decide from 2018/19 to offer students the opportunity to resubmit Master's dissertations or research projects where the student has marginally failed at the first attempt, there is the potential for current or previous taught Master's students to feel aggrieved that they were not offered this opportunity. The practical implications of offering resubmission to students from previous cohorts on request would be prohibitive. There is, therefore, an inevitable "cliff edge" involved in the introduction of such a policy regarding resubmission. However, the stated benefits to future students of adopting this revised approach should mean that this remains both worthwhile and defensible.

### *Resource Implications*

There are resource implications for staff time should CSPC choose to allow the resubmission of Master's dissertations. It is not anticipated that this will be overly burdensome, given that the number of students who meet the criteria for resubmission is likely to be small (as the data above demonstrate), and the fact that these students will be entitled to only one further supervisory meeting. Once resubmitted dissertations have been marked, they can be considered at an existing Board of Examiners meeting following Semester 1 or 2.

There are minor resource implications for Student Systems in supporting resubmission of dissertations or research projects on the student record, but Student Systems have confirmed that these are manageable within existing resources. Academic Services would work with Student Systems to provide guidance to Schools regarding the process of recording resubmission of Master's dissertations/research projects within the student record.

### *Equality and Diversity implications*

The 2017 EDMARC Student report evidenced that BME students and those students who had a disclosed disability were less likely to achieve an exit award at Postgraduate Taught level. Allowing for resubmission of Master's dissertations or research projects has the potential to enable those students who would not previously have achieved an exit award to now achieve one.

The proposals allow a three month period for resubmission following minor revisions, which should be more than sufficient for students with caring or employment commitments. Additionally, the fact that it is proposed that no fee be attracted for resubmission will mean that an individual's financial situation will not act as a barrier.

## **C) The role of the dissertation/research project supervisor**

### **Background**

There are varying expectations across the institution regarding the role of a dissertation or research project supervisor on postgraduate taught programmes. The University from time to time receives appeals from postgraduate taught students relating to perceived failings in dissertation or research project supervision. It would be beneficial for the University to reach a common understanding of the role of the dissertation or research project supervisor, in order to ensure consistent standards in the supervision and assessment of students, and to manage effectively the expectations of students and staff.

### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to comment on the following statement:

*The role of the supervisor in supporting the student in producing a piece of work capable of passing the relevant assessment should not include providing the student with an indication of their likely outcome at assessment.*

Responses to this question were very much dictated by existing local practices. Arguments for this centred around the fact that supervisors were often put in difficult scenarios and were left open to challenges owing to how advice they had offered had been taken or understood by students, and that it was generally safer to avoid indicating whether or not a piece of work was of passing quality.

Arguments against this centred on the belief that a supervisor should be able to warn students that they were in danger of failing, and that instructing supervisors that they could not do this would cause a reluctance to provide effective critical assessment of work, which may be harmful as opposed to beneficial.

### **Recommendation**

**The Task Group recommends that text be added to the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy providing information regarding expected content for inclusion regarding supervision of PGT Master's dissertations and research projects. This content would cover the following key points:**

- the student's responsibility for the academic quality of the dissertation/research project;
- the type of expertise the supervisor will provide;
- the expected volume of contact between the student and their supervisor;
- the volume and nature of feedback the supervisor will provide on drafts of the dissertation/research project;
- whom to contact in the event of problems with supervision.

The proposed text for inclusion in the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy is provided in Appendix 2 to this document. **CSPC is invited to approve the proposed content for inclusion in the Policy for 2018/19.**

### *Rationale*

It is vital that students and staff have a clear and common understanding of the role of the dissertation or research project supervisor on Master's programmes, given the critical role the outcome for this component plays in determining whether or not a Master's degree is awarded. Additionally, it is imperative that supervisors are able to provide effective and useful feedback on student work whilst ensuring that they remain sufficiently impartial. The supervisor/student relationship exists to facilitate and aid students in the formulation of their own personal research. It is equally important that supervisors are able to provide feedback to students which indicates where work does not appear to be being produced to the expected standard at a Master's level, and that students are aware that the academic quality of their work is ultimately their responsibility. The aligning of a base level of information across the University within relevant programme documentation will provide a coherent and clear statement on expectations for both supervisors and students alike.

### *Risk assessment*

There is a risk to the University of appeals, complaints and legal action from students if we do not set clear expectations regarding what they can expect from supervisors. The proposal seeks to mitigate this risk by ensuring that all students have access to the same core pieces of information regarding supervision.

No resource or Equality and Diversity implications have been identified in relation to this proposal.

## **D) Award of Merit and Distinction where students have failed courses**

### **Background**

At present, students are not eligible for the award of Merit and Distinction on postgraduate taught programmes where they have failed one or more courses. The College of Science and Engineering requested that the University consider permitting awards of Merit or Distinction for students with a small volume of failed courses, having received a number of recommendations from External Examiners to this effect.

### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to comment on the following proposal:

*Students may qualify for the award of Master's with Merit or Distinction in spite of receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet the other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction.*

There was widespread support for this proposal.

Those that supported this suggested that it seemed unfair that students who had performed to a Merit or Distinction level (bar one or two courses) suffered as a result. Students who were able to achieve qualifying averages for Merit or Distinction in spite of carrying a failed course should still be eligible for the award of Merit or Distinction.

The small number of respondents that were opposed to this suggested that it seemed to devalue the award of Merit or Distinction, and that this was potentially a reputational risk. These respondents felt that Merit or Distinction recognised consistency of performance.

### **Recommendation**

**The University should allow students to qualify for the award of Master's with Merit or Distinction in spite of receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet any other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction as outlined in programme or course handbooks. CSPC are asked to note that, should they approve this change, amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations (outlined in Appendix 3) will be required for the coming Academic Year. CSPC are asked to approve these in conjunction with this recommendation.**

### *Rationale*

Currently, a student can qualify for the award of a Master's degree in spite of failing up to 40 credits of taught courses, due to the award of credit on aggregate. However, students are not eligible for the award of Merit or Distinction if they fail one or more courses. Increasingly, students at Master's level are being offered the opportunity to undertake more optional courses, and courses from outside their subject area, which supports a more varied learning experience but increases the risk of failure in individual courses. The University should support a culture where students feel able to experiment with intellectually challenging material. Students who are able to achieve qualifying averages for Merit and Distinction in spite of carrying a failed course or courses will have demonstrated consistently high performance, and as such should still qualify for the award of Merit or Distinction.

### *Risk assessment*

A small number of respondents to the consultation suggested that there may be a potential risk to the perception of the value of Masters awarded with Merit and Distinction should the

University move to the model proposed by the Task Group. However, students achieving Merit or Distinction will still be required to provide the same volume of evidence of performance at Merit or Distinction level respectively in order to qualify for an award on this basis. It is therefore felt that the risk to the perception of Merit and Distinction is minimal.

No resource or Equality and Diversity implications have been identified in relation to this proposal.

## **E) Progression and Pass Marks**

### **Background**

Most existing taught Master's programmes at the University include a progression point between the taught and research components of the programme, preventing progression to the dissertation stage of a programme if the taught component has not been passed. However, the traditional model of two semesters of taught courses followed by a dissertation is becoming less dominant within the University, especially with the growth of online Master's programmes. As different models of Postgraduate Taught study arise, including programmes where research is undertaken alongside taught courses, and the potential for entire Master's to be delivered without a dissertation or substantial research project, the progression hurdle becomes less relevant.

All of the University's Postgraduate Taught awards – Certificate, Diploma and Master's – primarily involve study at SCQF level 11. Credit for courses studied at SCQF level 11 is awarded to students attaining a course result of 40% or higher, irrespective of whether the course is being counted towards a Certificate, Diploma or Master's award. However, students are generally required to achieve an overall average of 50% in taught courses in order to progress to the dissertation or research project component, with a minimum of 80 credits gaining marks of 50% or more; students are also required to gain a mark of 50% in the dissertation or research project in order to qualify for the award of a Master's degree. This can create confusion, for example where a student achieves a mark of 40-49% in the dissertation or research project, and is therefore awarded the credit for every component of their programme, but is not eligible for the award of the Master's degree.

### **Benchmarking**

The Task Group examined data from Student Systems regarding the proportion of students who progressed to dissertation or research project elements of Master's degrees, and also the proportion of those who progressed only to fail to qualify for the award of a Master's based on their performance in the dissertation/research project element.

Data received from Student Systems indicated that, in Academic Year 2015/16, of 3,627 full time students, 68 (1.9%) did not progress to the dissertation or research project stage of their programme.

As mentioned previously, in the same Academic Year, the data provided by Student Systems indicated that of those students who were submitting for the Master's award in the 2015/16 session, 3,542 students had submitted for an MSc or equivalent PGT level qualification. Of these 3,542 students, only 193 (5.4%) were unsuccessful in achieving their intended award. These numbers amounted to one or no students failing the dissertation component on most programmes.

### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to comment on the following proposals:

*Removal of the elevated hurdle of 50% for Master's awards (meaning awarding Master's degrees passed on the award of credit as a result of the attainment of a pass mark of 40%), and the removal of the existing progression hurdle following the taught component of most PGT programmes, allowing students to undertake a dissertation if they wished.*

This proposal can be split into two parts, the first being the removal of the elevated hurdle of 50% at Master's level, and the second being the removal of the progression hurdle, whereby students must pass the Taught component of the programme before the Dissertation stage.

When responding to the issue of the elevated 50% hurdle, arguments in favour of removing the elevated hurdle included those who had simply stated that they supported the proposal outlined in the consultation document, which focused on the fact that credit was awarded for Master's level (SCQF level 11) courses based on a mark of 40%.

Arguments against this were that students who were not averaging above 50% were not sufficiently strong students; that reduction in the minimum mark required appeared to pose a greater risk to perceived standards than not having a dissertation; and the idea that a Master's from Edinburgh would be perceived as 'easier' to pass with a pass mark of 40%.

In regards to the removal of the Progression Hurdle, views from respondents tended to be more negative. For those respondents who addressed it specifically, the majority were in favour of maintaining the progression hurdle, as it protected students who were not performing academically from "wasted" effort. It also prevented an increase in workload for staff acting as supervisors in terms of supporting academically weak students. There was also concern that students might persist in the hope of achieving an MSc by completing the dissertation, in spite of their taught course marks making this impossible.

## **Recommendation**

### **Progression**

The responses to the consultation indicated that there is not widespread support among Schools for the removal of the progression hurdle between the taught and research components of Masters programmes. However, there are different models of postgraduate taught study arising which may mean that the progression hurdle becomes less relevant. These models include:

- Programmes in which research is undertaken alongside taught courses;
- "stackable" programmes (often online) where students build up credit over a longer period to work towards a Masters-level qualification;
- Masters programmes without a substantial research component.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that further work should be done to conduct benchmarking and to explore this issue in greater detail, before returning to CSPC for further consideration.**

### **Pass Marks**

The Task Group examined possibilities and related issues around the current pass mark at Master's level, and considered whether or not to recommend that this be altered from the current 50 to 40, and recommend a recalibration of the relevant Common Marking Schemes to reflect this. The threshold for the award of credits would not be lowered, rather the descriptors for what currently constitutes a mark of 50 would now constitute a mark of 40. The responses to the consultation document were split in regards to this proposal, and the

Task Group recognises that the issue of potential recalibration of marking schemes is a complex one which would require further consideration before any concrete recommendation could be made. **The Task Group therefore recommends that further benchmarking in relation to pass marks and marking schemes should be undertaken to explore this issue in more detail, before returning to CSPC for further consideration.**

## **Appendix 1 – Consultation Document circulated to Heads of School, School Postgraduate Directors, College Postgraduate Deans, College Postgraduate Administrators, and Heads of College Academic Administration**

### **Postgraduate Assessment and Progression – Consultation Document**

#### Background

Postgraduate Taught Master's provision within the University has changed dramatically over the past 10-15 years. In Academic Year 2004/05, the University offered around 90 MSc programmes, almost exclusively on campus; in 2017/18, there are around 240 programmes, many of which are delivered online. Major strategic projects within the University, such as Distance at Scale, and the Edinburgh Futures Institute, and changing student demand, have the potential to impact significantly on the University's postgraduate taught offering in the coming years.

Taking account of these developments, Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee remitted a task group to consider the structure of postgraduate taught Master's provision at the University in order to agree its vital and desirable characteristics, and ensure that it is capable of supporting future development of PGT Master's provision. The group's remit included examining:

- whether or not all PGT Master's programmes should continue to be required to include a substantial dissertation or research project;
- progression to dissertation/research project stages of PGT programmes;
- issues around resubmission of Master's dissertations;
- the role of the dissertation or research project supervisor at PGT level;
- criteria relating to the award of Merit and Distinction.

The Task Group is seeking to consult with Schools and Colleges regarding a set of emerging proposals, outlined below.

Staff are asked to respond to proposals outlined in this document by Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

#### Proposals

##### **1. *Master's without dissertation/research project***

It remains the expectation at the University that postgraduate Master's programmes will include a substantial dissertation or research project component (although there are a small number of programmes operating without this, by exception). There is significant interest in developing different models of Master's delivery, particularly with regard to online programmes.

- Would Schools welcome the opportunity to design new Master's programmes which would not require a dissertation or substantial research project as a matter of course?
- Would this pose any risks to the perception of the University's Master's offering?

## **2. Removal of the requirement to pass the taught component with an average mark of 50% in order to progress to the dissertation/research project**

### Rationale

- All of the University's postgraduate taught awards- Certificate, Diploma, and Master's- primarily involve study at SCQF level 11;
- Credit for courses studied at SCQF level 11 is awarded to students attaining a course result of 40% or higher, irrespective of whether the course is being counted towards a Certificate, Diploma, or Master's award;
- The award of credit to students indicates that the University has determined that they have demonstrated the required level of competence;
- On this basis, setting an "elevated hurdle" by requiring an average of 50% in taught courses, and in the dissertation/research project component is difficult to justify;
- Where a student has qualified for the award of a Diploma, there are arguably no strong grounds for preventing them from attempting to complete a dissertation or research project;
- Even those students who have not qualified for the award of the Diploma following the taught component may benefit from undertaking a dissertation in order to qualify for an award.

We are keen to gather views from Schools regarding the following proposals:

- The removal of the "elevated hurdle" of 50% for Master's awards; this would mean awarding Master's degrees based on the award of credit as a result of the attainment of a pass mark of 40%;
- The removal of the existing progression hurdle following the taught component on most PGT programmes, allowing all students to undertake a dissertation, should they wish to do so.

## **3. Resubmission of Master's dissertations or research projects under defined criteria**

### Rationale

- At Undergraduate level, students can be awarded credit on aggregate where dissertations are failed. At Postgraduate Research level, students have the opportunity to resubmit theses where they have minor deficiencies. No such opportunity is routinely afforded to Postgraduate Taught students.
- Currently, the University is one of only two Russell Group institutions that does not allow for resubmission of Master's Dissertations or research projects.
- Only a very small number of students each year (around 5%) currently fail the dissertation or research project element of a Master's programme.
- The Task Group suggests that resubmission would only be allowed in instances where the Dissertation or research project only required revisions, as opposed to

substantial further research. Students would also need to meet a minimum threshold on the first submission attempt in order to qualify for resubmission.

We are keen to gather views from Schools regarding the following proposals:

- Students a mark of no more than 10% below the pass mark for the dissertation or research project would be entitled to resubmit.
- Students would be given a maximum of three months in which to resubmit their dissertation or research project following revisions. The assumption is that students would be studying during this period on a part time basis. Students would be entitled to minimal supervision and library access during this time.
- Students who are granted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project would be registered as Exam Only students on EUCLID. As a result, the University's obligations as a visa sponsor would not be affected, as students would not need to be physically present during the resubmission period.
- It is proposed that no fee be charged for resubmission.
- Boards of Examiners would continue to be entitled to offer resubmission to students where this was an appropriate response to a special circumstances application.

#### **4. *The role of the dissertation/research project supervisor***

Students can reasonably interpret feedback from their supervisor as an indicator of likely performance in assessment of the Dissertation/Research project, especially where the supervisor will be responsible for marking the dissertation/research project. This can lead to challenge where the student subsequently receives a mark which they feel was not reflected in the feedback they received.

- Do colleagues agree that the role of the supervisor in supporting the student in producing a piece of work capable of passing the relevant assessment ***should not*** include providing the student with an indication of their likely outcome at assessment?

#### **5. *Merit and Distinction- students carrying failed courses***

- Currently, a student can qualify for the award of a Master's degree in spite of failing up to 40 credits of taught courses, due to the award of credit on aggregate.
- However, students are not eligible for the award of Merit or Distinction if they fail one or more courses. This restriction appears unnecessary to the task group, and is not consistent with the University's approach to undergraduate degree classification.
- The University wishes to create a culture where students feel able to experiment with intellectually challenging material.

We are keen to gather views from Schools regarding the following proposal:

- Students may qualify for the award of Master's with Merit or Distinction in spite of receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet the other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction.

Responses would be appreciated via the following link -

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=sAafLmkWiUWHiRCgaTTcYSxDTY-Z8achGp84nbHtC20JUM0dHOEtMSFRYUjA2QzJGVzUySk5MUFdXMS4u> by Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**Appendix 2 – Suggested text for inclusion in Programme and Course Handbooks Policy**

Core content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<p><b>Dissertation or research project supervision</b></p>	<p><b>Standard text:</b>            “The dissertation/research project is an independent piece of work. You will be allocated a supervisor, who will provide you with advice and guidance in relation to the dissertation/research project, but you should remember that the sole responsibility for the academic quality of your dissertation/research project lies with you. You should research and develop your own ideas, and discuss your proposed approaches with your supervisor. Feedback you receive from your supervisor is intended as guidance, and must not be interpreted as an indication that your work will receive a particular final mark.</p> <p>You may be allocated a supervisor whose area of expertise is not a precise match for your chosen area of research, but who has the required expertise to supervise a dissertation/research project in this area. All supervisors are experienced and knowledgeable regarding academic writing.”</p> <p>Provide information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of meetings students can expect with their supervisor;</li> <li>• Expectations regarding email contact with the supervisor;</li> <li>• How many draft chapters the supervisor will review and comment upon;</li> <li>• Whom students should contact if they experience problems with their supervision.</li> </ul>	

## **Appendix 3 – Taught Assessment Regulation changes**

### **i) Resubmission of Master’s dissertations/research projects**

Should CSPC approve the proposal to allow resubmission of Master’s dissertations or research projects, amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations will be required. The proposal would be to amend Taught Assessment Regulation 58 (Postgraduate Dissertations), which currently states –

#### *Regulation 58 Postgraduate dissertations*

Resubmissions of revised dissertations are not permitted for postgraduate masters programmes unless a student’s performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control.

#### *Application of the regulation*

58.1 In exceptional circumstances, the University’s Special Circumstance Policy allows the Board of Examiners to apply to the College for permission to allow a student to resubmit a revised dissertation.

This regulation can be amended to incorporate the opportunity to resubmit Master’s dissertations in the following way -

### **Proposed regulation**

#### *Regulation 58 Postgraduate dissertations*

Students are entitled to one resubmission of the dissertation or research project for postgraduate Masters programmes where the student has achieved a mark of no more than 5% below the Masters level pass mark at the first attempt.

Boards of Examiners may also permit resubmission of the dissertation or research project where a student’s performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control.

#### *Application of the regulation*

58.1 Borderline rules (within two percent of the resubmission boundary) apply. This does not affect borderline consideration of the student for the award of a Masters degree if they are eligible for such consideration, if this is to the student’s benefit.

58.2 A student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project will be provided with a statement which outlines the deficiencies in their original submission, and will be entitled to one further supervisory meeting before resubmission.

58.3 The student will be advised of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their result. Extension requests and Special Circumstances submissions will be handled in line with provisions outlined within the Taught Assessment Regulations and the Special Circumstances Policy.

58.4 Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, they will be considered for a relevant exit award.

58.5 If the Board of Examiners agree that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at Masters level, the Board will recommend the award of the Masters degree. The original mark awarded for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt is retained on the transcript.

58.6 Students offered a null sit for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt and the opportunity to resubmit due to Special Circumstances may be permitted one further resubmission under this regulation.

## **ii) Award of Merit and Distinction**

Should CSPC approve the award of Merit or Distinction in spite of a student receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet any other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction as outlined in programme or course handbooks, an amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations which currently dictate the award of Postgraduate Merit or Postgraduate Distinction would be required.

Currently, Taught Assessment Regulation 59 states –

### *Taught Assessment Regulation 59 Award of Postgraduate Merit*

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with merit. To achieve a merit, a student must be awarded at least 60% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and must pass all other courses with an average of at least 60%. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for merits.

### *Application of the regulation*

59.1 Merit may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are a specifically named exit qualification.

59.2 A merit may not be awarded to a student leaving with a general postgraduate certificate or diploma or for any reason due to academic shortfalls.

59.3 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of dissertations, merit can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertation.

59.4 For degrees which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of merit will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.

59.5 For MFA, the award of merit relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).

59.6 Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.

59.7 The average for the courses is calculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average. All courses must be passed at 40% or above for the award of merit.

59.8 The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/studentadministration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/studentadministration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

## **Proposed Regulation**

### *Taught Assessment Regulation 59 Award of Postgraduate Merit*

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with merit, to achieve a merit, a student must be awarded at least 60% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and *must achieve an average of 60% in the remaining elements*. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for merits.

#### *Application of the Regulation*

59.1 Merit may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are a specifically named exit qualification.

59.2 A merit may not be awarded to a student leaving with a general postgraduate certificate or diploma or for any reason due to academic shortfalls.

59.3 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of dissertations, merit can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertation.

59.4 For degrees which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of merit will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.

59.5 For MFA, the award of merit relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).

59.6 Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.

59.7 The average for the courses is calculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average.

59.8 The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/studentadministration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/studentadministration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

Similar wording changes would be made to Taught Assessment Regulation 60 (Award of postgraduate distinction) to clarify that an average of 70% in the dissertation and 70% in the remaining elements would be required for the award of Distinction, whilst removing references to the need for students to have passed all courses, should CSPC approve these changes.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Authorised Interruption of Study Task Group Report**

**Executive Summary**

This paper provides an overview of the Authorised Interruption of Study Task Group's work and proposes a draft policy for approval.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This paper aligns with the University strategic objective of leadership in learning through fostering diversity and inclusion.

**Action requested**

For discussion and approval – Committee members are invited to discuss and provide their views on the key points outlined in the paper and are asked to approve the draft policy, for introduction at the beginning of the 2018/19 session.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

An implementation and communication plan is outlined within the paper.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**Resource implications (including staffing)/Risk Assessment/Equality and Diversity**

These have been considered and are addressed within the paper.

**Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words**

Authorised Interruption of Study, Concession

**Originator of the paper**

*Ms Roshni Hume, Academic Services 16 May 2018*

## **Authorised Interruption of Study Task Group Report**

### **Background**

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) established a task group in response to a recommendation, resulting from the Review of Support for Disabled Students to develop a University-wide policy for Authorised Interruption of Study.

The group is seeking to address the following issues:

- lack of information at University-level regarding acceptable grounds for requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study;
- lack of clarity regarding the status and rights of students who are interrupted;
- lack of guidance or information for staff and students regarding the reintegration of interrupted students.

The existing regulations relating to authorised interruption of study in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations are provided in Appendix 2.

### **Membership and remit of Task Group**

<b>Member</b>	<b>College/Department</b>
Dr Paul Norris (Convener)	CAHSS
Dr Chris Mowatt	CSE
Ms Julia Ferguson	CSE
Dr Daniel Hammond	CAHSS
Mrs Joan Kemp	CAHSS
Dr Paddy Hadoke	CMVM
Ms Nicola Crowley	CMVM
Ms Claire Thompson	Students' Association
Ms Sheila Williams	Student Disability Service
Dr Adam Bunni	Academic Services
Ms Roshni Hume (Secretary)	Academic Services

The remit of the group was to develop a University-wide policy on authorised interruption of studies covering taught and research students, including the following:

- A clear definition of Authorised Interruption of Study
- Acceptable grounds for requesting an interruption
- Application process
- Consideration and approval process
- Status of students who are interrupted
- Categories for recording interruptions in the student record
- Return to study process

The task group met on two occasions in November 2017 and December 2017 and conducted a consultation with stakeholders regarding a draft policy.

### *Revisions to remit*

The Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions (SCEC) project within the Service Excellence Programme has recently advised that it will be commencing work on the process elements of

considering applications for Authorised Interruption of Study during the early part of the 2018/19 session. The Task Group have therefore agreed to refer those elements of its remit relating to process (application process; consideration and approval process; elements of the return to study process; categories for recording interruptions in the student record) for consideration by the SCEC project. However, the Task Group remains keen to introduce a policy on Authorised Interruption of Studies for the 2018/19 session, in order to provide a stable definition and framework for decision-making regarding requests for interruption. This would provide a solid basis on which to add the elements of process which the SCEC project would consider in due course.

### **Consultation**

A consultation document and draft policy were sent to Directors of Teaching, Senior Tutors and College Heads of Academic Administration for comment in April 2018.

The following questions were specifically asked:

1. Does your School support the general principle that the University will approve requests for interruption of study “where this will assist them in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies, or support their career aspirations”?
2. Do you have any comments about the proposal to handle requests for interruption of study from taught students at School (rather than College) level?
3. General Comments on the proposed policy.

### **Key Points**

The proposed policy (Appendix 1) was redrafted in light of the plans of the Service Excellence Programme and the comments received from respondents to the consultation. The key points from the revised policy are as follows:

1. *Authorised interruptions of study will be approved where the request supports the successful completion of a student’s programme, or supports a student’s career aspirations.*

The task group proposed a more permissive approach to offering interruptions, with the presumption that they would be offered where they would support successful completion of studies, or support a student’s career aspirations. Consultation responses were broadly supportive of this approach. It is felt that this should not lead to a dramatic increase in the volume of students taking an interruption of studies; the financial and other consequences for students of prolonging their studies mean that it is not expected that the decision to request an interruption would be one taken casually by any student. The proposed policy further states that requests will not be approved where they are considered to pose too great a risk to successful completion of the student’s programme.

2. *Students will be expected to have a proposed return to study plan agreed with their Personal Tutor, Programme Director or Supervisor before they begin a period of Authorised Interruption of Study.*

This is to ensure that the student has considered the implications of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study and that they are aware of what to expect upon their return. It is proposed that students discuss their return to study plan with their Personal Tutor, Programme Director or Supervisor and provide this information as part of the application form which will be considered at the decision making stage.

- 3. Students may be asked to provide evidence to determine whether an Authorised Interruption of Study will be approved.*

Although it is likely that evidence will be required to support requests in most cases, the more permissive approach to offering interruptions may mean that this is not necessarily an absolute requirement in every case. For example, where a student requires time away to care for a relative who is unwell, the University may not expect to see medical documentation relating to the student's relative.

Consultation responses were generally supportive of this approach, however, some concerns were raised with regards to the level of inconsistency which may arise if Colleges and Schools are asked to determine whether or not evidence is required in support of an application. The task group believes that the decision making process requires a degree of academic judgement to assess whether or not an Authorised Interruption of Study would 'assist a student in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies, or support their career aspirations'. The individual decision makers with the Colleges and Schools would be best placed to assess individual cases and decide whether or not evidence is required to assist with the decision making process.

- 4. The policy provides clarity that students who are on an interruption of study are entitled to access support services, libraries etc.*

Providing interrupted students with clarity regarding their status was a key priority for the Task Group. Allowing students access to support services during a period of interruption should support their return to study, and is consistent with the position that interrupted students- although they are not actively studying- remain students of the University. Representatives of frontline support services (e.g. Counselling, Disability) have confirmed that the provision of support to interrupted students is sustainable with current resources. At present, most of the University's support services continue to provide support to students who are on an interruption, and interrupted students' University card access is not restricted. The majority of respondents agreed that this was of significant benefit to students who may require on-going support whilst interrupted, and clarification in relation to the status of interrupted students was welcomed. The policy also clarifies that students are subject to the Student Code of Conduct whilst interrupted.

- 5. Students are able to request an extension to their period of interruption if they are unable to return to their studies at the originally authorised date.*

This is consistent with existing practice. The draft policy makes clear that these requests will be considered in line with the normal approach to handling requests for interruption. It is to be expected, however, that requests for extended periods of interruption may raise more serious questions regarding their compatibility with a student successfully completing their studies subsequently.

- 6. Schools are expected to make contact with students prior to their return to discuss and implement any support required upon return.*

The University has a duty of care towards students who are interrupted and the task group agreed that Schools should contact students ahead of their return to study to offer pastoral support and to help organise any additional support e.g. counselling sessions or disability provision which may be

required upon the student's return. Consultation responses were supportive of this proposal and it is understood that this is currently common practice across the University.

7. *Students may also be asked to provide evidence of fitness to return where a student has taken an interruption due to ill health.*

The task group sought advice from Legal Services in relation to whether the University would be under any obligation to request evidence in such circumstances. Whilst the University does not have a general duty to require evidence that a student is fit to return to their studies, it is beneficial for Colleges and Schools to allow themselves the discretion to request evidence based on the facts of each individual case. Legal Services advised Academic Services that it is viewed as good practice to request medical evidence to prove that a student is fit to return to study if they have interrupted on medical grounds. This is based on the principle that the University has a duty of care towards all staff and students. Therefore, the task group felt it was necessary to allow Colleges and Schools to assess cases on an individual basis and to decide whether or not it would be appropriate to request evidence. Some concerns were raised in consultation responses in relation to the potential level of inconsistency in the treatment of students which may occur as a result of allowing Schools and Colleges to decide whether or not evidence would be required in certain cases.

### **Summary of progress against remit items**

The working group was able to successfully embed the following remit items within the draft policy:

- A clear definition of Authorised Interruption of Study

The policy clarifies that students who are temporarily unable to engage with their studies may apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, and that during a period of interruption, students do not engage with their studies.

- Acceptable grounds for requesting an interruption

The policy provides examples of what would be deemed as appropriate grounds for requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study, but, in keeping with the permissive approach proposed, does not prescribe that applications must be based on one of these grounds.

- Status of students who are interrupted

The policy clarifies that interrupted students hold the status of matriculated students and will, despite not being able to undertake any academic work, be able to access support services.

- Return to study process

Based on feedback and varying practices across the University, it was agreed that Schools and Colleges would be best placed to decide on a return to study process for interrupted students.

It is, however, expected that all interrupted students will be contacted prior to their return by their Personal Tutor, Programme Director, Supervisor, or a member of the Student Support Team to ensure that adequate support is in place upon the student's return.

The following items have been remitted to the Service Excellence programme for consideration as part of the Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions project:

- Application process

- Consideration and approval process;
- Categories for recording interruptions in the student record.

### **Risk assessment**

It is worthy of note that if a student completes the first year of their programme and subsequently takes an Authorised Interruption of Study for a full year, they will be treated as non-continuing students for the purposes of the Higher Education Statistics Agency data. Therefore, any increase in the number of Authorised Interruptions of Study taken by students between their first and second year of study could result in poorer statistics in terms of non-continuation. Data relating to non-continuation is one of the metrics used to assess universities within the Teaching Excellence Framework; although the University has not entered the Teaching Excellence Framework at this stage, it may choose to do so in the future. However, there are currently no grounds to suggest that the implementation of this policy would result in an increase in the number of students interrupting, as discussed above.

### **Resource Implications**

The proposed policy does not carry any significant resource implications as it does not prescribe any change in process.

### **Equality and Diversity**

For some students, medical or other circumstances mean that taking time away from studies in the form of an interruption better supports successful completion of their studies than continuing on programme. The principle that the University will approve requests for interruption of study "where this will assist them in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies or support their career aspirations" should provide reassurance and contribute to the wellbeing of students in the event that they need to apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, particularly if this is for health reasons. This should also provide benefits to those students who are more likely to need to take an interruption of studies due to caring responsibilities, or financial issues, which can often be connected with familial circumstances.

### **Proposed Implementation Plan**

If approved, it is proposed that this policy comes into effect in September 2018. Academic Services will be responsible for communicating the policy to Colleges and Schools via College briefing sessions on new policies, the Senior Tutor Network Forum and in a 'new policies' e-mail which will be sent ahead of the next academic year. This will be accompanied by central web-guidance for staff and students. Academic Services will also be responsible for maintaining the policy and providing advice and guidance, if required.

It is envisaged that Schools will work with Colleges to implement the policy locally and inform students of the relevant processes and whom they should contact to request an Authorised Interruption of Study. Academic Services will provide Schools and Colleges with a template application form for use by students.

### **GDPR Compliance**

Academic Services is producing a privacy notice covering Authorised Interruption of Study including special categories of personal data. The template application form which will be provided to Schools and Colleges will refer students to the privacy notice and explain how the information will be used.

**Requested action from CSPC**

- CSPC is asked to approve the draft policy, for introduction at the beginning of the 2018/19 session.
- CSPC is asked to approve the removal of the following guidance document which will, if approved, be superseded by this policy:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgrinterruption.pdf>



# Authorised Interruption of Study

## Purpose of Policy

The policy seeks to provide a consistent framework for consideration of requests from students to interrupt their studies for a period.

## Overview

The policy provides a definition of Authorised Interruption of Study, and explains where authority rests for making decisions regarding students' requests for interruption. It also provides information on the status of students whilst they are interrupted and the return to study process.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy is relevant to all undergraduate and postgraduate students requesting or taking an Authorised Interruption of Study. The policy also applies to staff who are involved in supporting, considering and approving requests for students wishing to interrupt their study.

## Contact Officer

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## Document control

Dates	Approved: DD.MM.YY	Starts: DD.MM.YY	Equality impact assessment: DD.MM.YY	Amendments: DD.MM.YY	Next Review: YYYY/YYYY
Approving authority	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)				
Consultation undertaken	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations: <a href="http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/">http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/</a> Laigh Year Regulations: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf">https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf</a>				
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement				
Policies superseded by this policy	Authorised Interruption of Study or Extension of Study – Postgraduate Research				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 651 4490.				
Keywords	Authorised Interruption of Study				



# Authorised Interruption of Study

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to supporting students who require time away from their studies, where this will assist them in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies, or support their career aspirations.

## 2. Definition of Authorised Interruption of Study

2.1 Where a student is temporarily unable to engage with their studies, they may apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study. Common reasons for authorised interruption include, but are not limited to:

- Health reasons (mental or physical health problems)
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Family Leave
- Extra-curricular pursuits e.g. elite sport, art/music related opportunities
- Employment Opportunities/Internships
- Financial circumstances
- Personal reasons
- Military Service

2.2 During a period of interruption, students do not undertake studies at the University.

2.3 Any one period of interruption of study will not exceed 12 months, unless authorised by the College due to exceptional circumstances. The total period of Authorised Interruption of Study permitted for an individual student is the same for full-time and part-time students and will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study for the relevant programme (for example, a maximum of four years' Authorised Interruption of Study for a four year undergraduate Honours degree).

2.4 Students should note that there are separate regulations relating to students taking up positions as sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union, which allow them to matriculate as students of the University without having to fulfil the normal academic requirements of their programme of study. The relevant regulations are available at:

[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh\\_year\\_regulations.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf)

## 3. Initial Considerations

3.1 Students should be aware that taking an Authorised Interruption of Study may have financial and visa implications.

3.2 The Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place provides independent advice to students regarding requests for Authorised Interruption of Study and the potential implications. Further information is available at:

[https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support\\_and\\_advice/the\\_advice\\_place/](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/)



## Authorised Interruption of Study

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- 3.3 The International Student Advisory Service provides advice and guidance to students in relation to any visa implications which may arise as a consequence of taking an authorised interruption of study. Further information is available at:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/student-advisory-service>
- 3.4 The University's Scholarships and Student Funding department provides advice and information to students in relation to any finance and funding issues which may arise as a result of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study. Further information is available at:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding>
- 3.5 Postgraduate Research students funded by a Research Council should contact their School to clarify and confirm the implications of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study upon their funding and to ensure that they are abiding by the terms and conditions of the relevant funding body. Students funded by any other body should contact their funder directly for advice and information.

### 4. Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study

- 4.1 Students are expected to liaise with their Personal Tutor, Programme Director or Supervisor about taking an Authorised Interruption of Study and to discuss a proposed return to study plan before completing an application for an Authorised Interruption of Study.
- 4.2 In order to apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, a student should complete the relevant form and submit this to their School. Schools will ensure that they publish details about whom the form should be submitted to.

### 5. Evidence

- 5.1 Students may be required to submit evidence to support applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. The relevant College or School will advise students where this is the case.

### 6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 All requests will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Privacy Notice, and information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate reason for being informed.

### 7. Consideration and Approval

The relevant Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will determine whether or not an Authorised Interruption of Study will be granted, and will inform the student of their decision. Colleges may routinely delegated consideration of applications for Authorised Interruption of Study to Schools where appropriate.

### 8. Student Status/Rights and Responsibilities



## Authorised Interruption of Study

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- 8.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study continue to be regarded as current students of the University during the period of interruption. During an interruption, students have the right to access relevant campus facilities, e-mail and student support services including the Students' Association, Library Services, Chaplaincy, Student Counselling and Student Disability Services.
- 8.2 Schools will ensure that a point of contact is available to advise a student regarding their return to study whilst they are interrupted.
- 8.3 Students remain subject to the Code of Student Conduct during an Authorised Interruption of Study.

### 9. Return to Study

- 9.1 Students wishing to return to their studies earlier than originally planned should submit a request via the relevant School or College Office for consideration. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.2 The relevant School will make contact with an interrupted student before their scheduled return to study in order to confirm the student's programme of study and to facilitate any support which may be required upon return.
- 9.3 The University has a responsibility to ensure that students are able to engage fully with their studies following a period of interruption. The relevant School or College may ask students to provide evidence of their ability to return to study, e.g. students who are enrolled on professional degree programmes, or those who are required to work within a high risk environment, handling dangerous materials or substances. The relevant School or College will be able to advise on whether evidence will be required in a particular case.
- 9.4 Students who are unable to return to study after a period of authorised interruption may request an additional Authorised Interruption of Study, provided that this does not exceed the maximum allowable total period of interruption (see section 2.3). Requests will be considered in line with normal approval processes.

### 10. Changes to Programme

- 10.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study should be aware that courses and programmes may be subject to change while they are interrupted and that they may return to an altered programme structure.
- 10.2 In interrupting their studies students consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while they are interrupted.
- 10.3 Students should be aware that in exceptional circumstances if their programme is to be discontinued, it may not be possible to grant an Authorised Interruption of Study.



# Authorised Interruption of Study

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## 11. Further Guidance

11.1 Further guidance on Authorised Interruption of Study and the relevant application form is available on the following webpage:

DRAFT

## **Authorised Interruption of Study Task Group Report - Appendix 2**

*Existing regulations relating to Authorised Interruption of Study in the University Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations are as follows:*

### **Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/17-18/regulations/UGDRPS17-18.pdf>):**

19. A student may apply for an authorised interruption of study and it may be authorised by the Head of College if there is good reason for approving the interruption. Students must provide evidence to support their applications. Interruptions of study will not be applied retrospectively. Any one period of authorised interruption of study will not exceed one academic year, unless authorised by the Head of College. The total period of authorised interruption of study is the same for full-time and part-time students and will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study.

20. Study undertaken at another institution during a period of authorised interruption of study will not be credited to a student's programme of study at the University of Edinburgh.

21. Students registered for the 5-year MBChB programme or the BVM&S may elect to take an intercalated Honours year, or undertake a postgraduate degree programme during their period of enrolment. This is not categorised as interruption of study.

### **Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/17-18/regulations/PGDRPS2017-18.pdf>):**

32. A student may apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, and it may be authorised by the College if there is a good reason for approving the interruption. Students must provide evidence to support their applications. Interruptions of study will not be applied retrospectively. Any one period of authorised interruption of study will not exceed one year, unless authorised by the College. The total period of Authorised Interruption of Study is the same for full-time and part-time students and will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

## **Timing of final assessment for Semester 1 courses**

### **Executive Summary**

At its January meeting, CSPC discussed the fact that some courses whose teaching is completed in Semester 1 hold their final assessment in the Semester 2 examination diet, meaning that students do not receive their results for these courses until the end of Semester 2. The Committee asked Colleges to seek information from Schools regarding the pedagogical rationale for this approach to assessment. This paper outlines the feedback received from Schools regarding this issue, and asks the Committee to consider its position regarding the timing of final assessment of Semester 1 courses,

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This paper aligns with the University strategic objective of leadership in learning through providing assessment and feedback designed to support students' success in their studies.

### **Action requested**

For discussion.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will provide Colleges with information to share with Schools regarding any guidance CSPC wishes to offer on this issue.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
- 2. Risk assessment**
- 3. Equality and Diversity**

The paper does not propose a change in policy, and does not therefore carry any significant implications in terms of resource, risk, or equality and diversity.

- 4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words** Assessment

### **Originator of the paper**

*Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services*

12<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## **Timing of final assessment for Semester 1 courses**

### **Background**

At its January meeting, CSPC agreed that Schools should hold Boards of Examiners following Semester 1 to ratify results for courses completed during Semester 1. The Committee discussed the fact that some courses whose teaching is completed in Semester 1 hold their final assessment (usually in the form of an examination) in the Semester 2 examination diet, meaning that students do not receive their results for these courses until the end of Semester 2. The Committee asked Colleges to seek information from Schools regarding the pedagogical rationale for this approach to assessment. This paper outlines the feedback received from Schools regarding this issue, and asks the Committee to consider its position regarding the timing of final assessment of Semester 1 courses.

It should be noted that many Semester 1 courses at postgraduate taught level involve the submission of final coursework after the end of Semester 1, usually in early January: this practice is not considered in this paper.

### **Summary of rationale**

Schools presented a variety of reasons for conducting assessment for Semester 1 courses at the end of Semester 2. These are summarised below:

#### Development of understanding of concepts/material

- Several Schools felt that their Semester 2 courses build on concepts developed during Semester 1 courses, meaning that students are able to approach the material taught in Semester 1 with greater understanding and confidence, if they are assessed at the end of Semester 2;
- PGT programmes involve a significant step-up in level, so students benefit from spending more time adapting to that level before they take their final assessment for courses.

#### Compressed nature of Semester 1 examination period

- There is more time between the end of teaching and the exam diet in Semester 2 than in Semester 1, giving students much more time to prepare for exams; several Schools felt that it was inappropriate to assess Honours level courses in the Semester 1 diet for this reason;
- Some Schools use the Easter vacation and revision period ahead of the Semester 2 diet to run revision/consolidation classes for Honours courses; there is not sufficient time to do this between the end of Semester 1 and the Semester 1 exam diet;
- Several Schools felt that moving exams for all Semester 1 courses to the Semester 1 diet would not be feasible given the relative shortness of that diet, and would lead to undesirable clustering of exams;
- One School makes use of the Semester 2 examination diet for some Semester 1 courses in order to balance the volume of exams students take across the two exam diets.

#### Staff workload pressures

- Conducting final assessment for courses in Semester 1 places additional pressure on academic staff to complete all marking before Christmas and on support staff to process all marks, and support Special Circumstances Committees and Boards of

Examiners before the end of January; this raises concerns regarding staff workload, and its impact on staff wellbeing.

#### Other issues raised

- One School suggested that, at the point that the University moved to a semesterised academic year structure, it was agreed that there would not be pressure to examine courses in Semester 1;
- The proximity of the Semester 1 exam diet to Christmas makes travel difficult and expensive for international students.

#### **For consideration**

CSPC is invited to consider the reasons given by Schools for conducting assessment for Semester 1 courses at the end of Semester 2, and determine whether it wishes to provide any further guidance on this issue. For example, CSPC may wish to consider encouraging Schools to complete assessment for Semester 1 courses in Semester 1 except in certain circumstances, and provide guidance regarding what might be regarded as acceptable reasons for delaying assessment. Alternatively, CSPC may be content with existing practice within the Schools and wish to take no further action in relation to this issue.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Academic Misconduct – Update Paper and Revised Procedures**

**Executive Summary**

This paper provides an update on discussion which has taken place within the University and externally, at a sector-wide level in relation to contract cheating and academic misconduct in general and proposes a plan for future activities. This paper also includes a revised draft version of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for approval.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Promoting academic integrity among students and taking action to address academic misconduct is crucial to the University's strategic aim of Leadership in Learning.

**Action requested**

For discussion – Committee members are invited to discuss and provide their views on the proposed plan for future University-level activities in relation to academic misconduct. For Approval – Committee members are asked to approve a revised version of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will publicise any changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures via the New and Updates Policies email to Schools and Colleges in June 2018. The other initiatives covered in the Future Planning document will be taken forward by College and School Academic Misconduct Officers, with support from Academic Services.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The actions referred to in the Future Plan of work are all manageable within existing resources.

The proposed changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures do not involve changes to existing practice, and do not therefore carry any resource implications.

**2. Risk assessment**

In order to safeguard the value and integrity of the awards offered by the University, it is vital that the University can have confidence that work for which students are awarded credited is their own. The University therefore needs to take appropriate steps both to promote academic integrity, and to identify occurrences of academic misconduct.

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

There are no grounds to expect any equality and diversity implications as a result of the proposals. The procedures have been restructured to provide greater clarity where necessary which, it is hoped, will enable a clear understanding of the process.

### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**

#### **Key words**

Academic Misconduct, Good Academic Practice, Academic Integrity, Contract Cheating

#### **Originator of the paper**

Ms Roshni Hume & Professor Susan Rhind, 15 May 2018

## **Academic Misconduct – Update Paper & Revised Procedures**

### **Background**

Recently Higher Education Institutions have been at the centre of heightened media interest in relation to the increasing volume of academic misconduct cases which are being reported. This has been highlighted as an increasingly worrying trend and brings into question what institutions are doing to reduce levels of academic misconduct. Additionally, there has been increased concern at government level regarding contract cheating (the use of ghost-writing services also referred to as 'Essay Mills') within Higher Education Institutions. In response to this, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education released guidance for Higher Education Institutions in October 2017, which provided recommendations on how to address the issue of contract cheating.

A paper was submitted to CSPC in November 2017, providing members with an overview of current practices and preventative measures taken in relation to academic misconduct in general and discussed the recommendations provided by the QAA in relation to contract cheating.

It was agreed that further action was required at University level in response to the QAA Guidelines and in the promotion of good academic practice across the University. It was agreed that the University's Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group would consider these issues at a future meeting and report back to CSPC at a later date.

This paper summarises discussion which has taken place within the University and externally, at a sector-wide level, in relation to contract cheating and academic misconduct in general and proposes a plan for future activities.

### **Internal Progress**

The issue of contract cheating and the promotion of academic integrity have recently been at the forefront of discussion within the following groups:

#### **Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group**

The University's Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group considered the issues raised above at its meeting on 19 February 2018 which was attended by the College Academic Misconduct Officers from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Science and Engineering. The group discussed some of the issues faced by the College Academic Misconduct Officers and the role of assessment design and how this can be used to reduce the potential for students to cheat.

The work of the group is on-going and is very much a University priority at this time. Careful assessment design can both address and minimise opportunities for cheating but, more importantly allow students to develop their academic skills and graduate attributes in their journey through courses and programmes.

#### **CAMO Meetings & SAMO Briefings**

The issue of contract cheating and the continual review of our processes remains a priority at CAMO meetings. Regular updates of discussions which have taken place at University level and at CAMO meetings are provided at SAMO meetings and their input is sought on emerging issues. These discussions will continue to take place and any significant developments or issues will be discussed ahead of the review of the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures in 2018-19.

### **External Developments**

Discussions with regards to contract cheating are on-going at a sector-wide level. The most recent developments are outlined below.

### QAA Developments

Following the guidance issued in October 2017 by the QAA in relation to contract cheating, an event was held in April 2018 focussing on the issue of contract cheating and academic integrity. During discussion, it became apparent that there is no straightforward approach in terms of dealing with this issue. This is partly due to difficulties with the detection of instances of contract cheating and particularly, the barrier posed by anonymous marking which prevents markers from being able to compare pieces of work by the same student. However, there is a general consensus across the sector that a greater emphasis could be placed on prevention rather than detection. There is agreement that the promotion of academic integrity and encouragement of positive academic practice is key in preventing the use of contract cheating services.

The QAA is currently developing an online tutorial focussing on academic integrity for use by Higher Education Institutions. It is intended that the tutorial will provide students with information on the importance of academic integrity and the consequences of cheating. The QAA will inform institutions when this becomes available.

### Turnitin Developments

Turnitin have created an add-on which they claim is capable of detecting instances of contract cheating. This is a very recent development and the software is currently being tested. Further information on how it will operate and its capabilities will be available in due course. IS is being informed of these developments.

### **Proposed Plan**

As a result of discussions which have taken place both internally and at a sector-wide level, a plan has been developed for future planning and activities (Appendix 1).

### **Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures**

The College Academic Misconduct Officers have expressed an appetite for a review of the current Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures in order to allow the School Academic Misconduct Officers to play a more active role within the investigation process and in the promotion of good academic practice.

The procedures are currently scheduled for review during the 2018/19 academic session and any significant proposals will be considered as part of the review. However, it has been necessary to make amendments to the procedures at this time (see Appendix 2) in order to comply with the recently-revised RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct. The College Academic Misconduct Officers have also proposed the reinstatement of a 20 mark penalty as a sanction for academic misconduct; this was previously present in the procedures, but was removed as a simplification. The CAMOs feel strongly that the option to be able to impose deductions of 10, 20 or 30 marks will allow them to apply penalties in a more proportionate manner.

Since changes to the procedures are being proposed, we have taken the opportunity to review the presentation of them more generally to seek to clarify where necessary, streamline where possible, and make them flow more logically overall. The proposed amendments to the procedures are summarised below:

- Inclusion of a definition of Academic Misconduct (1.1);
- Clarification that the University may investigate allegations of academic misconduct in work which has not been submitted for assessment at the University, where this could represent a breach of the Code of Student Conduct (1.2);
- General restructuring of procedures to clarify the sequence of events during an Academic Misconduct Investigation;
- The reinstatement of a 20 mark penalty as a sanction for academic misconduct (5.2);
- Amendments to ensure compliance with the recently-revised RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct (10).

#### **Requested Action from CSPC**

- The Committee is asked to **discuss** the proposed plan for future planning and activities (Appendix 1) and advise whether this is sufficient at this time or whether further action is required.
- The Committee is asked to **approve** the proposed amendments to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

### Academic Misconduct: Future Planning and Activities

Theme	Key actions planned for 2017-18 and 2018-19	Lead responsibility	Working With:
Awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote and share experiences through Directors of Teaching network (as well as via Directors of Professional Services and Heads of Schools).</li> <li>The College Academic Misconduct Officers and the Students' Association are in agreement that Colleges and Schools should continue to promote good academic practice and raise awareness in relation to the importance of academic integrity.</li> </ul>	Prof Susan Rhind, CAMOs	Students' Association
Prevention via the Promotion of Good Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Read.Write.Cite campaign will be revived by moving web content from the Students' Association website to the Institute of Academic Development website and will be promoted to students by College Academic Misconduct Officers, School Academic Misconduct Officers and the Students' Association by referring students to the online resource.</li> </ul>	IAD	CAMOs, SAMOs & Students' Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Own Work Declaration Form – The creation of a single, University-wide Own Work Declaration Form which refers students to further guidance on academic misconduct and highlights the importance of academic integrity.</li> </ul>	IS/Academic Services	CAMOs, SAMOs & Students' Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAMOs to continue to work closely with the School Academic Misconduct Officers and ensure that good academic practice is promoted within each of the Colleges.</li> </ul>	CAMOs	SAMOs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of the SAMO – As part of the review of the Academic Misconduct Investigation procedures in 2018/19, the role of the SAMO will be reviewed with a view that SAMOs will play a more active role in the promotion of good academic practice.</li> </ul>	CAMOs/Academic Services	SAMOs
Assessment and Curriculum Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAD have proposed to run a Practical Strategies workshop on designing out plagiarism. It is proposed that this workshop runs at least once a year and could be directly advertised to Board of Studies Conveners. It is proposed that the first of these workshops would run in Semester 1 of the 2018-19 academic session.</li> </ul>	Dr Cathy Bovill	Academic services, BoS Conveners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for course and programme design. As agreed by November Senatus LTC, SMR to work with IAD, ISG and Colleges to move to a position where for new programmes (and ideally courses), engagement with the relevant continuing professional development opportunities, or an alternative - such as mentoring by an experienced and successful course and programme designer is built into the project planning. The suite of CPD available will include attention to assessment and feedback design in the context of academic misconduct.</li> </ul>	Prof Susan Rhind	IAD, ISG, DoTs
Review of Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures are scheduled for review during the 2018/19 session. In addition to University-wide developments and activity, this review will take into account the QAA guidelines on Contact Cheating as well as any further sector-wide developments.</li> </ul>	Academic Services	CAMOs and College DOPs





## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

### Purpose of Procedure

This document sets out the University's procedures for dealing with suspected cases of academic misconduct by students or graduates of the University. These procedures apply to all types of academic misconduct including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit and personation.

The University takes very seriously any suspected incidences of academic misconduct and aims to ensure that all suspected cases are investigated efficiently and dealt with appropriately.

### Scope: Mandatory Procedure

All staff and students

### Contact Officer

Roshni Hume

Academic Policy Officer

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### Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 01/10/12	<b>Starts:</b> 01/08/2016 (For cases where investigation begins on or after 1 August 2016).	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b>	<b>Amendments:</b> 11.12.15 (references only), 02.06.16, 16.06.17 (contact officer only)	<b>Next Review:</b> 2018/19
<b>Approving authority</b>	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)				
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	College Academic Misconduct Officers, College administrative staff dealing with academic misconduct, EUSA.				
<b>Section responsible for procedure maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	Academic Misconduct Report Form Code of Student Conduct Code of Student Conduct Guidance				
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	UK Quality Code – B6				
<b>Procedures superseded by this procedure</b>	Previous versions of the Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct				
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
<b>Keywords</b>	Academic misconduct, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit, personation				



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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### 1. Definition of Academic Misconduct

- 1.1 Academic misconduct is defined by the University as any attempt by a student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, or to assist a student to make use of such unfair means. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit, and personation.
- 1.2 The University may investigate cases where a student is alleged to have committed an act of academic misconduct in a piece of work which has not been submitted for assessment at the University (e.g. a conference paper or publication) under the Code of Student Conduct, where this may represent a breach of the Code:

<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf>

#### A. Suspected academic misconduct involving students undertaking taught courses (including students on postgraduate research programmes)

### 2. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct

- 2.1 Any member of staff who suspects that a student has committed an academic misconduct offence in an assessed piece of work must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form. They should submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO). The work under investigation should be assessed and awarded a face value mark prior to referral to the SAMO. The face value mark is the mark that the work is believed to merit based solely on the content as presented, assuming no academic misconduct has taken place.
- 2.2 The Academic Misconduct Report Form is available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>

### 3. Investigation by the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO)

- 3.1 The SAMO is responsible for deciding whether there is a case to answer. The SAMO should consult with the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) if necessary. If the SAMO decides that there are grounds for investigation, they will determine whether they are able to deal with the case or whether it needs to be referred to a College Academic Misconduct Officer.

The SAMO may wish to check whether any other work submitted by the student is similarly affected.

- 3.2 A SAMO will be able to investigate and potentially conclude the case if it meets **all of** the following criteria:
  - it is a first offence (the relevant College can advise where it is a potential repeat offence); **and**
  - the student is a first or second year undergraduate, or a postgraduate taught student in their first semester of study at a UK university, or a visiting student; **and**



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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- the SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through genuine lack of understanding (poor scholarship) rather than any deliberate intention to cheat; **and**
- the SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty.

- 3.3 No mark penalty or alteration can be applied by the SAMO for cases outlined above in 3.2.
- 3.4 If the SAMO is investigating the case, the SAMO will arrange a meeting with the student, together with the relevant Course Organiser and/or marker. The student may be accompanied at that meeting by a member of the University community, e.g. their Personal Tutor or an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place. If the student is on an online programme, or is unavoidably away from Edinburgh for a significant period (e.g. the summer vacation), the SAMO will make contact via email or Skype.
- 3.5 The SAMO will refer all cases which fail to meet the criteria set out at 3.2 above to be dealt with by the College Academic Misconduct Officer. The SAMO must complete the relevant section of the Academic Misconduct Report Form and submit this with any relevant documentation to the College Academic Misconduct Administrator.

### 4. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO)

- 4.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied.
- 4.2 The CAMO will write to the student suspected of academic misconduct describing the alleged offence and inviting the student to comment on whether they wish to challenge the allegation.
- 4.3 Where the case involves a first offence, and the student acknowledges the offence and does not wish to have an opportunity to offer further comment, the CAMO may decide that there is no need for a formal academic misconduct interview. In such cases the CAMO may write to the student, to inform them of the penalty decision, and ask the SAMO to advise the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners of the decision on the penalty where appropriate. The SAMO should also meet with the student concerned in order to provide advice on academic best practice.
- 4.4 In all other cases, the CAMO will invite the student to attend an interview. The interview will be conducted by a panel chaired by the CAMO, and including at least one representative SAMO from that College (not from the same School as the student) and any other relevant member of staff. The student may be accompanied by a member of the University community, e.g. an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or Personal Tutor. It is preferable for the student to be interviewed in person, however, if they are unable to attend, the interview may be conducted electronically (e.g. via Skype/video conference). Alternatively the student may choose to be represented by a member of the University community, such as an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or the CAMO may offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.
- 4.5 The Personal Tutor will be copied into the summons for interview letter but will not be sent any additional documentation.
- 4.6 The purpose of the interview will be to enable the panel to obtain further relevant information on the alleged incident and to allow the student the opportunity to put forward their response



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to the allegation. The panel will take this information into account when deciding on any penalty to be applied.

- 4.7 Following the interview, the CAMO will draft a confidential report of the meeting and provide this to the student. The student will be given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the draft report.
- 4.8 The CAMO, in consultation with the rest of the panel, will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 5.1 below). The CAMO will be responsible for the final decision. The CAMO will inform the student of the decision as soon as possible following the interview.
- 4.9 Once the report is approved by the CAMO and the penalty is agreed, the CAMO will submit a written report to the SAMO, for forwarding to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. This will include details of any penalty which the Board must apply in light of the decision (see section 6 below).

### 5 Penalties available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO)

- 5.1 In deciding a penalty, the CAMO will take into account the severity, intent and benefit to the student of the academic misconduct, and the penalty applied in similar cases. Any penalty will apply **only** to the specific work under investigation which in itself may represent only a part of the overall course assessment. The College will retain a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript. Where the student claims that the affected assessment was impacted by special circumstances, the CAMO will advise the student to request consideration of these by the appropriate Special Circumstances Committee. The CAMO will not take account of special circumstances in reaching a penalty decision.
- 5.2 The following options are available to the CAMO:
  - (a) There is found to be no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
  - (b) In the case of a first offence which is a result of poor scholarly practice rather than any deliberate attempt to cheat, the CAMO may decide that a mark penalty will not be appropriate;
  - (c) A penalty deducting 10, 20 or 30 marks from the face value mark will be applied. The penalty applied should be proportional to the offence and/or the benefit to the student. All marks must be expressed using the relevant [Common Marking Scheme](#).
  - (d) The mark is to be reduced to zero;
  - (e) In cases where students have colluded in producing a piece of work the mark awarded can be shared (not necessarily equally) between the students involved if this is considered appropriate by the CAMO;
  - (f) In serious cases or where the student has committed a number of previous academic misconduct offences, the CAMO may decide to refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

### 6. Application of penalties by the Board of Examiners

- 6.1 The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty imposed by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO). It must not apply any additional penalty for the offence. In the event of a significant delay in arranging a meeting of the Board of Examiners, the penalty may be applied by Convener's Action. The Convener will write to the student to inform them of the mark agreed by the Board, incorporating any penalty imposed, in a timely manner. The Convener will also inform the student's Personal Tutor of any penalty applied.

### B. Suspected academic misconduct involving students undertaking postgraduate research programmes

### 7. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct

- 7.1 Any member of staff who suspects that a student undertaking a postgraduate research programme has committed an academic misconduct offence (in the thesis or other work submitted for assessment and/or progression) must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form in conjunction with the relevant SAMO. They should submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO).

### 8. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO)

- 8.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them and for deciding on the appropriate outcome.
- 8.2 If the CAMO considers that there has been no deliberate attempt to deceive on the part of the student, they will conduct an interview with the student. The CAMO will inform the student not only of the allegation, but also of any other areas of significant academic concern within the work. The CAMO will issue one of the following instructions to the student's School regarding their assessment:
- The work submitted will be assessed on academic merit only after any affected section(s) have been rewritten. This will be regarded as corrective work under the relevant provision within the University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
  - The matter will be taken into account in the examiners' recommendations to the Board of Examiners or relevant College committee, or the School PhD review group.
- 8.3 If the CAMO deems the case to be serious, and cannot be attributed to poor scholarship, an academic misconduct panel comprising the CAMO and one other relevant academic member of staff (for example a relevant College Dean or a Graduate School Director or School Academic Misconduct Officer from a different School in the same College) will interview the student. The CAMO, in consultation with the other member of the panel will determine which of the options in 9.1 to apply.



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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### 9. Penalties available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO)

9.1 The following options are available to the CAMO:

- (a) There is found to be no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
- (b) Allow the student to edit and resubmit the work having removed the affected section(s)\*;
- (c) Instruct the examiners to reassess the work with the affected sections removed (without offering the student the chance to edit)\*;
- (d) Fail the thesis (or dissertation, or other assessment or components of assessment) and instruct the Board of Examiners accordingly;
- (e) Refer the case for further consideration under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO's investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case directly to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Except in cases referred for further consideration under the Code of Student Conduct, the academic misconduct panel will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners of the penalty to be applied and will also inform the student.

\*Options (b) and (c) may involve the thesis no longer being fit for a specific award.

9.2 Where the work affected has been submitted for annual review the CAMO may wish to submit a report, including a recommendation, to the student's annual review panel.

9.3 The relevant College will keep a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript.

### 10. Students funded by UK Research Councils

10.1 Where a student who is receiving funding from one of the UK Research Councils is suspected of academic misconduct in their research, the University is required to report this to the relevant Research Council. Staff reporting suspected academic misconduct to the relevant CAMO should indicate on the Academic Misconduct Report form where a student is funded by a UK Research Council. Should the CAMO decide that there is a case to answer, they will notify the School, who will inform the relevant Research Council of the allegations against the student, and provide updates on the outcome of the case.

10.2 Research Councils UK publish guidance regarding their handling of information relating to suspected academic misconduct among students and staff funded by them: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/rcukpolicyguidelinesgovernancegoodresearchconduct-pdf/>

#### C. Suspected academic misconduct by students who have since graduated

### 11. Investigation by College Academic Misconduct Officer

11.1 The University takes seriously allegations of academic misconduct occurring in any assessed coursework, including work submitted by students who have since graduated. The relevant College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) will investigate cases of suspected academic misconduct in any piece of work assessed for any University award where the nature and



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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extent of the offence may have an impact upon the award or class of award. As part of their investigation the CAMO will write to the graduate notifying them of the allegations and inviting their response in writing.

- 11.2 Following investigation the following options are open to the CAMO:
- (a) If the allegation is found not to be substantiated, or if it is concluded that the academic misconduct was taken into account at the time of the original award, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners and to the University Secretary. No further action will be taken;
  - (b) If the allegation is found to be proven, and is likely to have impacted on the award or class of award made to the student, the CAMO will refer the case for further consideration under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO's investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO will contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter.
- 11.3 Graduates have the same right of appeal as that which exists for matriculated students (see section 13).

### **D. Review of a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) decision**

#### **12. Request for a review**

- 12.1 In exceptional circumstances, if the Board of Examiners disagrees with the CAMO's decision on the penalty to be applied, the Convener may request that the decision be referred for review by the CAMOs of the University's other two Colleges jointly. The relevant Convener will submit a request in writing as soon as possible to the relevant contact in Academic Services, outlining the reasons for challenging the decision. The Convener will write to the student to inform them that their case has been referred for review, explaining that the final course result has therefore not yet been agreed.
- 12.2 Academic Services will arrange for the case to be reviewed by the CAMOs of the other two Colleges. The original investigating CAMO will be required to submit a copy of all of the case documentation which was considered by the CAMO along with copies of the report and decision letter. Each CAMO will be sent the documentation and will be asked to come to a decision separately before meeting to discuss the case; this meeting may be held by correspondence. The CAMOs may decide to invite the student to a further academic misconduct interview. Where a further interview is held, the student may be accompanied by a member of the University community, e.g. an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or Personal Tutor. It is preferable for the student to be interviewed in person, however if they are unable to attend, the interview may be conducted electronically (e.g. via Skype/video conference). Alternatively, the student may choose to be represented by a member of the University community, such as an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or the CAMOs may offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.
- 12.3 Academic Services will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the student in writing of the joint CAMO decision. The original investigating CAMO will be informed of the outcome of the review. The Board will be required to adhere to that decision and cannot



## **Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures**

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request a further review. The Convener of the Board of Examiners should write to the student to inform them of the final course result agreed by the Board.

### **13. Student right of appeal**

- 13.1 CAMO decisions resulting in mark penalties are ratified by Boards of Examiners. Students have a right to appeal decisions made by Boards of Examiners, including decisions affected by the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation. Students wishing to submit such an appeal should refer to the University's Student Appeal Regulations and related guidance at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals>

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19**

**Executive Summary**

This paper contains the draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the key changes made.

**How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper supports the Committee’s priority of “good housekeeping”.

**Action requested**

CSPC is invited to discuss and approve the new assessment regulations for academic year 2018/19.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Approved regulations will be communicated by Academic Services’ annual update on regulations and policies.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications in updating the regulations and communicating the changes to staff and students. This work is expected to be managed within existing resources.

**2. Risk assessment**

The proposed changes to regulations introduce no new risks.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed changes present no new equality and diversity implications.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

**Originator of the paper**

Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services, and Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

24 May 2018

## Key Changes to Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19

Regulation	What has changed
19 Reasonable adjustments	<b>Amended</b> Removes reference to “Learning Profile” (now “Schedule of Adjustments”).
20 Language of assessment	<b>Amended</b> Dissertations and theses may be submitted in a language other than English or Gaelic where the relevant course requires the use of a different language (e.g. on foreign language programmes).
28 Late submission of coursework	<b>Amended 28.3</b> Clarifies that extensions may be offered under this regulation in addition to any offered as part of a student’s Schedule of Adjustments. <b>Amended 28.6</b> Adds the following to the list of “good reasons” for requesting an extension (per agreement at CSPC on 23 November 2017 and 25 January 2018): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience of sexual harassment or assault;</li><li>• Experience of other forms of harassment;</li><li>• Exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student’s control;</li><li>• Exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities.</li></ul>
30 Academic misconduct	<b>Amended 30.1</b> Adds specific reference to the use of purchased essays or model answers.
40 Undergraduate Progression Board meetings	<b>Amended 40.3</b> Refers to the use from 2018/19 of a University-level Progression Board for the award of credit to students taking periods of optional study abroad.
42 Board of Examiners: anonymity	<b>Amended</b> Clarifies what anonymisation means in the context of Boards of Examiners.
55 Undergraduate degree classification	<b>Amended 55.6</b> Removes reference to an algorithm previously used to calculate degree classification for some Honours programmes in ECA.
64 Status of decisions	<b>Amended 64.3</b> States that Schools should contact College in the event of uncovering an error which has led to communicating to student an incorrect award or classification outcome.

# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 20187/198



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

### Purpose of Policy

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, expressing in practical form the academic goals and policies of the University.

### Overview

These regulations:

- (i) replace the previous undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment regulations;
- (ii) set out the rules which must be followed in taught student assessment; and
- (iii) provide links to other sources or guidance and related regulations.

### Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide. They apply to assessment of **all** taught full-time and part-time students, studying degrees, diplomas and certificates at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 7 – 12 which are awarded for credit at the University of Edinburgh. They apply to undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates studying taught components. The regulations apply to undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment for courses assessed in the current academic year.

### Contact Officer

Ailsa Taylor

Academic Policy Officer

### Email

[ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk)

### Document control

Dates	Approved: <del>06.04.17</del> <del>31.05.2018</del>	Starts: <del>17</del> 8.09.1 <u>8</u> 7	Equality impact assessment: June 201 <u>8</u> 7	Amendments: <del>17.08.2017</del> (broken links)	Next Review: <del>May/June</del> April 201 <u>9</u> 8
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### Approving authority

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

### Consultation undertaken

Assessment Regulations Working Group, Colleges, Edinburgh University Students' Association, CSPC, Student Disability Service, HR, College Academic Misconduct Officers, Records Management, Distance Learning and Student Systems.

### Section responsible for policy maintenance & review

Academic Services

### Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Policies for Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards, Examination Hall Regulations, External Examiner for Taught Programmes Policy, Special Circumstances Policy  
DRPS Glossary of Terms  
Student Systems guidance for staff:  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/)

### UK Quality Code

Consistent with UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning

### Policies superseded by this policy

Previous versions of the taught assessment regulations

### Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email [Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk) or telephone 0131 651 4490.

### Keywords

Assessment regulations, examination, examiners, Board of Examiners, common marking scheme, Convener of the Board, progression, degree classification, degree award



# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 2018/19

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### Additional guidance

This document should be read in conjunction with University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study. These are available via: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

The regulations apply to all forms of summative assessment, including examination, take home examination, coursework, electronic and online assessment, oral assessment and peer and self-assessment.

The regulations must be applied, unless a concession has been awarded by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The boxed "Application of the regulation" below must also be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. These concessions and exemptions are recorded by CSPC and Colleges as appropriate.

The regulations operate in accordance with legislation and University policies on Equality and Diversity: [www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies)

Members of staff who need additional guidance may consult their Head of College or their nominee, their College Office, Academic Services, or Student Administration. Student Administration oversees the procedure relating to the provision of question papers, registration for degree examinations, the receipt and notification of results, examination timetabling and the provision of examination accommodation.

Where reference is made to 'the relevant Dean' this should be taken as being the Dean with responsibility for undergraduate or postgraduate matters, depending on the circumstances. Where reference is made to 'the Head of College' or 'Head of School' this may also in some cases be a designated representative of that individual.

For Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) students on programmes that use the assessment grade scheme, the term "mark" in the regulations also includes "grade".

Definitions of key terms can be found in the glossary of terms:  
[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf)

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# Taught Assessment Regulations

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# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 2018/19

### Section A. Roles and Responsibilities

#### Regulation 1 Board of Examiners: responsibility for courses and programmes

Every course and degree programme is the responsibility of a Board of Examiners.

##### Application of the regulation

- 1.1 Schools assign each course and degree programme to a Board of Examiners. This is done via a Board of Studies or equivalent committee.
- 1.2 Guidance on Boards of Examiners is available:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)
- 1.3 In the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of Science and Engineering, Schools are responsible for the award of their General/Ordinary Degrees.

#### Regulation 2 Examiners: appointment

Examiners are appointed to the Board of Examiners by the relevant College. There are internal examiners, who are staff of the University nominated by the relevant Head of School, and External Examiners.

##### Application of the regulation

- 2.1 Policy, principle and operational guidance is available for Boards of Examiners:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)
- 2.2 The list of examiners making up each Board is certified by the Head of the College, or their nominee, and is definitive unless an appeal to the relevant College committee is made by an interested party challenging the composition of the Board.
- 2.3 Heads of Schools inform the College Office of the names of those internal and External Examiners who it is proposed will constitute the Board. For the December diet of examinations this is by 1 November and for later diets it is by 15 January. Names are made available by the College Office on request. Where there is more than one diet of examination in an academic year the Board need not comprise the same examiners for each diet. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the Head of College or their nominee in good time before the relevant exam diet. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant College Office and are available for inspection by members of staff.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 2018/19

- 2.4 Internal examiners are teaching and/or honorary staff of the University who teach SCQF level 7 to 12 courses which are awarded for credit and are listed in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/index.php)
- 2.5 Honorary staff in this context include:  
Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House School of Education;  
Academic staff from research pooling partners who are appointed as an internal examiner by CSPC on the basis of a recommendation from the relevant College; and NHS staff.
- 2.6 External examiners are appointed by Colleges. Their roles, powers and responsibilities are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)

### **Regulation 3      Markers: appointment**

The Head of School has responsibility for appointing markers who contribute to the marking process. Markers are not members of the Board of Examiners.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 3.1 Markers can be people who are not covered in taught assessment regulation 2. They can also be members of staff who have a very limited input to the teaching of a course or programme who are not members of the Board of Examiners. Examples of markers are graduate tutors marking tutorial, laboratory or examination work, or members of professions or guest speakers who may contribute to student assessment.
- 3.2 Information regarding the role of Conveners of Boards of Examiners is available in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

### **Regulation 4      Convener of the Board of Examiners: appointment**

The Head of School\* that owns the programme or course has responsibility for nominating the Convener of the Board of Examiners, the Convener of the Progression Board and the Convener of the Special Circumstances Committee.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 2018/19

### Application of the regulation

- 4.1 The Head of School\* informs the College Office about the nomination for the Convener by 1 November for December diets and 15 January for later diets. The College appoints the Convener.
- 4.2 \*In the following College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) programmes:  
MBChB - the Director of UG Learning and Teaching nominates the Convener;  
Oral Health Sciences - the Director of the Postgraduate Dental Institute nominates the Convener.
- 4.3 For combined (formerly joint) degrees the “owning” Head of School liaises with other relevant Heads of School. In the case of any disagreement on the appointment of a Convener of a combined Board of Examiners, the Convener is nominated by the relevant Heads of College or their nominee.
- 4.4 Programme Directors and Course Organisers are not the Convener of the Board of Examiners for their programmes or courses. This is to ensure appropriate separation of roles. If the Convener is also a Course Organiser, formal chairing of the Board of Examiners is delegated to another member of the Board for discussion of that course.
- 4.5 Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy and Special Circumstances Policy:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special\\_circumstances.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf)

### Regulation 5 Number of External Examiners

At least one External Examiner is appointed for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses and programmes.

### Application of the regulation

- 5.1 The number of External Examiners is determined by the volume and diversity of the academic work contributing to the course or programme or the award of the degree. More than one External Examiner may be needed where there are a large number of students, the course or programme covers a wide range of studies and/or a large volume of academic work contributing to the course or programme.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Head of the College or relevant College Committee to ensure that all elements which contribute to the award of a degree from the University are represented by the appropriate number of External Examiners.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year 2018/19

### Regulation 6 External Examiners: responsibilities

External Examiners must be competent and have the requisite experience to examine the course or programme at the level at which it is taught. They must meet the requirements, roles and responsibilities that are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)

#### Application of the regulation

- 6.1 The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines the purposes and functions of External Examiners; their selection, qualification, appointment and period of service; their participation in assessment and examination procedures; and their discussion of course structure, assessment process and degree schemes.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)
- 6.2 External Examiners need to be given sufficient information and samples of different forms of assessments as evidence on which to base their advice.
- 6.3 The Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes sets out the responsibilities of Conveners of Boards of Examiners in ensuring External Examiners' contributions to the assessment process. For example, as part of the formal proceedings of the Board, External Examiners are invited to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the courses they examine.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

### Regulation 7 Examiners and markers: responsibilities

Examiners and markers need to meet the responsibilities set out in the assessment and degree regulations and comply with quality and standards requirements.

[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

#### Application of the regulation

- 7.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners and markers (see taught assessment regulation 6). In particular, examiners and markers need to meet deadlines, attend relevant meetings and participate in standard-setting discussions when required.
- 7.2 A University briefing document provides information about the storage and disclosure of information about students during marking, and dealing with requests for teaching materials.



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### Regulation 8 Convener of the Board of Examiners: responsibilities

The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for the assessment process for courses and programmes covered by the Board and for ensuring that the Board operates within university regulations.

#### Application of the regulation

- 8.1 The responsibilities of the Convener of the Board of Examiners are outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)
- These include:
- (a) approving the content of examination papers, taking account of the comments of External Examiners;
  - (b) the security of and arrangements for setting papers and assessments, including the robustness of and resources for electronic assessment; examining and marking assessed work; and processing and storing marks and grades;
  - (c) the quality and standards of marking;
  - (d) ensuring all examiners and markers are aware of their responsibilities;
  - (e) effective operation of the meeting of the Board and the Special Circumstances Committee;
  - (f) participation of the External Examiners;
  - (g) accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Board; and
  - (h) meeting relevant deadlines.
- 8.2 Conveners must act in accordance with these Taught Assessment Regulations; the Degree Regulations and Programme of Study; and the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy. [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)
- 8.3 In practice, Conveners may delegate operation of some responsibilities to Course Organisers, Programme Directors and School Teaching Organisations. They are supported by the Regulations Expert. See taught assessment regulation 9. [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)
- 8.4 Definitions of some of the main terms used in assessment are given in the Glossary of Terms [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf)



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### Regulation 9      Regulations Experts on Board of Examiners: responsibilities

Schools appoint one or more Regulations Expert whose remit is to be an immediate source of knowledge and advice about the relevant university regulations and guidance and their academic application.

#### Application of the regulation

- 9.1 The responsibilities of the Regulations Expert are outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)
- 9.2 A Regulations Expert either attends or is available to all meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the relevant regulations and guidance are available for reference at all meetings.
- 9.3 The Regulations Expert does not need to be a member of the Board of Examiners. Schools may appoint a Regulations Expert to operate across the School or across a number of Boards of Examiners.

### Regulation 10      Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No member of University of Edinburgh staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.

#### Application of the regulation

- 10.1 If in doubt as to whether there is a potential conflict of interest, the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the Head of School will be consulted. The Head of School may seek advice from the Head of College.
- 10.2 The External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy is relevant:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)
- 10.3 The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is also relevant:  
[www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict\\_of\\_Interest.pdf](http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict_of_Interest.pdf)



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### Section B. Conduct of Assessment

#### Regulation 11 Principles of Assessment

The University, which engages in a wide diversity of assessment procedures, has established the following general principles of assessment:

- (a) beneficial – actively fostering learning
- (b) fair, reliable and valid
- (c) diverse, varied and representative
- (d) transparent
- (e) effective; and
- (f) secure

#### Application of the regulation

- 11.1 Assessment is part of learning and is an integral part of course planning. Assessment planning aligns assessment tasks with the relevant learning outcomes. Assessment should be beneficial in its effect, particularly in motivating students. The purpose of any assessment, especially formative assessment, should be to foster learning. It should assist the processes of teaching and learning, foster the relationship and trust between teachers and learners, and guide learning. It should aim to strengthen morale, encourage initiative and innovation and increase commitment of staff and students.
- 11.2 The assessment process should operate fairly for all concerned, and be seen to be fair. No individual or group should enjoy privileged status or suffer undue disadvantage in terms of the academic judgements that are made about their performance.
- 11.3 Moderation assures that an assessment outcome is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed.
- 11.4. In order to be valid the assessment objectives must match the objectives of the syllabus.
- 11.5. In order to record as full a profile of student strengths and weaknesses as possible, achievement should be measured by a varied and diverse range of methods.
- 11.6 The purposes, procedures and criteria of the assessment process need to be open, clearly stated and understood by all involved: assessors, teachers and students. All need to understand the expected learning outcomes of each programme of instruction; the marking criteria upon which decisions are made; the nature of any grading system; and the nature of any appeals process, etc. Both staff and students



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should have access to information about these procedures from the outset of the assessment process.

- 11.7 Any assessment scheme should achieve its intended purpose and should motivate learning. Assessment can be formative, where the main aim is to provide feedback and guidance on how to improve, or summative, where the aim is to accurately quantify attainment e.g. for degree classification purposes. Summative assessment can provide information that is of formative value.
- 11.8 Assessment information is used in the quality assurance of courses and programmes. It is used by course teams to enhance course design and understand students' educational needs.
- 11.9 Any assessment scheme must be adequately resourced, practicable and managed efficiently in terms of staff and student time, or it will not be effective.
- 11.10 Assessment processes must ensure the security of their operation in terms of the safe recording, transfer, storage and retrieval of information on student achievement. Fairness, effectiveness and the right of redress are all predicated on the assumption of secure operation and the prevention of any loss of information or fraudulent practice.

### **Regulation 12      Assessment requirements**

Course information in the degree programme tables states the learning outcomes, assessment practices and assessment requirements.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 12.1 The degree programme tables are available online: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

### **Regulation 13      Passing assessment**

Passing a course or degree programme requires attainment of the learning outcomes and may require a specified level of performance or attendance in some or all components.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 13.1 The course information that is linked to degree programme tables describe the learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated in assessment. [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)
- 13.2 Some degrees have professional or statutory body requirements which are reflected in the learning outcomes and their assessment. Students are informed about these in the statement of assessment (see taught assessment regulation 14).



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- 13.3 Boards of Studies and the relevant College Committee approve the assessment and satisfactory performance requirements for courses and degree programmes before their delivery. Individual course elements and options available to students can change and there are annual changes to degree programme tables and course availability. However, the approval of the relevant College Committee must be obtained if it is exceptionally necessary to change the weighting of assessment of a course after students have entered it; or to change progression, classification or award requirements for a programme after students have entered their honours years or a postgraduate programme.
- (a) Before approval can be given, written evidence of the results of consultation with the students must be submitted. Every student affected needs to be informed of the changes and given the opportunity to comment. The expectation is that the College will not approve changes in the face of significant student objections, unless changes are compelled by external factors.
  - (b) The relevant external examiners must also be informed and consulted.
  - (c) Students may be given alternative course options, where this is possible. The expectation is that course assessment requirements will not change after students are registered on it.

### **Regulation 14                      Statement of assessment**

Students must be given a clear statement of how and when each of their courses and programmes is to be assessed. The statement needs to be issued at the start of each course; on entry into the honours component of a degree programme; and at the start of each postgraduate programme.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 14.1 The statement must include:
- (a) how each piece of assessed work contributes to the final assessment, progression decision or classification, outlining relevant weightings;
  - (b) the arrangements for the moderation of the assessed work;
  - (c) any methods that the Board of Examiners uses for standard setting;
  - (d) assessment deadlines and any penalties for late submission;
  - (e) the duration and format of examinations and in which diet they will be held;
  - (f) how work will be taken into account by a resit Board of Examiners and the number of permitted resits;
  - (g) the standards and criteria for entry into honours or for progression to Masters dissertation, where relevant.
- 14.2 The assessment statement is included in a course or programme handbook or provided by the School, along with other relevant information about assessment, feedback, good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism.



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[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct)

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism)

### Regulation 15 Provision of formative feedback

All students will be given at least one formative feedback or feed-forward event for every course they undertake, provided during the semester in which the course is taken and in time to be useful in the completion of summative work on the course. Such feedback may be at course or programme level, but must include input of relevance to each course in the latter case.

#### Application of the regulation

- 15.1 Feedback and feed-forward may be provided in various formats, for example, to include written, oral, video, face-to-face, whole class, individual. Advice on feedback and feed-forward is available on the Enhancing Feedback webpages: [www.enhancingfeedback.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.enhancingfeedback.ed.ac.uk/)
- 15.2 The regulation applies to formative feedback. The University's Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles apply to formative and summative feedback.
- 15.3 Further guidance on feedback is available online. Relevant definitions are in the University's Glossary.  
[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf)  
[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment)

### Regulation 16 Feedback deadlines

Feedback on formative and summative in-course assessed work will be provided within 15 working days of submission, or in time to be of use in subsequent assessments within the course, whichever is sooner. At the start of the semester in which the course is taught, Schools will publish their timetable for returning feedback and marks for in-course work.

#### Application of the regulation

- 16.1 Feedback and feed-forward may be provided in various formats, including for example written, oral, video, face-to-face, whole class, individual or via virtual learning environments. Advice on feedback and feed-forward is available from the Institute for Academic Development  
[www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment)



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- 16.2 Further guidance and the University's Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles are available online.
- Relevant definitions are in the University's glossary:  
[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf)  
[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/15-16/GlossaryofTerms2015-16.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/15-16/GlossaryofTerms2015-16.pdf)
- 16.3 The School's timetable for returning feedback will specify which forms of summative in-course assessed work will not be returned within 15 working days. Schools may choose whether to meet the 15 working day deadline for single items of assessment which are equivalent to 40 credits or more (and which therefore must be double marked). For other summative assessed work, in exceptional circumstances, where the necessary marking and moderation processes cannot be concluded within 15 working days, Schools may request an opt-out from the relevant College committee.
- 16.4 This requirement to provide feedback within the specified period applies to the provision of marks as well as other types of feedback.
- 16.5 In-course assessment includes any form of assessment other than examinations scheduled by Student Administration, irrespective of the deadline for submission of the assessment (e.g. including the final assessment for a course). There is no requirement for feedback on examinations scheduled by Student Administration to be provided within 15 working days.
- 16.6 The University closure period during the Christmas and New Year vacation should be discounted when calculating working days for providing feedback.
- 16.7 See taught assessment regulation 36 for information on the release of provisional marks.

### **Regulation 17      Assessment deadlines: student responsibilities**

It is a student's responsibility to ascertain and meet their assessment deadlines, including examination times and locations.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 17.1 The examination timetable is based on students' course choices. To avoid examination timetabling clashes, it is students' responsibility to ensure that their record of courses is accurate by the end of week 3 of each semester.
- 17.2 Students who have a clash in their examination timetable need to contact the Examination Office, Student Administration, through their Personal Tutor or Student



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Support Team, as soon as possible to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place.

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/overview](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/overview)

- 17.3 As examinations may be scheduled at any time during the semester, it is students' responsibility to be available throughout the semester, including the whole of the revision period, examination diet and the resit diet, if the student has scheduled examinations. Examinations will not be scheduled during winter or spring vacations. Occasionally assessments may need to be rescheduled with very little notice. If special circumstances mean that a student is unavailable for the rescheduled assessment, Boards of Examiners may consider using an alternative method to assess the relevant learning outcomes.

### Regulation 18 Selective assessment

The selective use of specific assessment methods to help a Board of Examiners reach a decision about an individual student, e.g. on a borderline, is not permitted, unless required to meet a learning adjustment.

### Regulation 19 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

#### Application of the regulation

- 19.1 Reasonable adjustments must be determined in advance by the Student Disability Service (SDS). They are recorded in the student's **Learning Profile**/Schedule of Adjustments by the SDS, which communicates the **Learning Profile Schedule of Adjustments** to the student, the student's Personal Tutor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, Student Administration (if examination adjustments are recommended) and other relevant areas.
- 19.2 The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments (CoA) has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments **on the Learning Profile**. The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School.
- 19.3 The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the SDS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the **Learning Profile**/Schedule of Adjustments the SDS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.
- 19.4 The SDS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support: [www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/study-adjustments/support-to-help-with-your-studies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/study-adjustments/support-to-help-with-your-studies)



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- 19.5 Reasonable adjustments can be made for a variety of assessment methods, depending on the needs identified and recorded in the student's **Learning Profile/Schedule of Adjustments**, e.g. assessed coursework, take-home examinations, online examinations, invigilated examinations. The SDS supports students in the preparation and review of their **Learning Profile/Schedule of Adjustments**. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their **Learning Profile/Schedule of Adjustments** covers all types of assessment methods relevant to their courses. For example, if a student discovers that an aspect of their course is likely to have an impact on their support needs, they should contact the SDS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their **Learning Profile/Schedule of Adjustments**.
- 19.6 Arrangements can be made via the SDS for students with temporary injuries or impairments, e.g. broken arm or leg, on the submission of relevant medical information. Students should contact the SDS as soon as possible to allow the SDS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

### **Regulation 20      Language of assessment: languages other than English or Gaelic**

The English language is the usual medium of teaching and assessment at the University of Edinburgh. All work submitted for assessment must be written in the English language, except for those courses and classes where the School or Course handbook specifies that written work can and/or should be submitted in the language which is being studied, and/or where the learning outcomes allow for the possibility of submitting work in a language other than English. All theses and dissertations must be written in English. Different arrangements apply in relation to the use of Gaelic (see regulation 21) [and in relation to any dissertation where the course documentation specifies the use of an alternative language is required](#).

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 20.1 Quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.
- 20.2 In very exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to submit a dissertation written in a language other than English. Approval will only be given in cases where the nature of the research is such that presentation of the research results in the language(s) of the materials under analysis confers significant intellectual advantage to the community of scholars who are expected to comprise the primary audience of the research. Approval to do so must be sought either at the time of admission to the University or no later than by the end of the



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first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study), and will not be normally be granted retrospectively. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that there are sound academic reasons for the request, and that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis or dissertation in the proposed language of submission.

- 20.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis or dissertation should also include a substantial summary written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in a language other than English, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

### **Regulation 21      Language of assessment: Gaelic**

Dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 21.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 21.2 Candidates who wish to submit a dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis or dissertation.
- 21.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

### **Regulation 22      Availability of assessment examples**

Sufficient examples of students' summative assessments need to be made available for the scrutiny and use of examiners, including External Examiners, particularly for progression and award decisions.

#### **Application of the regulation**



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- 22.1 If use is made of assessment types which cannot be made available, this should be made explicit to the External Examiner in advance and included in the assessment statement to students.
- 22.2 If a School wishes to determine 50% or more of the marks for a course by coursework, oral, online, peer or self-assessment, then External Examiners need to receive sufficient information about these and samples of these as evidence on which to base their decisions.
- 22.3 The Convener of the Board of Examiners will consider with the External Examiner whether and how to present information on these assessments to the External and the Board of Examiners. It may be appropriate to record some forms of assessment for consultation by the Board, e.g. major pieces of performed work.

### **Regulation 23 Oral assessment**

Oral assessments may only be used to assess all students on a course as part of the assessment of a specific component, such as a dissertation or practical skill.

A minimum of two examiners must be present if 50% or more of a course is assessed orally.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 23.1 If oral performance is to be assessed the assessment statement (taught assessment regulation 13) must include information on how it is to be assessed.
- 23.2 Conveners of Boards of Examiners need to make available sufficient information about oral assessments to External Examiners and Boards of Examiners.
- 23.3 A Bachelor of Nursing with Honours student who fails an honours course, for which a pass is required for professional registration, will be required to resit the examination and/or to resubmit the coursework (see taught assessment regulation 27). If the student does not achieve a pass at resubmission, an oral examination will be scheduled. If the student fails to satisfy the examiners in the oral assessment, professional registration will not be possible and the student will not be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Nursing with Honours but may be eligible for another award.

### **Regulation 24 Peer and self-assessment**

Boards of Examiners may use summative student peer and self-assessment.

#### **Application of the regulation**



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- 24.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for ensuring the robustness of student peer and self-assessment. Where peer and self-assessment is used summatively, students need to receive appropriate support and guidance, which should pay specific attention to the avoidance of inappropriate discrimination.
- 24.2 External Examiners need to receive sufficient information about and samples of the assessments as evidence on which to base their decisions.
- 24.3 Resources and publications are available from the Institute for Academic Development: [www.ed.ac.uk/iad](http://www.ed.ac.uk/iad)

### Regulation 25 Examination timetable

Students are only permitted to sit examinations at the times and in the venues that are detailed on the relevant examination timetable.

#### Application of the regulation

- 25.1 Examinations may be scheduled outside normal University teaching hours.
- 25.2 Students who believe that extenuating circumstances exist which prevent them from sitting an examination in the scheduled time or venue should contact their Personal Tutor and Student Support Team. Their case is considered by the relevant Dean and Student Administration in consultation with the Convener of the Board of Examiners. Examples of extenuating circumstances are: religious reasons; elite participation where students are representing their country at national or international level. Travel arrangements, early departure during the semester, holidays, learning adjustments (under regulation 19 above), etc. do not constitute extenuating circumstances.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance\\_sport\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf)
- 25.3 A student who is permitted to appear for examination at a time other than that prescribed may have to sit a specially prepared examination paper or alternative method of assessment.
- 25.4 If examinations are disrupted, for example due to adverse weather conditions, then Boards of Examiners may decide to use an alternative assessment method, rather than rescheduled examinations, to assess the learning outcomes.
- 25.5 Other than online assessment and assessment opportunities offered via Student Administration, students are not allowed to sit examinations away from Edinburgh.

### Regulation 26 Conduct of examinations



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Examinations in an invigilated environment are conducted in accordance with Examination Hall Regulations, which are publicised to students annually.

### Application of the regulation

- 26.1 Student Administration has responsibility for the effective operation of examinations in accordance with the Examination Hall Regulations.  
[www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf)
- 26.2 All examinations which are in Student Administration's scheduled examination diet will be invigilated by authorised staff appointed by Student Administration. The Invigilator ensures compliance with the Taught Assessment Regulations in accordance with Invigilation Guidance.  
[www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/Invigil\\_guide.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/Invigil_guide.pdf)
- 26.3 Examinations that contain practical, oral or performance elements are invigilated by members of academic staff and may be conducted jointly with an External Examiner.
- 26.4 Formative assessment and small elements of summative assessment, which are not scheduled in the published examination timetable, are invigilated by academic members of staff, for example, tutorial participation marks and in-course assessment marks.
- 26.5 Take-home examinations are subject to the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations which are related to examinations but are not subject to the Examination Hall Regulations. Take-home examinations are not assessed coursework.

### Regulation 27 Resit assessment

Undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 7 and 8. Non-Honours undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11. Honours and taught postgraduate students are entitled to one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

### Application of the regulation



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- 27.1 Boards of Examiners must publish the requirements for resits for those courses that they are responsible for. Boards must take the same approach to resits for all students on a particular course, except where a student's previous attempt is a null sit.
- 27.2 Boards of Examiners must set requirements at resit that are as demanding as those made of students at the first attempt.
- 27.3 Boards of Examiners will inform students who are required to undertake resit assessment of the format of their resit assessment. Resit methods need not be the same as those used to assess the learning outcomes at the first attempt, but all relevant learning outcomes must be assessed. Resit arrangements must give students a genuine opportunity to pass the course. Boards of Examiners choose between two options to achieve this:
- (a) Carry forward any component of assessment (coursework or examination) that has been passed already and require the student to retake the failed element;
  - (b) Set an assessment covering all learning outcomes for the course, and weight this as 100% of the course result.
- 27.4 Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed.
- 27.5 The four assessment attempts are the initial assessment and a maximum of three further assessment opportunities, of full assessment, examination or coursework only basis, at the next available opportunities. There may be PSRB requirements which mean that fewer than four assessment attempts are permitted.
- 27.6 The first sitting and subsequent attempts must take place over no more than two academic sessions, unless the relevant College grants an exemption.
- 27.7 Non-attendance or non-submission is considered an assessment attempt.
- 27.8 Some Honours programmes require students to pass specified courses at the first attempt in the first or second year in order to progress to Junior Honours. Any such requirements will be specified in the Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook for the relevant programme.
- 27.9 Where an assessment attempt has been affected by special circumstances, a Board of Examiners may declare this attempt a null sit. Null sits do not count toward the maximum number of permitted attempts.
- 27.10 Re-assessment attempts are not generally permitted for courses at SQCF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students since Honours and taught



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postgraduate programmes permit the award of credit on aggregate (see Taught Assessment Regulations 52, 54, 56, 57). Where resits are permitted for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, any ~~award~~, classification ~~or progression~~ decision must use the result obtained on the first attempt.

- 27.11 The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee decides whether a programme may offer resits which are required for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements for courses at SCQF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students. This decision is based on a case proposed by the relevant College.
- 27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals) may have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. UK government legislation in this area supersedes academic regulations. For example, limits on the length of time that a non-EEA national can study in the UK are in place which may reduce a non-EEA student’s scope for taking resits in the same way as EEA/UK students. The International Student Advisory Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations and may be contacted to verify the implication of a resit opportunity for a non-EEA student: Email: [isas@ed.ac.uk](mailto:isas@ed.ac.uk)
- 27.13 If repetition of the in-course assessed work is not possible in the vacation, the student, with the permission of the relevant Head of School, may be allowed to repeat any coursework on its own in the following year. Students who do not receive such permission may be permitted by the relevant Head of School to repeat the course, including examination, in the following year.
- 27.14 The full range of marks offered by the relevant Common Marking Scheme is available at resit assessment. Resit marks are not capped.
- 27.15 Where a degree programme’s Honours classification is based on the final year only, students are permitted a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses in non-final years.
- 27.16 In the case of collaborative degrees, where not otherwise stipulated in the collaborative agreement, any permitted resit attempt must be within two years of the first attempt.

### **Regulation 28      Late submission of coursework**

Students need to submit assessed coursework (including research projects and dissertations) by the published deadline. Where the student provides a good reason for late submission, Schools will consider accepting late submission of up to seven calendar days without exacting a penalty.



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### Application of the regulation

- 28.1 If assessed coursework is submitted late without an agreed extension to the deadline for an accepted good reason, it will be recorded as late and a penalty will be exacted. For coursework that is a substantial component of the course and where the submission deadline is more than two weeks after the issue of the work to be assessed, that penalty is a reduction of the mark by 5% of the maximum obtainable mark per calendar day (e.g. a mark of 65% on the common marking scale would be reduced to 60% up to 24 hours later). This applies for up to seven calendar days (or to the time when feedback is given, if this is sooner), after which a mark of zero will be given. The original unreduced mark will be recorded by the School and the student informed of it.
- 28.2 Schools may choose not to permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment where the specific assessment and feedback arrangements make it impractical or unfair to other students to do so. If Schools do not permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment, they must publicise this to students on the relevant course.
- 28.3 Where Schools accept late submissions of coursework, they will consider cases for accepting late submissions up to a maximum of seven calendar days without exacting a penalty. This may be in addition to any extensions offered in line with a student's Schedule of Adjustments. Students are responsible for submitting their cases and supporting evidence in advance of the published deadline for the coursework, using the standard Coursework Extensions Request form (or a local School online form, where available).
- 28.4 The Course Organiser, Programme Director, or equivalent member of academic staff, decides whether the student has provided good reason and sufficient supporting evidence to justify an extension, and, if so, determines the length of extension to grant up to a maximum of seven calendar days.
- 28.5 The requirement for evidence should be proportionate to the weighting of the component of assessment and the length of extension sought, and should also take into account the student's ability to obtain documentary evidence. Self-certification will provide sufficient evidence in some circumstances. The School is responsible for ensuring a record is kept of the decision and the information which substantiates the reason for late acceptance.
- 28.6 Good reasons for coursework extensions are unexpected short-term circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student, beyond that student's control, and which could reasonably be expected to have had an adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time. Good reasons may include:
- Recent short-term physical illness or injury;
  - Recent short-term mental ill-health;



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- A long-term or chronic physical health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- A long-term or chronic mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- The recent bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship;
- The recent breakdown in a long-term relationship, such as a marriage;
- Emergencies involving dependents;
  
- Job or internship interview at short notice that requires significant time, e.g. due to travel;
- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact;

- Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions

Experience of sexual harassment or assault;

Experience of other forms of harassment;

Exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control;

Exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities.

28.7 In addition to these unexpected circumstances, Schools will also consider requests for coursework extensions in relation to:

- A student's disability where the student's **Learning Profile** includes relevant provisions;
- Representation in performance sport at an international or national championship level, in line with the University's Performance Sport Policy: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance\\_sport\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf)

28.8 The following are examples of circumstances which would not be considered good reasons for coursework extensions:

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health or similar ill-health) which has not worsened recently or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment;
- A minor short-term illness or injury (e.g. a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time;
- Occasional low mood, stress or anxiety;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;
- Holidays;
- Financial issues;
- Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health);



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- Poor time-management;
- Proximity to other assessments;
- Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission;
- Failure, loss or theft of data, a computer or other equipment;
- Commitments to paid or voluntary employment.

28.9 Where a student has good reason for requiring a coursework extension of more than seven calendar days, the student should submit the coursework when able to do so and apply via the Special Circumstances process for the Board of Examiners to disregard the penalty for late submission.

### **Regulation 29      Academic best practice**

All work submitted for assessment by students is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort without falsification of any kind.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 29.1 Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research, even when group exercises are carried out.
- 29.2 Where students rely on reference sources, they should indicate what these are according to the appropriate convention in their discipline. Students are given advice on appropriate referencing in their course.
- 29.3 Students may be asked to sign a declaration that the work submitted is their own work.
- 29.4 Students can get advice on studying effectively from the Institute for Academic Development: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/undergraduate/good-practice](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/undergraduate/good-practice)



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### Regulation 30 Academic misconduct

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

#### Application of the regulation

- 30.1 Marks or grades can only be given for original work by students at the University. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or one's own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to cheat. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription, or if it involves the use of purchased essays or model answers. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.
- 30.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.
- 30.3 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place: [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/proofreading](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/proofreading)
- 30.4 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.
- 30.5 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website.

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[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct)

30.6 Exam hall regulations can be found at:

[www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf)

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### Section C. Marking of Assessment

#### Regulation 31 Moderation and standard-setting

The marking of all components of assessment must be subject to moderation in a way that is appropriate to the discipline, the nature of the assessment, and the credit weighting of the component of assessment. Boards of Examiners can apply standard-setting processes to the marks of assessments, provided that the choice of standard-setting methodology is defensible.

##### Application of the regulation

- 31.1 Moderation occurs before External Examiners review the operation of the marking and internal moderation process. Forms of moderation include sampled second marking, double-marking, and checking the operation of computer-based assessment. Any single item of assessment which is equivalent to 40 credits or more must be double marked.
- 31.2 Moderation may result in recommended mark or grade adjustments and associated changes to feedback. No changes can be made to marking without the original marker's knowledge. Where possible, any changes should take place in discussion with the original marker.
- 31.3 Records of the operation of the occurrence and the outcome of the moderation processes must be kept. Records must show the rationale for decisions taken, including any decision that marks or grades should not be altered.
- 31.4 Boards of Examiners are responsible for determining the form of moderation for each component of assessment, and for ensuring the appropriate operation of moderation processes. Course Organisers are responsible for the organisation and supervising of the marking and moderation processes for their courses' assessments.
- 31.5 Boards of Examiners are responsible for reviewing marking and moderation arrangements, and the outcomes of students' assessments, across related courses (for example, Honours level courses in a subject area) in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.
- 31.6 Standard-setting is the process whereby decisions are made about boundaries or 'cut-points' between the marks or grades of candidates. Any standard-setting process must aim to ensure that students' results reflect the learning outcomes they have achieved and that the assessment is fair. Standards can be relative or norm-referenced (taking account the performance of candidates), absolute (defining minimum levels of competence) or a compromise between these two approaches.



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- 31.7 Schools need to state what practice each course uses for internal moderation, and (where relevant) the methods of standard-setting, in the Statement of Assessment (see Regulation 14).
- 31.8 Resources and publications are available from the Institute for Academic Development: [www.ed.ac.uk/iad](http://www.ed.ac.uk/iad)

### Regulation 32      **Anonymous marking**

Assessed work must be marked anonymously when possible. Marks and grades must also be anonymised during processing.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 32.1 Marking work anonymously is an important aspect of fair marking.
- 32.2 There will be occasions when it is not possible to mark a piece of work anonymously, e.g. a performed piece, an oral presentation, a dissertation or other piece of work where the specialised nature of the topic identifies the student.  
~~However, - students' names should be removed when marks are presented at the Board of Examiners' meeting. However, marks must be anonymised for the meeting of the Board of Examiners.~~
- 32.3 Use of examination numbers in assessment can help maintain anonymity.

### Regulation 33      **Security of marks**

Assessed work, marks and grades must be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 33.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for the security of arrangements. In practice, the operation of this may be delegated to the Teaching Organisation or equivalent.
- 33.2 Security arrangements must also include sending assessed work and marks and grades to examiners, including External Examiners; marking arrangements for online assessment; and correspondence about marks, which may be by email.
- 33.3 Marks or grade information about more than 50 individuals is classified as medium risk information under the University's policy on taking sensitive information and



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personal data outside the secure computing environment. Under this policy, if exam scripts, marks or grade information leave University premises or University computing systems then additional security measures, such as encryption or locked cabinets, must be used.

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/encrypting-sensitive-data](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/encrypting-sensitive-data)

### Regulation 34 Legibility and accessibility of assessed work

It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their submitted assessed work is legible and accessible.

#### Application of the regulation

34.1 If markers consider a significant proportion of a student's assessed work to be so illegible that they cannot reach a robust mark they must consult the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

(a) Where disability impairs the student's ability to write legibly, the Convener, in consultation with the relevant Dean and the Student Disability Service, can decide whether the work should be marked normally or whether the disability justifies transcription. If transcription is not justified and the work is completely illegible, a zero will be awarded. If it is partially legible then the legible part will be marked.

(b) Where there are no issues of disability, the Convener should ensure that the legible part of the work is marked normally. If the work is completely illegible, a zero will be awarded.

All such cases need to be drawn to the attention of the relevant Dean and the External Examiner and feedback needs to be given to the student.

34.2 Schools are responsible for informing students of the format in which assessed work must be submitted, e.g. they may require work to be submitted electronically.

### Regulation 35 Common Marking Schemes

The final mark, grade, result and award and classification decision must be expressed using the relevant Common Marking Scheme:

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

#### Application of the regulation

35.1 The University operates the following Common Marking Schemes:

CMS1 Undergraduate degree assessment (except BVM&S and MBChB)

CMS2 Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVM&S)



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CMS3 Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB)  
CMS4 Postgraduate Assessment

CMS5 Edinburgh College of Art degree programmes which use the Assessment Grade Scheme (ECA degree programmes which do not use the Assessment Grade Scheme use CMS1 and CMS4)

These are available online: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

- 35.2 In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.
- 35.3 Boards of Examiners make a statement on how marks are held, and to how many decimal places, during the internal processing of the marks for a course. Practice within a Board of Examiners needs to be consistent.



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### Regulation 36      Provisional marks

Students need to be made aware that marks for assessed coursework are provisional and may be modified when considered at the Board of Examiners meeting.

#### Application of the regulation

- 36.1 Course handbooks and other sources of advice for students are used to inform students that marks are provisional until agreed by a Board of Examiners.

### Regulation 37      Final marks

Boards of Examiners confirm marks as final in the minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting. A Board of Examiners must not revise marks agreed as final by a previous Board of Examiners.

#### Application of the regulation

- 37.1 For undergraduates and postgraduate students, the Board of Examiners agrees marks as final in the year in which they are obtained.
- 37.2 The Board of Examiners for final year students is responsible for determining the award of degree. The Board of Examiners, in determining final classifications and awards, may exercise discretion by taking into account special circumstances. See taught assessment regulation 43.
- 37.3 The Board of Examiners approves a single mark for each component of assessment for which final marks are to be released; marks for components of assessment are not rounded. The final component marks are used by the Board of Examiners when determining the overall result for the course. Rounding is only applied to final course marks (see regulation 63).
- 37.4 Students are informed of the status of the marks released and are reminded that the Board of Examiners, in determining the final marks or award, may have exercised discretion by taking into account additional relevant information.

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### Section D. Operation of Boards of Examiners

#### Regulation 38 Board of Examiners meetings

Meetings of Boards of Examiners are held to reach assessment, progression and award decisions.

##### Application of the regulation

- 38.1 See taught assessment regulation 8.1 for additional information on responsibilities of the Convener of the Board of Examiners. Further information can also be found in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)
- 38.2 The minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting needs to be an accurate record of the meeting and the approved results and decisions. Guidance on minuting Board of Examiners meetings is available: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)
- 38.3 Students are informed in advance about progression and award criteria.

#### Regulation 39 Board of Examiners: quorum

A Board of Examiners meeting is quorate if at least half the internal examiners are present and at least one External Examiner participates in and approves the decisions of the Board. No Board may have fewer than two internal examiners present. See taught assessment regulation 2.4 for the definition of an internal examiner.

##### Application of the regulation

- 39.1 All members of the Board of Examiners should attend meetings of the Board. In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the College and the Convener of the Board, representatives nominated and authorised by them may substitute for internal examiners.
- 39.2 Each subject discipline must be represented and, whenever practicable, an External Examiner from each subject should participate. Where more than one School is involved, the composition of the Board reflects the contribution of the Schools to the assessment of the courses or programmes.
- 39.3 The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines External Examiners' participation in Boards of Examiners meetings. [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)



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- 39.4 If an External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, their non-attendance must be approved by the College.
- 39.5 It is not necessary for the same members of a Board of Examiners to attend all meetings of the Board in an academic year, provided each Board is quorate.
- 39.6 If no External Examiner can attend a meeting of a Board of Examiners then at least one of them must contribute, ideally by video, telephone or web-camera and otherwise by email. The minute needs to reflect their participation.

### Regulation 40 Undergraduate Progression Board meetings

Meetings of Undergraduate Progression Boards are held to reach progression decisions. Each undergraduate student's progression status needs to be decided and recorded at least once each year by a Progression Board which is the responsibility of the School that has responsibility for the student's degree programme.

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)

#### Application of the regulation

- 40.1 The status, governance, and decision making and reporting responsibilities, of Undergraduate Progression Boards are provided in the Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards.
- 40.2 The Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards sets out the role of the External Examiner; the quorum; the role of the Special Circumstances Committee; student anonymity in discussions and the role of the Convener of the Board, for example for ensuring the accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Board.
- 40.3 ~~College Progression Boards make decisions on the credit obtained by students who have optional periods of study abroad.~~ College Progression Boards make decisions on the credit obtained by students who had optional periods of study abroad in 2017-18. For decisions in relation to students who had optional periods of study abroad in 2018-19, these responsibilities will be undertaken by a University Progression Board operating under equivalent terms of reference.

### Regulation 41 Attendance at a Board of Examiners meeting

The Convener of the Board may invite any person who has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the work under consideration by the Board to be present "in attendance". People "in attendance" at the meeting of the Board are not involved in the decision making process.



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### Regulation 42 Board of Examiners: anonymity

Anonymity should be retained until, in the opinion of the Convener of the Board of Examiners, the best interests of the students are no longer being served.

#### Application of the regulation

- 42.1 ~~When s~~Students' marks and grades are presented, considered and agreed by the Board, their names should not be visible to the Board. ~~.. should be anonymised for presentation, consideration and agreement by the Board.~~
- 42.2 Where students have to attend oral examinations, perform or otherwise present some of their work, or on courses or programmes taken by small numbers of students, anonymity may be unachievable. Anonymity should be breached only for those examiners directly involved in the relevant assessment, and students' names should be removed when marks are presented ~~marks should be re-anonymised for presentation~~ at the Board of Examiners' meeting.
- 42.3 Once decisions have been agreed by the Board of Examiners there should be a final check of the ~~un-anonymised~~ marks and decisions by the Convener of the Board, with sight of the students' names.
- 42.4 The nature of some assessment means that the Board of Examiners establishes that the interests of the students are served best by ceasing anonymity at the start of the assessment process. This requires the prior approval of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) on the basis of a case presented by College.

### Regulation 43 Special circumstances

Where a student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control, it is the student's responsibility to submit an account of these special circumstances, along with supporting evidence, to the Special Circumstances Committee for the relevant Board of Examiners (including Progression Boards). The relevant Board of Examiners decides what action to take in the light of a Special Circumstances Committee's decision on a student's submitted special circumstances.

#### Application of the regulation

- 43.1 The Special Circumstances Policy sets out the arrangements for students to request consideration of special circumstances, types of circumstances which are and are not likely to be accepted by Special Circumstances Committees, requirements for evidence to support special circumstances, the composition and operation of Special Circumstances Committees, and the actions available to



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Boards of Examiners (including Progression Boards) in the light of a Special Circumstances

Committee's decision on a student's special circumstances. The policy is available at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special\\_circumstances.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf)

### Regulation 44      **Borderlines**

Boards of Examiners must consider students whose marks are borderline for progression, award or classification purposes. Boards of Examiners can also consider students whose marks are borderline for passing a course, where special circumstances apply. Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the class or grade boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for an undergraduate 2.1 classification or 38% to 39% for a pass in a course. Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards must use the University borderline definition and must not set and use a different definition.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 44.1 Boards of Examiners must publish in advance the factors that will be taken into account for borderline progression, award, or classification decisions, which can include:
- (a) cases in which a student has performed better in courses at a higher level;
  - (b) cases where the amount of credited assessed work to be used for classification or award decisions is less than the norm (e.g., where credits have been awarded for progression purposes only in recognition of special circumstances); and
  - (c) individual student profiles of performance.
- 44.2 Boards of Examiners cannot selectively use any additional assessment to reach assessment decisions for specific students. See taught assessment regulation 19.
- 44.3 Examples of borderlines for progression decisions include:
- (a) where a student has a final mark of 38% or 39% for a course in first year that they need to pass to progress to second year;
  - (b) where a student is within two percentage points of a requirement for progression into honours or postgraduate dissertation, for example where the Degree Programme Table specifies the attainment of 50% as an average across a number of courses, the progression borderline is 48.00% to 49.99%; and
  - (c) for the award of credit on aggregate, where a student has an average of 38.00% to 39.99% over their 120 credits.
- 44.4 Boards of Examiners may award a pass for a course where a student has a borderline fail mark (i.e. 38% to 39%) and has had a request for consideration of



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special circumstances approved (see the Special Circumstances Policy: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special\\_circumstances.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf)).

### Regulation 45 Confidentiality

All discussion at a Board of Examiners' meeting is confidential.

#### Application of the regulation

- 45.1 Boards of Examiners reach a collective decision. The decision does not need to be unanimous.
- 45.2 No comments or remarks should be reported to any students, whether or not they are unattributed.
- 45.3 The views of a particular examiner should not be made known to a student. If a student makes a request to see the minutes of a Board of Examiners meeting, the information recorded in the minutes on that particular student will need to be disclosed. In doing so examiners' comments should be anonymised, e.g. assigned to "Examiner1, Examiner2". Further information is available at: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)
- 45.4 Students have a right to see information about themselves recorded in minutes of Board of Examiner meetings.
- 45.5 Other than with the written permission of the student concerned, members of staff should not make available information about marks to persons or bodies outside the University except when necessary in the context of a reference.
- 45.6 Guidance on disclosing information on students can be found at: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information)



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### Regulation 46 Release of marks

Students are informed of marks or grades for each discretely identified unit of assessment used by the Board in reaching its final mark for the course or its progression or award decision.

#### Application of the regulation

- 46.1 Marks and grades are made available to the student, together with guidance on their meaning.
- 46.2 Boards of Examiners are not obliged to provide this information if the request is made more than one year after the date of the assessment.
- 46.3 Assessed coursework marks which contribute to the overall result for a course are provided to students at the time that the assessment is marked, as a guide to each student's performance, together with guidance on the meaning of the marks.
- 46.4 Throughout the year, before consideration by a Board of Examiners, marks for examinations and assessed coursework are provisional and have no status until they are approved or modified by the Board. If such marks are released before confirmation by the Board of Examiners, students must be advised that the marks are provisional and may be modified when considered at the Board of Examiners meeting.
- 46.5 **Undergraduate non-honours degree examination marks; and professional degree examination marks or grades in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (other than final professional degree examination marks): Overall marks:** The final overall mark agreed by Boards of Examiners for diets of examinations for graduating courses of study will be made available to the student via EUCLID Student View.
- 46.6 **Undergraduate Honours degree examination marks; and final professional degree examination marks in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine: Overall classification:** The final overall classification of honours degrees will be communicated to students via EUCLID Student View. The professional degrees may be awarded with honours in Medicine, or with distinction in Veterinary Medicine, but are not otherwise classified.

### Regulation 47 Publication of results

Students will be notified of their assessment results and their progression status. Students have the right to exclude their name and/or final award results from being publicly announced.



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### Application of the regulation

- 47.1 Concessions from the following application of the regulation on Publication of results require the approval of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) based on a case presented by the relevant College.
- 47.2 Students are officially notified of their results (including course marks, progression and programme outcomes or awards) via EUCLID Student View. This may be supplemented by the communication of assessment component results via virtual learning environments. Results are entered on to students' records by the relevant School.
- 47.3 The host School of the degree programme is responsible for overseeing the communication of all undergraduate award and final programme results and all taught progression decisions. The host School of the course is responsible for overseeing the communication of all final course results to the students on the course. Students will be notified in advance of the date on which they can expect to hear their results.
- 47.4 Notification of final postgraduate results and the award of qualification to students, following the final meeting of the Board, is the responsibility of the College Postgraduate Office, except where this has been devolved to the School.
- 47.5 Students' results (including assessment component and course marks, programme and progression outcomes) may not be released over the telephone or informally via email. Students only receive their results via formal communication channels.
- 47.6 There should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme.
- 47.7 The host School will communicate a clear plan of action to each student when the student has failed an assessment that is required. This applies to final course results and some "in course" assessments where a pass is required. The communication is to take account of the student's progression and/or award status.
- 47.8 Each School will provide a general statement on their website describing their local process, indicating to their students how they should proceed in the event of failure.
- 47.9 Where a student has failed a summative assessment (either "in course" or "final") and a resubmission or retake is required and permitted, the host School ensures that the student is provided with timely academic feedback, guidance and support prior to their re-assessment.
- 47.10 The Head of the host School, or their designated representative, has responsibility for ensuring that, where a student has failed their programme of study at the final



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stage, the student is supported in a timely and personal manner. If appropriate, an offer of a private consultation may be made.

- 47.11 Once a final award, final degree programme or final course result and progression decision has been agreed by the Board of Examiners and other relevant bodies, then Schools may contact students who have failed before the decision is published in EUCLID Student View. Schools should not give informal indications about the final award, final degree programme or final course result or progression decision in advance of the decision of the Board of Examiners and/or other relevant bodies. See regulation 46.4 for the release of provisional marks.
- 47.12 Where there is a requirement to confirm pass lists to a Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the assessment results should not be collated and sent until the results of individual assessments have been made available to the student.
- 47.13 If students attend the graduation ceremony their names and degrees are included in the graduation programme. The Student Administration team is responsible for the final award listing in the graduation ceremony programme (if the student registers their intention to graduate in person) and the listing in the press (students may opt out of this listing).

### **Regulation 48 Degree examination scripts**

Degree examination scripts are received by the University in confidence. Degree examination scripts, or copies of such scripts, may be returned to students on Year 1 and 2 pre-honours courses. Degree examination scripts are not returned to students on honours or taught postgraduate courses.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 48.1 Students are entitled to see their examination scripts to assist with the provision of feedback and their self-reflective learning.
- 48.2 Course organisers, or their delegates, may show and discuss students' examination scripts with them for feedback purposes. Local arrangements are made for ways to implement the opportunity for students to see their exam scripts.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/feedback](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/feedback)
- 48.3 Other forms of assessed summative work may be returned to students, provided that sufficient documentation is retained for the Board of Examiners and External Examiners. This documentation needs to record those types of assessment which cannot be made available to the Board of Examiners.



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- 48.4 The potential return of scripts to students on Year 1 and 2 pre-honours courses does not apply to multiple choice questions which are not defined as degree examination scripts.
- 48.5 Schools will need to make arrangements to make exam scripts available to students taking Year 1 and 2 pre-honours courses to take away (on individual request) after the retention period is over. Schools may wish to decide to keep the scripts for longer than the minimum required retention period, for example in order to make them available for release to the relevant students returning in the following semester (this is at the discretion of individual Schools).

### **Regulation 49      Retention and destruction of material**

Assessed material must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's student records retention guidance.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 49.1 Information about the student records retention schedule is online: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records)
- 49.2 Schools need to maintain an adequate documentary record of assessed work, which is necessary to inform decisions of original, resit and reconvened Boards of Examiners.
- 49.3 Material which contributes to the assessment of the degree, including any written examinations, dissertations, essays, laboratory or studio work and projects, should be retained in the School for a suitable period after the Board of Examiners meeting which decides the overall classification or award of the degree, diploma or certificate. This enables the Board to respond to any student appeal.
- 49.4 Assessment material should be destroyed at the end of the retention period, or at the end of the period in which the School has agreed it will retain the information for (see regulation 48.5). For students who submit appeals, the retention period will need to be extended until the end of the appeal process. Other material which contributes to the final assessment of the degree or overall assessment of the course may be returned to the student after the expiry of the retention period. Dissertations and theses may be retained by Schools, who have the responsibility to make them available to any enquirer in response to a freedom of information request (unless an exemption applies). Assessment samples may be retained for specified periods as supporting documentation for accreditation and quality assurance purposes, e.g. Teaching Programme Reviews.



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## Section E. Assessment decisions

### Regulation 50 Award of degrees, diplomas and certificates

Degrees, diplomas and certificates are awarded by the Senatus on the basis of Board of Examiners' recommendations. Each honours programme of study, the MBChB and the BVM&S, has a Board of Examiners responsible for recommending the award of the degree and determining the classification of the degree. Each postgraduate degree, diploma or certificate examination has a Board of Examiners responsible both for determining progression to diploma/masters dissertation and for determining the final award of the qualification.

#### Application of the regulation

50.1 Information on the criteria for award of degrees, diplomas and certificates is published in advance.

### Regulation 51 Undergraduate progression: pre-honours and into honours

To progress to the next year of study and into honours, students must meet the requirements for progression which are specified in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study and degree programme tables. [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

#### Application of the regulation

51.1 The Undergraduate Progression Board has responsibility for ensuring that students have met the requirements for progression, on the basis of information provided by Boards of Examiners.

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)

51.2 The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models\\_for\\_curricula.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf)

### Regulation 52 Undergraduate honours assessment progression

The Undergraduate Progression Board has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the next year of honours study. Progressing students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more for the 120 credits of study taken in the relevant honours year; and
- (c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook.



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When all the marks for the taught components of the relevant year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

### Application of the regulation

- 52.1 The Undergraduate Progression Board has responsibility for ensuring that students have met the requirements for progression, on the basis of information provided by Boards of Examiners.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)
- 52.2 The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models\\_for\\_curricula.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf)
- 52.3 In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, in addition to other final course marks.
- 52.4 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID", as are EUCLID grades for Credit on aggregate (AA, CA and UA).  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)

### Regulation 53 Award of undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees

Students registered for an Ordinary or General (non-Honours) degree may be awarded the degree if they satisfy the requirements in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study.

### Application of the regulation

- 53.1 The Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board may propose the award of an Ordinary or General degree to those students who have met the requirements of one of these degrees but who do not satisfy the honours degree requirements.
- 53.2 The Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board should take account of the recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee and the student's general academic record when determining the award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification. Boards of



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Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.

### **Regulation 54 Undergraduate honours degree award**

The Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can be awarded a classified honours degree. To graduate students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 10 or above in their final honours year; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more for the 120 credits of final honours; and
- (c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme.

When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 54.1 The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models\\_for\\_curricula.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf)
- 54.2 In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, along with other final course marks.
- 54.3 The Board of Examiners may propose the award of an Ordinary or General degree be made to students who do not achieve the honours classification requirements, on the basis of their honours achievements.
- 54.4 The Board of Examiners may propose the award of an honours degree to students who do not achieve the requirements for an undergraduate masters, on the basis of their senior honours achievements.
- 54.5 The Board of Examiners should take account of the recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee and of the student's general academic record, when determining the classification and award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification or classification. Boards of Examiners may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.
- 54.6 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID".



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### Regulation 55 Undergraduate degree classification

The Board of Examiners for assessment of students in their final year is responsible for deriving the classification for award of an honours degree. Degree classification is derived by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each course. Exceptions are outlined in the guidance on the regulation.

#### Application of the regulation

- 55.1 The assessment weighting of a course within a year is proportional to its credit value.
- 55.2 For degrees with two honours years, including degree programmes with an obligatory period of residence/study abroad, the classification is based on performance in both honours years, which are equally weighted except for:
- (a) modern language degree programmes with a prescribed period of residence abroad where credit points for language acquisition through residence are aggregated with those associated with the language learning in the final year and where the classification is based on two honours years in line with this aggregation;
  - (b) degree programmes where students can opt to spend a period of residence/study abroad, where credits will be allocated for the study abroad but these are weighted zero in the final classification;
  - (c) the MA in International Business, where the classification for these students is based solely on the final honours year; and
  - (d) the BSc Honours degrees in the School of Biological Sciences and Deanery of Biomedical Sciences which are weighted 2:1 Senior: Junior Honours; and the BSc degrees in Chemistry which are weighted 2:1 Senior: Junior Honours.
- 55.3 Integrated Masters degrees have three honours years and their classification is based on all these years, in which the three honours years are weighted respectively 20, 40, 40 (in percentage terms), with the exception of the MChem and MChemPhys degrees “with Industrial Experience” and “with a Year Abroad”, and the MPhys degrees “with a Year Abroad” which are weighted 20, 20, 60.
- 55.4 The relevant Board of Examiners will specify which courses will be used for classification purposes for students who exit with a BSc who were previously on an Integrated Masters degree.
- 55.5 Intercalated honours degrees have a one-year honours component and their classification is based solely on the honours year. Degree classification is derived



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by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each course.

55.6 Honours degree programmes [in the Art and Design subject areas \(except the MA Fine Art\) within Edinburgh College of Art calculate classification based solely on performance the final honours year in ECA using the Grade Assessment Scheme apply an algorithm to establish the classification of award based solely on the final honours year. The algorithm is based upon the level of grades attained for each learning outcome within each course, weighted by the volume of credit for each course.](#)

55.7 Classification models for credit for study abroad are contained in the College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf)

### Regulation 56 Postgraduate assessment progression

For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project or dissertation component, students must pass the assessment requirements of the taught stage at an appropriate level at the first attempt before progression to the dissertation. In order to progress to the masters dissertation students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

For programmes where the taught and project or dissertation components are taken in parallel, or where there are not identifiable taught and project or dissertation components, the requirements for progression are determined at programme level, stated in the Programme Handbook.

### Application of the regulation

56.1 For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project / dissertation component (e.g. 120 credits of taught courses in semesters 1 and 2, followed by a 60 credit project / dissertation component):



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- (a) Postgraduate Boards of Examiners are normally convened at least twice during the year for full-time students. The initial meeting to decide matters relating to progression (to masters, or diploma), or failure, is held at the end of the coursework component. A second meeting to consider the dissertation results and the final award of degrees (or diplomas) is held soon after completion of the programme. Both meetings are equally important.
- (b) The Postgraduate Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the dissertation required for candidature for the award of a masters degree; or, in the case of other awards, exit either directly or following satisfaction of any outstanding requirement.
- (c) Exceptionally, with the permission of the relevant College Committee, a student who has been unable to sit an examination because of illness or other extenuating circumstance may, if that circumstance is certified, be allowed to progress to the dissertation stage prior to completion of the coursework assessment on condition that the dissertation will subsequently be set aside if the student is eventually unsuccessful in the coursework element of the programme.

56.2 For MFA programmes (240 credits) where there is an identifiable taught component, in order to progress to masters dissertation/project the student must pass at least 120 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits, and attain an average of at least 50% for the 180 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression to dissertation/project, and satisfy any other requirements as outlined in 56 (c) above.

56.3 In general failed course are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, along with other final course marks.

56.4 In Regulation 56(a) above, where some of the 80 credits are pass/fail courses, then where these courses are passed, they can be included in the 80 credit total. However, a mark of 50% is the mark that is to be applied in calculations under Regulation 56 (b).

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

56.5 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID"  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)



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### **Regulation 57 Postgraduate degree, diploma and certificate award**

In order to be awarded the certificate students must:

- (a) pass at least 40 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 40% for the 60 credits of study examined for the certificate; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named certificate that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded the diploma students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 40% for the 120 credits of study examined for the diploma; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named diploma that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded a masters degree students must:

- (a) have satisfied any requirements for progression, as laid out in taught assessment regulation 56 above, and
- (b) attain an additional 60 credits, by achieving a mark of at least 50% for the dissertation or project component (if the programme has a dissertation or project element) and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective Programme Handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme or diploma are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses, up to a maximum of 40 credits. For a certificate, a maximum of 20 credits may be awarded on aggregate.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 57.1 Boards of Examiners, including those involving subjects from two or more of the Schools, are required to establish guidelines in advance on how the results of individual papers or units of assessment are to be aggregated, averaged or profiled to produce the overall final result. These guidelines are an integral part of the disclosure process and must be published to students within one month of the start of the programme.
- 57.2 In general failed course are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. Exam Boards must make this distinction clear when reporting course marks.



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- 57.3 The Board of Examiners should take account of any personal circumstances and of the student's general academic record, when determining the award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification. Boards of Examiners may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.
- 57.4 The General Postgraduate Regulations permit a General Postgraduate Certificate to be attained by students who do not fulfil the requirements for a specific diploma or certificate award but who have attained a minimum of 60 credits gained from passes in University courses which count towards graduation. At least 40 of the credits attained must be at level 11.
- 57.5 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID"  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)

### **Regulation 58 Postgraduate dissertations**

Resubmissions of revised dissertations are not permitted for postgraduate masters programmes unless a student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 58.1 In exceptional circumstances, the University's Special Circumstance Policy allows the Board of Examiners to apply to the College for permission to allow a student to resubmit a revised dissertation.

### **Regulation 59 Award of postgraduate merit**

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with merit. To achieve a merit, a student must be awarded at least 60% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and must pass all other courses with an average of at least 60%. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for merits.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 59.1 Merit may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are a specifically named exit qualification.
- 59.2 A merit may not be awarded to a student leaving with a general postgraduate certificate or diploma or for any reason due to academic shortfalls.



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- 59.3 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of dissertations, merit can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertation.
- 59.4 For degrees which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of merit will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.
- 59.5 For MFA, the award of merit relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).
- 59.6 Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.
- 59.7 The average for the courses is calculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average. All courses must be passed at 40% or above for the award of merit.
- 59.8 The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

### **Regulation 60      Award of postgraduate distinction**

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with distinction. To achieve a distinction, a student must be awarded at least 70% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and must pass all other courses with an average of at least 70%. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for distinctions.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 60.1 Distinctions may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are a specifically named exit qualification.
- 60.2 A distinction may not be awarded to a student leaving with a general postgraduate certificate or for any reason due to academic shortfalls.
- 60.3 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of dissertations then a distinction can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertation.



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- 60.4 For degree programmes which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of distinction will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.
- 60.5 For MFA, the award of distinction relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).
- 60.6 Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 68.00% to 69.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.
- 60.7 The average for the courses is calculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average. All courses must be passed at 40% or above for the award of distinction.
- 60.8 The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)



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### Regulation 61 Award of credit from other Universities

Boards of Examiners confirm the award of credit from other universities which is used in the award of a University of Edinburgh degree.

#### Application of the regulation

61.1 There are two types of credit from external bodies: recognition of prior credit at admission, determined by Colleges against published criteria; and recognition of external learning whilst on programme. In both cases recognition of prior learning is recorded on admission or during study, with credit awarded at exit.

[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

### Regulation 62 Minuting of decisions of Boards of Examiners

The internal and External Examiners must concur in the mark and grade to be awarded to each student and in the classification and award of degree to be made. Boards of Examiners must record all decisions in the minutes of the meeting.

#### Application of the regulation

62.1 Once the Board of Examiners has decided on the final marks, grades and if appropriate, class of degree and award for each student, the students' names must then be made visible to the Board of Examiners. There must then be a final check of the results before the list is agreed and recorded in the minutes. Only in the event of detection of an error, which was not detectable when examination numbers were used, can changes be made to the marks, grades or class of degree at this stage. Any such change should be recorded in the minutes.

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)

62.2 The Convener receives and is responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meetings are an accurate record of the meeting and of the approved results.

62.3 Minutes should include:

- (a) a record of the names of the examiners and those in attendance at the meeting;
- (b) relevant information considered at the meeting or by the Special Circumstances Committee, and outcomes from this;
- (c) discussion and outcomes of borderline cases;
- (d) details of any modification of marks, grades or classification, and the reasons for these; and



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- (e) comments by the External Examiner(s) about the examination of the course, the performance of the students in general, and their approval of results agreed by the Board of Examiners.

62.4 The minute is a confidential document, although information on a particular student may need to be disclosed to that student under the Data Protection Act and generic information may need to be disclosed under Freedom of Information. Further information is available at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

62.5 If agreement cannot be reached on concurrence of decisions then the issue is referred to the Head of College.

### **Regulation 63 Board of Examiners: return of marks**

Assessment and course results, degree classification and awards agreed by the Board of Examiners and confirmed by the External Examiner(s) must be recorded on the student record system as the final official results of the University.

#### **Application of the regulation**

63.1 Schools have responsibility for ensuring that final results are displayed accurately in the student record system. More than one person should be involved in checking their accuracy.

63.2 When marks for courses are finalised (and not before then), they must be rounded to an integer, i.e. with no decimal places. Any mark which is xx.50 or above is rounded up and any mark which is xx.49 or below is rounded down, e.g. 59.50% is rounded to 60%, 59.49% is rounded to 59%. Individual course marks must be rounded before they are released to students and the rounded marks must be used in calculating the overall mean mark. The overall mean mark is to be used in Honours classification, progression, and award decisions. The overall mean mark is not rounded.

63.3 Schools have responsibility for uploading course results and final award outcomes in line with the deadlines published each year by Student Systems.

[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Support/awards.htm](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Support/awards.htm)

63.4 In the case of autumn (August) undergraduate examinations, results should be submitted as soon as possible and not later than 10 days before the start of the next semester.

63.5 Provisional marks for components of assessment may also be released to students via the student record system (see regulation 36)



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### Regulation 64 Status of decisions

Decisions by a Board of Examiners, once certified in writing, are final. In exceptional circumstances a Convener of the Board of Examiners can reconvene the Board to review a decision.

#### Application of the regulation

- 64.1 A Board of Examiners may, at the request of any of its members or member of the Special Circumstances Committee, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light or if any error having a material bearing on that decision or an error in the written certification of that decision has been made. A member of the Board may request a review but it is the Convener who must review the decision in the light of any new significant information or error brought to light, and therefore the Convener, and not a member of the Board, who decides whether to reconvene the Board.
- 64.2 If the Board is satisfied that there are grounds for varying the decision, the Board shall forthwith report its decision to Student Systems
- 64.3 Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an examination or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any examination or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall ~~forthwith~~ correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and that whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made. [Where such an error affects degree award or classification, the School should contact the relevant College and Academic Services before notifying the student of any change.](#)
- 64.4 In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.
- 64.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning examinations.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

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### Regulation 65 Convener's Action

The Convener of the Board of Examiners, Progression Board, or Special Circumstances Committee may take decisions by Convener's Action.

#### Application of the regulation

- 65.1 This may occur when the Board of Examiners takes a decision in principle but needs confirmation or further information, or when the Board, or Special Circumstances Committee considers the possible outcomes and authorises the Convener, once relevant information is known, to apply the appropriate option. Convener's Action may also be appropriate when the decision to be made follows an existing precedent.
- 65.2 Decisions made by Convener's Action should be recorded and reported to the relevant Board or Committee.

### Regulation 66 Failure to complete all the assessment requirements of a degree programme

When a student fails to complete all the assessment requirements of a degree programme the Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board will investigate the case. If there is no satisfactory reason then taught assessment regulation 64 on unsatisfactory progress applies. If the Special Circumstances Committee for the relevant Board of Examiners (including Progression Boards) is given sufficient evidence that the performance of a student has been affected for reasons of illness, accident or other circumstances beyond the student's control, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

- 66.1 The University's Special Circumstances Policy is available at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special\\_circumstances.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf)

### Regulation 67 Unsatisfactory academic progress

The University may exclude students who do not meet the criteria for progression on their programme.

#### Application of the regulation

- 67.1 Degree regulations, Degree Programme Tables, programme handbooks and/or course handbooks must contain details of the progress which students are



# Taught Assessment Regulations

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expected to achieve within given periods. They must also include warnings that students are liable to be considered for exclusion if these expectations are not met.

- 67.2 Where a student fails to meet the published progression criteria, the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies will be used.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal\\_exclusion\\_from\\_study.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf)
- 67.3 Some degree programmes leading to a professional qualification include Fitness to Practise considerations. Any issues of unsatisfactory progress in relation to fitness to practise are dealt with according to the relevant College's published Fitness to Practise procedures.
- 67.4 A student declared to have made unsatisfactory progress under professional Fitness to Practise requirements is normally excluded from all further attendance at classes and examinations leading to the professional qualification, but is entitled to apply to the College for permission to re-enter for assessment in a suitable alternative programme which does not lead to a professional qualification.

### **Regulation 68      Academic Appeal**

Students have the right of academic appeal against the decisions of Boards of Examiners or Progression Boards on specific grounds, which are set out in the University's Student Appeal Regulations

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals)

### **Section F.              Interpretation and Significant Disruption**

### **Regulation 69      Interpretation of regulations**

The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has authority to resolve any dispute arising from these regulations. The University Secretary and their nominees have authority to make urgent decisions relating to assessment issues.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 69.1 Staff who need guidance on the taught assessment regulations, beyond that provided in the regulations and associated guidance, should contact the relevant College Office, Dean and/or the Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression)



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### Regulation 70 Significant disruption: concessions and standards

When the University's assessment practices are subject to significant disruption then the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may approve temporary concessions to mitigate the impact of assessment disruption on students, without compromising academic standards. Board of Examiners take decisions that ensure the consistency of treatment of students and the maintenance of academic standards. The overriding principles are that:

- (a) the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners remains paramount;
- (b) the University's academic standards will be maintained; and
- (c) the provisions of the University's Taught Assessment Regulations remain in force except where a concession has been approved by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

These concessions will only be used where necessary: if a Board of Examiners is able to operate without a concession then the Board will do so.

#### Application of the regulation

- 70.1 Significant disruption can be extremes of weather, loss of facilities, and factors beyond the University's control which have an impact on the assessment of students. This may result in Boards of Examiners only having partial results available.
- 70.2 In response to individual significant disruptions that may have a widespread impact on assessment, the University will adopt a communication strategy for students, staff and key external stakeholders, e.g. External Examiners, to ensure that they are aware of the measures that are adopted.
- 70.3 All forms of assessment, such as examination scripts and course assignments, are the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required.
- 70.4 Drawing on previous experience [CSPC 14/15 2 C], the issues and regulations where CSPC may consider concessions include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) External Examiners: number appointed; commenting on examination papers; participation in Boards: confirmation of results [Taught Assessment Regulations 5, 8.1(a), 38, 39.1, 39.2, 39.6, 62.3(e), 63]
  - (b) Ensuring that there is appropriate external input for relevant decisions, for example, External Examiners provide an important quality assurance function in the assessment process. If an External Examiner is unable to act then that quality assurance function still needs to be carried out;
  - (c) Board of Examiners' quorum [TAR 39, 39.1];
  - (d) Progression requirements and timing of progression decisions [TAR 51, 52, 56, 56.1(a) and Degree regulations on *Progression and Permissible Load*];
  - (e) Feedback schedules [TAR 16].



# Taught Assessment Regulations

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### **Regulation 71      Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards**

The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee must confirm that significant disruption has occurred before the provisions of the significant disruption regulations come into effect. In periods of significant disruption, Boards may need to take decisions on the basis of partial information. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of a student should proceed to determine marks and grades as usual. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of only some students should proceed to determine marks and grades for those students.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 71.1 Where Boards have sufficient evidence to make decisions then the decision will be made and will stand, unless subsequent information becomes available which it would be in the student's academic interest for the Board to consider.
- 71.2 Situations may arise in which assessment results are unavailable for particular elements of assessment for all students or for only some students. Such elements of assessment may become available after the disruption is over.
- 71.3 Within the limits described below, and where the outcomes are beyond reasonable doubt, Boards are empowered to make decisions in the absence of assessment results which are expected to become available at a later date.
- 71.4 At the start of the meeting, the Board of Examiners or Progression Board must agree on any specific elements of assessment without whose marks they cannot proceed to determine a student's result for the course or progression decision. Before making such a decision, the Board should consider carefully whether there is sufficient other information already available to allow it to take a view on such elements of assessment. If it is not possible to determine a result or decision then the Board will reconvene when information is available.
- 71.5 Where a very high proportion of the assessment results are available, it is possible that the Board may decide it is able to determine a student's marks and grades for the course. The Board must be satisfied that, in its academic judgement, the mark and grade assigned is correct and the decision beyond reasonable doubt (i.e. the Board has confidence that the outcome will not need to be changed when further assessment results become available).
- 71.6 Where less than four-fifths of the assessment credit results are available, it is unlikely that the Board will be able to determine a mark or grade for the course. However, if at least half of the assessment results are available, then the Board may decide it is able to confirm a pass or progression outcome for the



# Taught Assessment Regulations

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student. If unable to reach a decision, even on a pass or progression outcome, the Board should record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.

- 71.7 Where less than half of the assessment results are available for a course, it is unlikely that the Board will have sufficient information to reach any decision, even on a pass or progression outcome, and the Board should record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark, grade and progression decision.
- 71.8 No Board should return a fail decision in a situation where any unavailable assessment results will become available at a later date, unless it is absolutely clear that even passes at 100% in the unavailable assessments would not be sufficient to turn a fail into a pass.
- 71.9 Once all assessment results are available, Boards should reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to determine outstanding marks, grades and progression decisions and to review the status of any decisions where significant information is now available.

6 April 2017

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2018/19**

**Executive Summary**

This paper contains the draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2018/19. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the key changes made.

**How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper supports the Committee’s priority of “good housekeeping”.

**Action requested**

CSPC is invited to discuss and approve the new assessment regulations for academic year 2018/19.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Approved regulations will be communicated by Academic Services’ annual update on regulations and policies.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications in updating the regulations and communicating the changes to staff and students. This work is expected to be managed within existing resources.

**2. Risk assessment**

No risks have been identified.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed changes present no new equality and diversity implications.

**4. Freedom of information**

*The paper is open.*

**Originator of the paper**

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services and Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services

24 May 2018

## Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2018/19

Regulation	What has changed
<b>3 Examiners: appointment</b>	<b>Amended 3.4</b> Colleges may approve internal examiner appointment from Research Pooling partners (previously Curriculum and Student Progression Committee). <b>Amended 3.5</b> Clarifies language regarding College authority for decision.
<b>6 Examiners: responsibilities</b>	<b>Amended 6.1</b> Clarifies that Colleges ensure External Examiners are aware of the regulations and recommendations available to them.
<b>10 Reasonable Adjustments</b>	<b>Amended</b> Removes reference to “Learning Profile” (now “Schedule of Adjustments”).
<b>13 Progression Review</b>	<b>New 13.5 Proposed inclusion from REC</b> – Schools must ensure students are aware of how reviews will be conducted.
<b>20 Preparation for oral assessment</b>	<b>Amended 20.2</b> Clarifies that Internal Examiners make arrangements for oral assessment in consultation with the School.
<b>22 23 and 24 examiner recommendations</b>	<b>Amended</b> Clarifies that examiners “agree and specify” one of the recommendations available.
<b>36 Committee recommendation</b>	<b>New 36.4</b> Proposed inclusion from REC – When committee varies examiner recommendation, College Dean or representative will be available to discuss the outcome if the student requests.

# Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

## Academic Year ~~2017/18~~/19



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### Purpose of Policy

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, articulating the academic goals and policies of the University.

### Overview

These regulations:

- (i) replace the previous Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
- (ii) set out the rules which must be followed in research assessment for Research Degrees; and
- (iii) provide links to other sources of guidance or related regulations.

### Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide and apply to all postgraduate research degrees at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework levels 11 and 12. The regulations apply to work submitted for assessment during the current academic year. They relate to all research degrees listed in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk).

More detail is given in the document.

**Contact Officer** Susan Hunter Academic Policy Officer [Susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk)

### Document control

Dates	Approved:	Starts:	Equality impact assessment:	Amendments:	Next Review:
	01.06.17	18.09.17		N/A	2017

**Approving authority** Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

**Consultation undertaken** Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations Working Group, Colleges, EUSA, Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, Researcher Experience Committee, Student Disability Service, College Academic Misconduct Officers, Records Management, Distance Learning, Student Administration and Edinburgh Research and Innovation

**Section responsible for policy maintenance & review** Academic Services

**Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations** Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, DRPS Glossary of Terms: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18.pdf)

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**UK Quality Code** The regulations are consistent with UK Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees

**Policies superseded by this policy** Previous versions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

**Alternative format** If you require this document in an alternative format please email [Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk) or telephone 0131 651 4490.

**Keywords** Assessment, assessment regulations, degree award, examination, examiners, progression, research assessment, oral examination, viva

# Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2017/18/19



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## Additional guidance

For research degree programmes that contain a significant proportion of taught courses, taught elements are governed by the University's Taught Assessment Regulations:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf). The regulations must be applied, unless a concession has been awarded by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The "Application of the regulation" must also be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. Concessions and exemptions are recorded by CSPC and Colleges as appropriate. The regulations operate in accordance with legislation and University policies on Equality and Diversity:

[www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies). Members of staff who need additional guidance may consult their Head of College or their nominee, their College Postgraduate Office, Academic Services, Student Administration or Student Systems.

Where reference is made to "the relevant Dean" this should be taken as being the Dean with responsibility for postgraduate research matters and "the Committee" is the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, or the Committee of each College which is formally identified as exercising the functions of a College Postgraduate Committee for the purposes of postgraduate research academic decisions. Where reference is made to 'the Head of College' or 'Head of School' this may also in some cases be a designated representative of that individual. The term MSc by Research includes Masters by Research, ~~and~~ MTh by Research and LLM by Research.

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For Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) students on courses that use the assessment grade scheme, the term 'mark' in the regulations also includes 'grade'.

Definitions of some of the key terms in the regulations can be found in the Glossary of Terms: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18-19.pdf](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2017-18-19.pdf)

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These research assessment regulations, and related University practices, are consistent with the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code of Higher Education, Chapter B11: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b)

This document should be read in conjunction with University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study; the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students; the External Examining Code of Practice; and Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees. These are available via:

[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/a-to-z](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/a-to-z)



**Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for  
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## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 20~~17~~18/19

### Section A Roles and Responsibilities

#### Regulation 1 Scope of regulations

All relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees apply to all Doctoral and MPhil degree programmes except where stated.

The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees also apply to MSc by Research degree programmes where relevant. Information regarding how these regulations apply to MSc by Research degree programmes is provided in Section E of these regulations.

#### Regulation 2 College Postgraduate Committee: responsibility for research degree programmes

Research degree programmes are the responsibility of the relevant College Postgraduate Committee.

#### Application of the regulation

- 2.1 The College Postgraduate Committee will consider and ratify the recommendation of the Internal and External Examiners appointed to examine a student for the award of a research degree.
- 2.2 The responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee include:
  - (a) approving the format of assessments;
  - (b) the security of and arrangements for assessments; examining and marking assessed work; and processing and storing marks and grades;
  - (c) the quality and standards of marking;
  - (d) ensuring all examiners are aware of their responsibilities;
  - (e) accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Committee.
- 2.3 Committees may, where appropriate, delegate operation of some responsibilities to Schools. Such delegation decisions are recorded by the College.
2. Colleges produce information on postgraduate research assessment:  
CHSS: [www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/research-students](http://www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/research-students)  
CMVM: [www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/CMVM/PGMarketing/CMVM+Postgraduate](http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/CMVM/PGMarketing/CMVM+Postgraduate)  
CSE: [www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pagelD=118719348](http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pagelD=118719348)

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### Regulation 3 Examiners: appointment

Examiners are appointed by the relevant College. There are Internal Examiners, who are staff of the University nominated by the relevant Head of School, and External Examiners.

#### Application of the regulation

- 3.1 Where appropriate, upon receipt of a student's Notice of Intention to Submit form, the College Office will contact the Head of the student's School to request that examiners are nominated for the assessment of the thesis or submitted assessment.
- 3.2 Before submitting nominations to the College, the Head of School should consult the student's supervisors over the choice of examiners. Supervisors inform students of the names of possible examiners, and students must inform their supervisor if any problems are likely to arise if particular examiners are appointed. Any comments will be taken into account but students have no right to determine the Head of School's eventual recommendation, and therefore have no right to veto any particular appointment.
- 3.3 The External Examiner will be approached informally by the Head of School to establish their willingness to act. However, the College Postgraduate Committee has responsibility for the approval of all examiners. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the College committee in good time before the relevant assessment. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant College Office.
- 3.4 Internal Examiners are academic and/or honorary staff of the University. Honorary staff, in this context include:

Staff from Associated Institutions: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/associated-institutions](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/associated-institutions) ;

Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House School of Education;

Academic staff from Research Pooling partners who are appointed as an Internal Examiner by ~~the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, on the basis of a recommendation from~~ the relevant College;

and NHS staff who are honorary staff members of the University of Edinburgh.
- 3.5 Internal Examiners are appointed by the student's School with approval by the ~~relevant~~ College ~~\_committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters.~~ Staff who are or who have been a supervisor of the student at any time cannot be an Internal Examiner for that student.



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- 3.6 No person who has held an appointment on the teaching or research staff or has been a student of the University, or who has been granted honorary status in the University, is eligible to act as an External Examiner until a period of four years has elapsed since the termination of the appointment or the status. In exceptional circumstances this rule may be waived by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Members of affiliated or associated institutions may be Internal but not External Examiners.
- 3.7 The School must inform the student of the names of their examiners when the examiners have been approved by the College committee.
- 3.8 If more than three months have elapsed between the examiners being appointed and the student submitting the thesis, the College Office has responsibility for checking whether the commitments of any examiner have changed significantly so that consideration may be given to appointing an alternative examiner.

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**Regulation 4 Non-Examining Chair: appointment**

The College must appoint a Non-Examining Chair if the Internal Examiner is acting for the first time, or is a member of honorary staff.

**Application of the regulation**

- 4.1 The appropriate process for appointing a Non-Examining Chair is the same as for appointing Internal Examiners (see regulation 3).
- 4.2 The role of the Non-Examining Chair is to ensure that due process is carried out and to attend for the duration of the oral examination. The non-examining chair needs to be a person with appropriate experience of postgraduate research examining from within the University. The Non-Examining Chair need not be from the same School as the student. The Non-Examining Chair must ensure that all parties to the examination process fully understand the expectations of them and should offer assistance and facilitation where necessary. The Non-Examining Chair must not express an opinion on the merits of the thesis.

**Regulation 5 Number of examiners**

Each student is assessed by at least one External Examiner and one Internal Examiner.



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### Application of the regulation

- 5.1 In particular cases, such as the assessment of an interdisciplinary topic, a second External Examiner may be appointed.
- 5.2 When the student is or has been a member of staff of the University during their research degree there must be two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner. "Member of staff" will be defined by the student's School with approval by College. There is no requirement for students who are or have only been tutors or demonstrators (or have undertaken similar roles) to have two external examiners.
- 5.3 See also Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

### Regulation 6 Examiners: responsibilities

Examiners must have the requisite experience to examine the degree programme at the level at which it is offered. They need to meet the responsibilities set out by the College Postgraduate Committee and comply with quality and standards requirements.

### Application of the regulation

- 6.1 The College Postgraduate Committee will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners, and ensure they are aware of these regulations and the recommendations available to them.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the College Postgraduate Committee to ensure that the External Examiner is competent to assess the degree. The External Examiner is appointed for their specialist knowledge, whereas the Internal Examiner may be a generalist or an expert in only part of the subject matter of the thesis.
- 6.3 Internal Examiners must be fully conversant with the procedures and regulations for oral examinations within the University. Heads of School must ensure that Internal Examiners are aware of all their duties in the examination process.
- 6.4 During the assessment the examiners must hold the thesis and the abstract in strict confidence.

### Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No member of University of Edinburgh staff, Internal Examiner, External Examiner, or Non-Examining Chair shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a



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## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 20~~17~~18/19

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personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.

### Application of the regulation

- 7.1 If there is a potential conflict of interest the College Postgraduate Committee will be consulted.
- 7.2 The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is relevant:  
[www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict\\_of\\_Interest.pdf](http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict_of_Interest.pdf)



## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 20~~17~~18/19

### Section B Conduct of Assessment

#### Regulation 8 Assessment requirements: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to be aware of the assessment practices and requirements for the degree programme, including the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis.

##### Application of the regulation

- 8.1 The grounds for the award of specified research degrees are provided in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)
- 8.2 The student must read the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf)
- 8.3 It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment practice and requirements, including *The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students*.
- 8.4 There are flow charts showing the thesis assessment process and the responsibilities of the student, College, School and Examiners: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/doctoralthesisassessment.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/doctoralthesisassessment.pdf)
- 8.5 The Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis can be found online at: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf)

#### Regulation 9 Assessment deadlines: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to meet their assessment deadlines, including thesis submission deadlines and oral examination times and location.

##### Application of the regulation

- 9.1 It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment requirements.

#### Regulation 10 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

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### Application of the regulation

- 10.1 Reasonable adjustments must be determined in advance by the Student Disability Service (SDS). They are recorded in the student's [Learning Profile](#)/Schedule of Adjustments by the SDS, which communicates the [Learning Profile](#)/Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's supervisor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, and other relevant areas.
- 10.2 The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments [on the Learning Profile](#). The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School. In the case of oral examinations, the supervisor is responsible for communicating relevant adjustments to the chair of the oral examination.
- 10.3 The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the SDS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the [Learning Profile](#)/Schedule of Adjustments, the SDS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.
- 10.4 The SDS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support: [www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/study-adjustments/support-to-help-with-your-studies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/study-adjustments/support-to-help-with-your-studies)
- 10.5 The SDS supports students in the preparation and review of their [Learning Profile](#)/Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their [Schedule of Adjustments Learning Profile](#) covers all types of assessment methods relevant to the programme. For example if a student discovers that an aspect of their programme is likely to impact on their support needs, they should contact the SDS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their [Learning Profile](#)/Schedule of Adjustments.
- 10.6 Arrangements can be made via the SDS for students with temporary injuries or impairment, on the submission of relevant medical information. Students should contact the SDS as soon as possible to allow the SDS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

### Regulation 11 Language of assessment: languages other than English or Gaelic

The English language is the usual medium of teaching and assessment at the University of Edinburgh. All work submitted for assessment must be written in the English language, except for those courses and classes where the School or Course handbook specifies that written work can and/or should be submitted in the language which is being studied, and/or where the learning outcomes allow for the possibility of submitting work in a

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language other than English. All theses, research projects and dissertations must be written in English. Different arrangements apply in relation to the use of Gaelic (see regulation 12).

### Application of the regulation

- 11.1 Quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.
- 11.2 In very exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation written in a language other than English. Approval will only be given in cases where the nature of the research is such that presentation of the research results in the language(s) of the materials under analysis confers significant intellectual advantage to the community of scholars who are expected to comprise the primary audience of the research. Approval to do so must be sought either at the time of admission to the University or no later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study), and will not normally be granted retrospectively. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that there are sound academic reasons for the request, and that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation in the proposed language of submission.
- 11.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a substantial summary (of approximately 10,000 words in the case of theses) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in a language other than English, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

### Regulation 12 Language of assessment: Gaelic

Theses, research projects and dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

### Application of the regulation

- 12.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 12.2 Candidates who wish to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible, and certainly not later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) in the case of



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Doctoral and MPhil students. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation.

- 12.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

**Regulation 13 Progression review**

The first progression review will take place for all students within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. The student must participate in a meeting and may be required to make a written submission and/or prepare an oral presentation. Progress in the subsequent years (at 9 to 12 months) is assessed until the thesis is submitted. The online progression report form must be completed.

**Application of the regulation**

- 13.1 Guidance on the procedure for the progression review is included in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf)
- 13.2 It is expected that progression reviews are normally held early within the 9 – 12 month period, to allow time for a repeat review if this is required.
- 13.3 There are similar procedures for full-time and part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. Part-time students will not be expected to have made as much progress as full-time students within this time. Exceptionally, the first progression review may be postponed, with permission from the College. The postponement must be no longer than six months.
- 13.4 Colleges/Schools may also have additional requirements, for example 10 week review.
- 13.5 Schools must ensure that students are aware of how the progression review will be conducted.

**Commented [HS1]:** Proposed inclusion from CoP, agreed at REC 16/1/18

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### Regulation 14 Annual progression review recommendation

The Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors will make one of the following recommendations after the annual review

- (a) confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;
- (b) a repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;
- (c) for part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;
- (d) registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;
- (e) registration for a postgraduate taught degree (for example MSc) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;
- (f) exclusion from study.

The College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for making the progression decision.

#### Application of the regulation

- 14.1 If the outcome of the annual review is 14(b) then the three month period starts from the date of issue of the progression decision to the student.
- 14.2 If there are doubts about a student's ability to complete a PhD successfully then option (d) must be considered. If there are serious doubts as to the student's research capability, then options (e) or (f) must be considered.
- 14.3 The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal\\_exclusion\\_from\\_study.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf)

### Regulation 15 Repeat progression review

If the annual progression review indicates some concerns about a student's progress then a repeat review must be undertaken within three months.

#### Application of the regulation

- 15.1 The repeat review can contain any or all of the components of the progression review (see regulation 13).
- 15.2 The options for recommendations from the repeat progression review are those listed in regulation 14, with the exception of Regulation 14(b). Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.
- 15.3 The College has responsibility for providing the student with a statement on expectations for progress.



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**Regulation 16 Notification of intention to submit a thesis for assessment**

Students must notify their supervisor and the College Postgraduate Committee of their intention to submit their work for assessment.

**Application of the regulation**

- 16.1 The student must complete the suite of submission forms at least two months before the thesis is submitted:
- Notification of Intention to Submit,
  - Thesis Abstract,
  - Access to a Thesis and Publication of Abstract.

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)

**Regulation 17 Deadlines for the submission of a thesis for assessment**

A student must submit their thesis for assessment, to the relevant College, within 12 months of the completion of their prescribed period of study, except:

- For the degree of **PhD by Research Publications** a student must submit their thesis within three to twelve months of registration.

**Application of the regulation**

- 17.1 At least two, soft-bound copies of each thesis containing an abstract and lay summary, and one electronic copy of each thesis, abstract and lay summary must be submitted to the relevant College Office. If more than two examiners are appointed then additional copies of the thesis will be required. Only the submission sent by the College Office is assessed by the examiners.
- 17.2 All theses must conform to regulations and guidance in Section C.
- 17.3 Once a student has submitted a thesis they cannot retract it.
- 17.4 The relevant College Office is responsible for transmitting the thesis and the examiners' report forms to the examiners.

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### Regulation 18 Early submission

Any student wishing to submit their thesis earlier than three months prior to the end of the prescribed period of study must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee.

#### Application of the regulation

- 18.1 The student must discuss early submission with their supervisor. Colleges are unlikely to approve early submission without the agreement of the Principal Supervisor.

### Regulation 19 Examiners' reports

The College will send the thesis to the examiners who must each submit an initial, independent written report in advance of the oral examination. The examiners must not consult with each other in completing their initial report. Examiners will not send any comments or decision to the student prior to the oral examination. After the oral examination the examiners will submit a joint report.

#### Application of the regulation

- 19.1 At the University of Edinburgh, doctoral and MPhil degrees are assessed through a two-stage process in which each examiner, acting independently, submits an initial ('Part I') report on the thesis before the oral examination is held. Following the oral, the examiners are asked to submit a joint ('Part II') report on the thesis. Examiners submit their own Part I reports and the Internal Examiner is responsible for sending the Part II report to the relevant College Postgraduate Committee. The forms are available online:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms)
- 19.2 Exceptionally, if the examiners do find it necessary to consult before writing their Part I reports, this fact and the reason(s) for it must be noted in their reports.
- 19.3 The reports must be sufficiently detailed to enable members of the College Postgraduate Committee (after the oral examination) to assess the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. They must be expressed in terms that are intelligible to those who are not specialists in the particular field of the thesis.
- 19.4 Examiners must complete their initial reports (Part I) prior to the oral examination, in the time frame advised by the School or College. The joint report (Part II) should be completed directly after the oral examination and sent to the College Postgraduate Committee within two weeks of the oral.



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- 19.5 The chair of the oral examination should ensure that the Part II report gives a full account of the examiners' views. In the unlikely event of examiners failing to reach agreement, separate recommendations may be made and will be subject to arbitration by the College Postgraduate Committee.

**Regulation 20 Preparation for oral assessment**

All examiners must participate in any oral assessment of the student. The College has responsibility for overseeing the oral assessment of the student.

**Application of the regulation**

- 20.1 Oral assessment may be conducted using technology such as video conferencing, enabling the student or an examiner to participate but not be physically present at the University. Such remote assessment must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee, the student, all examiners and any Non-Examining Chair. The College has responsibility for approving and overseeing this process.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked\\_phd\\_oral.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked_phd_oral.pdf)
- 20.2 The Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring that all the necessary arrangements for the oral assessment are made in consultation with the School. The arrangements, including the date and place of the oral, the chairing of it, and the names of all those participating in it, must be provided in advance to all those who are to be present (i.e. the student, all examiners, any Non-Examining Chair and any observer). Where a Non-Examining Chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 4.)
- 20.3 If an examiner is unable to participate in the oral assessment, it may be postponed to a later date. If postponement would be a serious hardship to the student, the College Postgraduate Committee will consider appointing an alternative examiner.
- 20.4 The examiners complete and submit the relevant forms by the specified deadline:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms)

**Regulation 21 Oral examination**

The examiners will hold an oral examination to assess a student's doctoral or MPhil thesis. Oral examination may be used as part of the assessment process for other research degrees.



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**Application of the regulation**

- 21.1 The expectation is that the oral examination will be held within three months of submission of the thesis.
- 21.2 The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the examiners are assessing jointly whether the thesis and the student's defence of it satisfy the requirements and regulations for the award of the degree. Requirements that specific research degree programmes have for oral assessment are set out in Section D.
- 21.3 Where there is a non-examining chair, they will chair and attend for the duration of the oral. Where a non-examining chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 3.)
- 21.4 Supervisors may attend the oral examination, with consent of the student and examiners, but will not participate in or comment during the oral examination. Supervisors must leave the examination room with the student and do not participate in the examiners' discussion and decision on recommendations.
- 21.5 The (oral) examination procedure of practice-led PhDs can include exhibitions, performances and other events, elements and processes.
- 21.6 The professional doctorate oral examination may cover any part of the degree programme.
- 21.7 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation, indicate their recommendation to the student. The examiners must stress, however, that their recommendation is not final but will form the basis of the Part II report (see regulations 22-24). Receipt of the Part II report by the student from the College constitutes formal notification of the decision and beginning of any additional period of study set by the examiners.

**Regulation 22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation**

After the oral examination, the examiners must ~~make~~ agree and specify one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and

**Commented [HS2]:** Proposed inclusion agreed at REC 16/1/18

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Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or

- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses, as identified by the examiners, must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed.** The thesis needs work above and beyond editorial corrections or minor weaknesses in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, and this work may require further supervision. However, the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner(s) (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MPhil.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these

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requirements; but the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil;  
or

- (g) **Award MPhil following Minor Corrections.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil except for stated minor corrections in the thesis. The student should be invited to carry out the specified minor corrections as indicated by the examiners. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (h) **Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis may satisfy the requirements for the degree of MPhil if stated deficiencies in the thesis are remedied. Accordingly, the student should be invited to resubmit the thesis in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners for the degree of MPhil. The revisions should be completed within a further period which must not exceed 12 months; or
- (i) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements or the requirements of the MPhil. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (j) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree requirements.

**Application of the regulation**

- 22.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once.
- 22.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under 22(b) to (h) then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 22.3 A student presenting a thesis under Regulation 22 (h) may not subsequently be permitted to resubmit the thesis under Regulation 24 (e).
- 22.4 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

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22.5 Where a student is offered the award of a different degree under (f), (g) or (i) above then the original word limits for the offered degree are set aside.

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### Regulation 23 PhD by Research Publications: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make agree and specify one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

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- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

**Application of the regulation**

- 23.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once.
- 23.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 23 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 23.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

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**Regulation 24 MPhil: examiner recommendation**

After the oral examination, the examiners must ~~make agree and specify~~ one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award MPhil.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree of MPhil as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without supervision and without undertaking any further original research. These corrections to the

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thesis must be completed within a specified period of not more than three months and are, subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the MPhil and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (g) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation

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- 24.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once.
- 24.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 24 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 24.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 24.4 Where the student is offered the award of an MPhil as an exit degree, having originally submitted for a doctorate, the MPhil word count will be set aside.

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### Regulation 25 Thesis resubmissions

Where the examiners decide that resubmission of a thesis is required, they must write a detailed statement of the aspects which require revision. The resubmitted thesis is judged only against this written statement. A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis.

#### Application of the regulation

- 25.1 No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis passed as satisfactory at the first assessment can be introduced at a later stage. The written statement and the aspects of the thesis which require revision must be approved by the College Postgraduate Committee and cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that Committee.
- 25.2 A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis. Thereafter, at most, they may make only minor corrections.
- 25.3 In the event of resubmission, the examiners will re-assess the thesis and hold a second oral examination.
- 25.4 If resubmission is recommended, only one copy of the original thesis should be returned to the student. The other should be retained by the Internal Examiner to facilitate checking of revisions when the thesis is resubmitted.

### Regulation 26 Academic misconduct

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It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

### Application of the regulation

- 26.1 Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or your own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to cheat. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.
- 26.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.
- 26.3 A student who has submitted work for one course at this or another University must not submit the same work or part of the work to attempt to achieve academic credit through another course. See also the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations at: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)
- 26.4 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place: [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/proofreading](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/proofreading)
- 26.5 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.

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26.6 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct)

**Regulation 27 Security of marks**

Assessed work, marks and grades must be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

**Application of the regulation**

- 27.1 The College has responsibility for the security of arrangements. In practice, the operation of this may be delegated to the College Office, Graduate School or equivalent.
- 27.2 Security arrangements must also include sending assessed work, marks and grades to examiners, including External Examiners; marking arrangements for online assessment; and correspondence about marks, which may be by email.

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## Section C Thesis Regulations

### Regulation 28 Format of thesis

Students are responsible for ensuring that the submitted thesis is presented in a clear, accessible and consistent format.

#### Application of the regulation

- 28.1 Guidance regarding the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis is available at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf)
- 28.2 If the School or the examiners have concerns regarding the presentation of a thesis they should seek advice from the College. If the College considers the presentation of a thesis to make it unreasonable for the examiners to conduct the examination, it may require the student to represent and resubmit the thesis.

### Regulation 29 Copyright

The student holds copyright as author of all work submitted for assessment.

Doctoral and MPhil students must grant the University the right to publish the thesis, abstract or list of works, and/or to authorise its publication for any scholarly purpose with proper acknowledgement of authorship.

#### Application of the regulations

- 29.1 The student reserves the copyright on both the thesis and the abstract.
- 29.2 Students must complete the Access to a Thesis and Publication Abstract form available to download from:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)
- 29.3 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, the provisions of this regulation apply.



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**Regulation 30      Thesis title**

The student must provide a thesis title with the Notice of Intention to Submit Form (where this form is used).

**Application of the regulation**

- 30.1 The Notification of Intention to Submit Form is available online:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)
- 30.2 The expectation is that the student's thesis title on the Notification of Intention to Submit Form will be the final title for the thesis.

**Regulation 31      Thesis length**

Research degree theses, research projects and dissertations must not exceed the length specifications set out in the regulations for the degree.

**Application of the regulation**

- 31.1 Word count specifications are provided in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) or programme documentation: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

**Regulation 32      Previously published material**

Where material to be included in a thesis, research project or dissertation has been published before the thesis, research project or dissertation is submitted, the student must acknowledge the fact of such publication.

**Application of the regulation**

- 32.1 The signed declaration must contain a clear statement on the inclusion of any previously published material. See also regulation 34.
- 32.2 A student cannot include in a thesis material that has been accepted for publication prior to the start of their programme of study, unless registered for a PhD by Research Publications degree. Guidance on including publications in a thesis is available online: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/publications\\_in\\_thesis.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/publications_in_thesis.pdf)
- 32.3 See also regulation 26.

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**Regulation 33 PhD by Research Publications: submission**

The portfolio of published work submitted for the PhD by Research Publications must be accompanied by an abstract and also by a general critical review by the student of all the submitted work.

**Application of the regulation**

- 33.1 The critical review must summarise the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the work submitted in the portfolio. It must also critically assess how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge, and indicate how the publications form a coherent body of work and what contribution the student has made to this work.
- 33.2 The specifications for submission of PhD by Research Publications are listed in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS): [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

**Regulation 34 Signed declaration**

Every student must incorporate a signed declaration in the thesis, research project or dissertation submitted for assessment, stating:

- (a) that the thesis, research project or dissertation has been composed by the student, and
- (b) either that the work is the student's own, or, if the student has been a member of a research group, that the student has made a substantial contribution to the work, such contribution being clearly indicated, or
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified, and
- (d) that any included publications are the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised and clearly identified on the declarations page of the thesis.

**Application of the regulation**

- 34.1 Guidance on completing the signed declaration is available online: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesis\\_signed\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesis_signed_declaration.pdf)

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## Section D Assessment Decisions

### Regulation 35 College Postgraduate Committee: approval of assessment decisions

The College Postgraduate Committee discusses the examiners' reports and decides whether or not to approve the recommendations made by the examiners.

#### Application of the regulation

- 35.1 Prior to the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee, examiners' recommendations are provisional until approved or modified by the Committee.
- 35.2 The examiners for individual students do not participate in any assessment decisions regarding these students in the relevant meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.
- 35.3 The Secretary to the College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for giving reasonable notice of meetings: ensuring that the recommendations of the Committee are approved in writing and made available to Student Administration at the required time; and ensuring that a minute of the meeting is produced.
- 35.4 The minute is a confidential document although information on a particular student may need to be disclosed to that student under the Data Protection Act and generic information may need to be disclosed under Freedom of Information legislation.

### Regulation 36 Committee recommendation

The College Postgraduate Committee must *either* confirm the examiners' recommendation and transmit it to the Senatus without further comment *or* for stated reasons make a different recommendation to the Senatus, including, where appropriate, assessment by different examiners.

#### Application of the regulation

- 36.1 The Committee, on receipt of a recommendation by the examiners, must consider whether it appears to be adequately justified in the light of the full reports by the examiners, and may make further inquiry of the examiners and the student's supervisor(s).
- 36.2 If the Committee receives reports by the examiners indicating disagreement as to the appropriate recommendation, it may recommend to Senatus that the recommendation of one of the examiners be accepted in preference to that of the



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other. The Committee may require that a further report on the thesis be obtained from some other examiner or examiners, or that the assessment of the thesis be conducted from the beginning by different examiners.

36.3 If the Committee is offering an alternative award to that for which a student had originally submitted (for example MPhil as an exit award for PhD submission), the student must either agree or decline to accept the alternative award.

36.4 If the Committee varies the recommendation of the examiners for the degree, the student will receive a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

Commented [HS3]: Proposed inclusion from CoP agreed at REC 16/1/18

### Regulation 37 College Postgraduate Committee: quorum for assessment decisions

Provided reasonable notice of a meeting has been given, a meeting is properly constituted and empowered to act if at least three academic members (including the Convenor) are present.

#### Application of the regulation

37.1 The Convener of the Committee may, at their discretion, invite any person who has been involved in the assessment of the work under consideration by the Committee to be present 'in attendance' but without voting rights.

### Regulation 38 Confidentiality

All discussion about the assessment of an individual student at a College Postgraduate Committee meeting is confidential.

#### Application of the regulation

38.1 The College Postgraduate Committee reaches a collective decision. The decision does not need to be unanimous.

38.2 The views of a particular committee member should not be made known to a student. If a student makes a request under the Data Protection Act, information recorded in the minutes on that particular student will need to be disclosed. In doing so, comments should be anonymised, e.g. assigned to Member 1, Member 2. Further information is available at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

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- 38.3 Students have a right to see information about themselves recorded in minutes of the College Postgraduate Committee meeting.
- 38.4 Other than with the written permission of the student concerned, members of staff should not make available information about marks to persons or bodies outside the University except when necessary in the context of a reference.
- 38.5 Guidance on disclosing information on students can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information)

**Regulation 39 Retention and destruction of material**

Assessed material must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's student records retention guidance.

**Application of the regulation**

- 39.1 Information about the student records retention schedule is online:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records)
- 39.2 Material which contributes to the assessment of the degree will be retained in the School, College Office, Library for a suitable period after the College Postgraduate Committee meeting which decides the overall classification or award of the degree, diploma or certificate. This enables the University to respond to any student appeal.
- 39.3 Assessment material should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. For students who submit appeals, the retention period will need to be extended until the end of the appeal process. Other material which contributes to the final assessment of the degree may be returned to the student after the expiry of the retention period providing they do not make known the views of a particular examiner (see regulation 38). Theses, research projects and dissertations may be retained by Schools, who have the responsibility to make them available to any enquirer in response to a Freedom of Information request (unless an exemption applies). Assessment samples may be retained for specified periods as supporting documentation for accreditation and quality assurance purposes, e.g. Postgraduate Programme Reviews. Material which is not retained or returned should be destroyed at the end of the retention period.



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### Regulation 40 Award of degrees

Degrees are awarded by the Senatus on the basis of recommendations of the College, or Board of Examiners.

### Regulation 41 College Postgraduate Committee: return of decision

Decisions and awards recommended by the examiners and confirmed by the College Postgraduate Committee must be recorded on the Student Records System as the final official results of the University.

#### Application of the regulation

- 41.1 Doctoral and MPhil students receive Part II reports, which constitute formal notification of the Committee decision, after the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.
- 41.2 The decisions of the Committee must be notified to Student Administration as soon as possible and certainly no later than 21 days before the date of graduation.
- 41.3 Notification of final results and recommendation of the award of qualification to students, following the meeting of the Committee, is the responsibility of the College Office.
- 41.4 Because of the nature of research degrees, transcripts for such degrees are not issued by the University. Colleges may instead provide students with an explanation of the specific degree awarded and confirmation that the student has been awarded (or is eligible to be awarded) this degree.

### Regulation 42 Status of Decisions

Decisions by a College Postgraduate Committee, once certified in writing are final. In exceptional cases the College Postgraduate Committee can review its decision.

#### Application of the regulation

- 42.1 A College Postgraduate Committee may, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light or if any error having a material bearing on that decision or an error in the written certification of that decision has been made.
- 42.2 If the Committee is satisfied that there are grounds for changing its decision it will report its decision to Student Systems.

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- 42.3 Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an assessment or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any assessment or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall forthwith correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.
- 42.4 In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.
- 42.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning assessment.

**Regulation 43 Convener's Action**

The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee or Progression Board may take decisions by Convener's Action.

**Application of the regulation**

- 43.1 This may occur when the College Postgraduate Committee takes a decision in principle but needs confirmation or further information, or when the Committee considers the possible outcomes and authorises the Convener, once relevant information is known, to apply the appropriate option. Convener's Action may also be appropriate when the decision to be made follows an existing precedent.
- 43.2 Decisions made by Convener's Action should be recorded and reported to the relevant Board or Committee.

**Regulation 44 Final version of the thesis**

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The student is required to submit the final version of the thesis to the College Postgraduate Office.

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**Application of the regulation**

- 44.1 Degrees are conferred upon receipt of the final version of the thesis and following approval by the Senate at graduation.
- 44.2 The final version of the thesis must be submitted within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their thesis to the College Postgraduate Office. See:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/graduations](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/graduations).
- 44.3 Final submission must be notified by the College Office to Student Systems as soon as possible. Graduation deadline information is available online:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates)
- 44.4 Students are responsible for submitting their final version in electronic form in addition to one hard bound copy. Hard bound copies should conform to standards for the format and binding of theses:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf)
- 44.5 Further details on the submission of theses are available in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students* and from the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA) at [www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk](http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk).

**Regulation 45 Academic Appeal**

Students have the right of academic appeal against the decisions of the College Postgraduate Committee on specific grounds, which are set out in the University's Student Appeal Regulations:

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals)

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## Section E MSc by Research Degrees

### Regulation 46 MSc by Research degrees: examination

There are two types of MSc by Research degrees:

1. MSc by Research degrees which are examined by the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, and are subject to all relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees except for those regulations listed below.
2. MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School. For these programmes, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners apply instead of the following regulations in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 2 to 7; 35-38; 41 to 43.

Both types of MSc by Research degrees are exempt from the following provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 13-19; 22-25; 33; 44.

Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme which examination arrangements apply to their programme.

### Regulation 47 MSc by Research degrees: submission of research project or dissertation

Students on MSc by Research degrees must submit their research project or dissertation on or prior to the completion of the prescribed period of study.

#### Application of the regulation

- 47.1 Once a student has submitted a research project or dissertation, they cannot retract it.
- 47.2 Students on some MSc by Research programmes may be required to complete Notification of Intention to Submit forms prior to submission of their research project or dissertation. The relevant School or College will inform students where they are required to submit the form.



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### Regulation 48 MSc by Research degrees: markers

For MSc by Research programmes, staff who are or have been a supervisor of the student may not act as a marker or Internal Examiner for the research project or dissertation, where the research project or dissertation is worth more than 60 credits.

### Regulation 49 MSc by Research degrees: oral assessment

Oral assessment may be used as part of the examination process for MSc by Research degrees. Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme whether oral assessment is to be used as part of the examination process for their degree. Where oral assessment is used on an MSc by Research programme, the relevant College Postgraduate Committee or Board of Examiners will determine whether regulations 20 and 21 of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, or the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to Oral assessment will apply. Schools will inform students which regulations apply to their programme.

### Regulation 50 MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award

In order to be awarded the degree of MSc by Research, students must pass at least 180 credits' worth of courses. This may include the award of credits on aggregate for up to 40 credits. Where credit on aggregate is offered, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations (under "Postgraduate assessment progression") apply.

Where marks are awarded for assessment on MSc by Research degrees, these must be expressed using the postgraduate common marking scheme:

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

#### Application of the regulation

- 50.1 In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.
- 50.2 For some MSc by Research programmes the examiners may award a mark or grade, merit or distinction.
- 50.3 There will be no progression hurdle to proceed to the research project or dissertation.
- 50.4 Where a mark is awarded for the research project or dissertation, this must be passed at a minimum of 50%. Failure to achieve this standard will automatically result in no award at MSc level being made.

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**Regulation 51 MSc by Research degrees: examiner recommendation**

The examiners may recommend:

- (a) **Award Pass with Distinction in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 52; or
- (b) **Award Pass with Merit in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 53; or
- (c) **Award MSc by Research.** The research project or dissertation satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree as laid down in the University's [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#) as appropriate and that the degree should be awarded; or
- (d) **Award exit award.** The research project or dissertation is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the MSc by Research. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of postgraduate diploma or certificate; or
- (e) **Fail.** The research project or dissertation is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and does not meet the requirements for any award.

**Application of the regulation**

51.1 For those MSc by Research degrees assessed by a Board of Examiners within a School, the Board makes a single recommendation for each student directly to the Senatus.

**Regulation 52 MSc by Research degrees: distinction**

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with distinction. Different criteria for the award of distinction may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation;
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common

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- marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded;
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Distinction.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with distinction, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

**Application of the regulation**

- 52.1 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for distinction based on their first attempt.
- 52.2 The postgraduate common marking scheme can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

**Regulation 53 MSc by Research degrees: merit**

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with merit. Different criteria for the award of merit may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation;
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded;

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- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Merit.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with merit, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

**Application of the regulation**

- 53.1 For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for merit based on their first attempt.

**Regulation 54 MSc by Research degrees: revisions**

Resubmission of the research project or dissertation with revisions is not permitted in the case of MSc by Research degree programmes unless a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

**Application of the regulation**

- 54.1 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to submit a revised version within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.

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**Section F Interpretation and significant disruption**

**Regulation 55 Interpretation of the regulations**

The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has authority to resolve any dispute arising from these regulations. The University Secretary and their nominees have authority to make urgent decisions relating to assessment issues.

**Application of the regulation**

- 55.1 Staff who need guidance on the postgraduate assessment regulations for research degrees, beyond that provided in the regulations and associated guidance, should contact the relevant Dean and/or the Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression)
- 55.2 The University uses questions on the regulations as a source of information for training and development of the regulations.

**Regulation 56 Significant disruption: concessions and standards**

When the University's assessment practices are vulnerable to significant disruption then the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may approve temporary concessions to mitigate the impact of assessment disruption on students, without compromising academic standards. The College takes decisions that ensure the consistency of treatment of students and the maintenance of academic standards. The overriding principles are that:

- (a) the academic judgement of the examiners remains paramount;
- (b) the University's academic standards will be maintained; and
- (c) the provisions of the University's Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees remain in force except where a concession has been approved by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

These concessions will only be used where necessary: if a College Postgraduate Committee is able to operate without a concession then the Committee will do so.

**Application of the regulation**

- 56.1 Significant disruption can be extremes of weather, loss of facilities, and factors beyond the University's control which have an impact on the assessment of students. This may result in College Postgraduate Committees only having partial results available.



**Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for  
Research Degrees  
Academic Year 20~~17~~18/19**

- 56.2 In response to individual significant disruptions that may have a widespread impact on assessment, the University will adopt a communication strategy for students, staff and key external stakeholders, e.g. External Examiners, to ensure that they are aware of the measures that are adopted.
- 56.3 All forms of assessment, such as theses submitted for assessment, examination scripts and course assignments, are the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required.
- 56.4 Drawing on previous experience [CSPC 14/15 2 C], the issues and regulations where CSPC may consider concessions include, but are not limited to:
- (a) participation of External Examiners;
  - (b) College Postgraduate Committee quorum;
  - (c) annual progression decisions.

~~1 June 2017~~ XX June 2018

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Publication of results for Semester 1 Postgraduate Taught courses**

**Executive Summary**

At its meeting in November 2017, CSPC noted that some PGT programmes were struggling to meet the existing deadline of 31st January for publication of Semester 1 course results. Academic Services agreed to consider data regarding publication of Semester 1 course results during the 2017/18 session and discuss with Student Administration before recommending a deadline date for the 2018/19 session. This paper proposes a publication date for results for Semester 1 PGT courses.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This paper aligns with the University strategic objective of leadership in learning through providing timely feedback to students on their performance.

**Action requested**

For consideration and approval.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will inform Schools of a revised date for publication of Semester 1 PGT course results; the date will also be included on Student Systems Key Dates web page.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Schools which currently publish results for Semester 1 PGT courses after the proposed deadline may need to reprioritise work in order to meet the deadline. However, the proposed deadline is more than three weeks later than the existing deadline.

**2. Risk assessment**

Where students receive their results after the proposed deadline and decide to withdraw from studies, they may not be entitled to any refund of fees.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The paper does not carry any equality and diversity implications.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words** Course results; publication

**Originator of the paper**

*Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services*

19<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## **Publication of results for Semester 1 courses**

### **Background**

At its meeting in November 2017, CSPC agreed that Boards of Examiners were to be held following the end of Semester 1 to ratify results for all courses whose assessment was complete during or immediately following Semester 1. The Committee noted, however, that some PGT programmes were struggling to meet the existing deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January for publication of Semester 1 course results, especially those programmes which set deadlines for final coursework assessment for Semester 1 courses in January. 31<sup>st</sup> January is also the Student Administration deadline for students withdrawing from the University to be entitled to a partial refund of fees. Student Administration agreed to allow some flexibility in considering refund requests from students in the few weeks after the deadline, where students could demonstrate that they received their Semester 1 course results after 31<sup>st</sup> January. Academic Services agreed to consider data regarding publication of Semester 1 course results during the 2017/18 session before recommending a deadline date for the 2018/19 session.

### **Publication data**

Data from 2017/18 show a marked increase (62%) in the volume of results published to students following Semester 1 relative to the previous session. This indicates that a larger proportion of Schools and Deaneries have moved to holding Boards of Examiners following Semester 1 to ratify results for Semester 1 courses.

- Results published by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017: 37,343
- Results published by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018: 60,642

### **Proposed deadline for PGT course results**

In 2017/18, 85% of the total results published for UG courses were entered by 31<sup>st</sup> January; for PGT courses, only 64% were published by 31<sup>st</sup> January. Based on this, and the fact that Student Administration are keen to retain the existing deadline for fee refunds of 31<sup>st</sup> January in all but exceptional cases, we are proposing retaining the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January for publication of UG course results, and setting a later deadline for PGT course results. In recommending a deadline for PGT courses, we have sought to take account of the following factors:

- The desire to provide students with final course results as early as possible in order to assist with Semester 2 assessment;
- The pressures for Schools in confirming final results for courses during the early part of Semester 2;
- The need to place a limit on the period during which Student Administration may be required to offer discretionary fee refunds.

During the 2017/18 session, 94% of published results for PGT courses were entered by 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018. Based on this information, and consideration of the factors outlined above, we are recommending a publication date for the 2018/19 session of **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019**.

**CSPC is requested to approve the proposed deadline for publication of Semester 1 PGT course results for 2018/19.**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

## **Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure**

### **Executive Summary**

The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies was due to be reviewed during Academic Year 2017/18. This paper proposes revisions to the Procedure, for implementation during the 2018/19 session.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Maintenance of the University's policy framework is a priority for CSPC.

### **Action requested**

CSPC are asked to approve the revisions to the Procedure.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services send a New and Updated Policies email to Schools and Colleges in June, which will draw colleagues' attention to all changes to policies for the coming year.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The changes to the Procedure reflect existing practice within Colleges and Schools, and therefore result in no new resource implications.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

As above, the changes to the Procedure present no additional risks.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies underwent an Equality Impact Assessment on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. This paper does not propose any change to existing practice.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

### **Key words**

**Withdrawal, exclusion, permanent withdrawal, voluntary withdrawal**

### **Originator of the paper**

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Services, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## **Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure**

The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies was due for review this Academic Year. Academic Services have reviewed the procedure in conjunction with Immigration Compliance, and input from the University's three Colleges. The result of this exercise has led to a number of proposed amendments to the policy, which are outlined in detail below.

**CSPC is invited to approve the revisions to the Procedure**, for implementation from the beginning of the 2018/19 academic session.

### **Summary of Changes to the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies**

#### General

It is proposed that the title of the Procedure change from Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies, to Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure. This emphasises the focus of the Procedure, and should make the document easier to find on the web.

Given the introduction of new sections to the document, the document has been re-numbered. New sections regarding exclusion of students on MPhil or PhD programmes and exclusions under Fitness to Practise procedures have been added to the document, and terminology and links have been updated.

#### Section 1

Wording which outlined the last changes to the policy has now been removed, and has been replaced with a description of what the policy is designed to do.

#### Section 2

The wording 'to terminate their studies at the University' has been added to the description of Withdrawal, in order to provide clarity.

#### Exclusion from Studies – Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

The section within the policy outlining the Exclusion procedures for unsatisfactory academic progress has been split into two sections. One section details exclusion procedures for Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Master's by Research students, whilst a new section has been included to provide detail regarding exclusion procedures for students on Doctoral or MPhil programmes. The section covering Doctoral or MPhil programmes incorporates content previously contained within the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, and is consistent with the provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students has been re-written, with the relevant section regarding Exclusion now signposting to the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies. The Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) had asked that this content be transferred into the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies.

#### Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement

This section had previously been titled 'Exclusion for non-attendance', so has been expanded to reflect that students can also be excluded for non-engagement.

#### Students holding Tier 4 visas

Wording within this section has been amended to reflect that the University has statutory obligations to monitor and report on engagement. Reference to census points arranged by Student Administration have been removed, as these are no longer in operation.

The link within this section to the Tier 4 Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy has been updated.

#### Exclusion under Fitness to Practise procedures

This section has been added to the document to reflect the fact that Fitness to Practise procedures can result in a recommendation of exclusion. The text of this section is consistent with relevant content within the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations relating to Fitness to Practise.

#### Appeals

The link within this section to the University's Appeal webpages has been updated to a singular link, as the Appeal section of the website is no longer sub-divided by level of study.

# ~~Procedure for~~ Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Purpose of Procedure

The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies applies to circumstances where a student voluntarily wishes to leave the University permanently, and also circumstances where a student is required to leave the University permanently.

## Scope: Mandatory Procedure

The procedure applies to all students who are withdrawn or excluded from the University and to University staff managing this procedure.

Contact Officer    Stuart Fitzpatrick    Academic Policy Officer    [Stuart.Fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Stuart.Fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk)

## Document control

Dates	Approved: 26.04.12	Starts: 26.04.12	Equality impact assessment: 13.11.14	Amendments: 29.10.12, 30.06.14 20.11.14 09.01.15 16.02.15 18.08.16	Next Review: 2017/2018
Approving authority	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on behalf of Senatus				
Consultation undertaken	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee				
Section responsible for procedure maintenance & review	Academic Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Assessment regulations, principles and guidelines <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment">www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment</a>				
UK Quality Code	n/a				
Procedures superseded by this procedure	Revises the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies (April 2011)				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Withdrawal, exclusion, permanent withdrawal, voluntary withdrawal				



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

~~1. This document is the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies. It provides a comprehensive and clear statement of the responsibilities of both the University and students.~~

~~2.1. In particular, the procedure has been updated to~~ This procedure is designed to:

~~(i) take into account the latest requirements of UK immigration legislation;~~

~~(ii)~~ (i) clearly state the obligations on both the University and its students within the process;

~~(iii) provide clear guidance on how students are withdrawn on health grounds;~~

(ii) provide clear guidance on the process to be followed when a student has failed to satisfy the criteria for progression;

~~(iv)~~ (iii) take into account the ~~latest~~ requirements of UK immigration legislation.;

~~3.2.~~ The following terminology is used:

(i) withdrawal from studies - this is a voluntary decision by the student to terminate their studies at the University.

(ii) exclusion from studies - this is where a student is required to leave the University. This may be for academic or other reasons (see ~~9.8~~-29 below).

~~4.3.~~ This procedure makes reference to the College and to the Head of College. It is for Colleges and their Heads to determine local arrangements for the delegation of his/her authority.

~~5.4.~~ There are separate procedures for interruption of studies (which is a temporary suspension of studies and hence a different process from permanent withdrawal or exclusion).

### Withdrawal from studies

~~6.5.~~ Any student may withdraw permanently from the University at any point in the year. However, a student may not voluntarily withdraw after a Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) has decided to exclude the student.

~~7.6.~~ Before applying to withdraw, the student is strongly advised to consult beforehand his/her Personal Tutor/ Programme Director/ Supervisor in order to consider the implications of withdrawal. These include matters such as: access to the University's facilities; financial issues (scholarships, fees, other University debts, external financial issues relating to the Student Loans Company/Student Awards Agency for Scotland etc.); Tier 4 visas; exit awards; readmission.



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

8-7. Students wishing to withdraw must signal their intention by completing a standard University form (Withdrawal Form – Student) available at [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)

### Exclusion from studies

A. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress (Taught and Masters by Research programmes)

9-8. The criteria for progression on a programme of study can depend on the nature of the programme and / or year of study. These will be contained in the University's assessment and degree regulations (see the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study at <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/> and there may be additional information within College or School guidance, or in course and programme handbooks. This policy should be read in conjunction with those documents.

10-9. The Taught Assessment Regulation on 'Publication of Results' sets out responsibilities for ensuring that, where a student has failed their programme of study at the final stage, the student is informed in a timely and personal manner. If appropriate, an offer of a private consultation may be made. - <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>

11-10. Colleges ~~should~~ publicise procedures for considering the cases of students who have not met the criteria for progression. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will ~~normally~~ invite for interview any student who has not met the criteria for progression. The interview provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation.

12-11. The interview may be carried out electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.). The outcome of that interview will be one of the following:

- (i) The student is permitted to progress to the next year of study;
- (ii) The student cannot progress to the next year of study on his / her current programme but is permitted to continue his/her studies under other options permitted in the University regulations;
- (iii) The student may voluntarily withdraw permanently from studies. This option will not be available if the student has already been notified in writing of exclusion from studies;
- (iv) The student may be excluded from the University. In such cases, the student's eligibility for a Certificate, Diploma, Ordinary Degree or other exit qualification will be explored.

13-12. Students should recognise that the full range of options does not apply in every case, as it may depend on the year and nature of the programme and the status of the student. Exclusion from studies will only be invoked after other available options have been considered ~~and may only be authorised by the Head of College (or delegated~~



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

~~authorising officer). Where the student does not attend the interview, the Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.~~

13. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will decide which option to apply, and will inform the student in writing (via the student's university email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.

14. A copy of the communication will be sent to the Personal Tutor/Programme Director/Supervisor. The College / School must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

~~For students on PhD, MPhil, Masters by Research or professional doctorates, see guidance on student progress contained within the [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).~~

~~B. Exclusion for [unsatisfactory academic progress](#) (Doctoral or MPhil programmes)~~

~~16. Students are subject to annual progression review under the terms set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. [Following an annual progression review](#), ~~it may be determined that a student has not made satisfactory academic progress, and as such this student may be recommended for exclusion~~the relevant Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School may determine that a student has made unsatisfactory academic progress and recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee that the student be excluded from study.~~

~~17. The student's supervisor will inform the Head of College or Postgraduate Director of their recommendation in light of the annual progression review. The Head of College or Postgraduate Director will review the recommendation of exclusion. If the Head of College or Postgraduate Director disagrees with the recommendation, they will then liaise with the School to take steps to ensure that an appropriate framework is in place to allow the student to continue with their studies, including the provision of any conditions, targets or deadlines that the student must fulfill.~~

~~18. Where the Head of College or Postgraduate Director agrees with the recommendation~~The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer); ~~they will then inform the student that exclusion from study for unsatisfactory academic progress has been recommended, and invite the student to offer the student the opportunity to attend an interview. This~~Where an interview is held, this provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation. ~~This~~is interview may be carried out electronically (eg. by video, web-camera, etc)

~~189. [Following this interview](#), or where the student does not wish to attend an interview, the ~~Head of College or Postgraduate Director~~College Postgraduate Committee [will determine whether to exclude the student from study, or to consider one of the alternative](#)~~



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

~~options available to it under the provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations. These are –~~ following options are available:

- [\(a\) confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;](#)
- [\(b\) a repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;](#)
- [\(c\) for part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;](#)
- [\(d\) registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;](#)
- [\(e\) registration for a postgraduate taught degree \(for example MSc\) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;](#)
- [\(f\) exclusion from study.](#)

~~one of the following outcomes:~~

- ~~The student is permitted to continue with their research~~
- ~~The student cannot continue with their research on their current programme~~
- ~~The student is to be excluded from the University for unsatisfactory academic progress~~

~~19. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) The Head of College or Postgraduate Director will inform the student in writing (via the student's university email account) of the decision as soon as possible following the interview. This communication should clearly set out the decision reached, and any of the terms attached.~~

~~20. A copy of the communication will be sent to the student's Supervisor. The College must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.~~

~~B-C. Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement~~

~~21. Students are liable for exclusion if they do not attend the University at key points during the academic session. The decision and procedure for exclusion follows that outlined in the previous section 'Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress'.~~

~~22. Students are required to undergo assessments, attend scheduled meetings with their Personal Tutor/Programme Director/Supervisor, and participate in other events depending on their programme of study. Students will be informed of these events by the School.~~

Students holding Tier 4 visas:

~~23. Under the terms of its sponsorship of international students on Tier 4 visas, the University has additional statutory obligations to monitor and report attendance engagement to the Home Office at key points during the session, including census points arranged by Student Administration.~~



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

24. Where the student is excluded or withdraws from the University for whatever reason, the Compliance Manager (Student Administration) will report the student and end the sponsorship of their visa.

25. The [Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) sets out the University's responsibilities as a sponsor of international students within the UK immigration system which includes the requirement to evidence Tier 4 student attendance and engagement. The policy ensures that the University has relevant guidance for staff and mitigates risk related to the University's sponsor licence by ensuring that we have robust student attendance and engagement procedures in place. -

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier4studentattendanceengagementpolicy.pdf>  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier\\_4\\_student\\_engagement\\_and\\_attendance\\_policy\\_august\\_2015\\_approved.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier_4_student_engagement_and_attendance_policy_august_2015_approved.pdf)

### D. Exclusion under Fitness to Practise procedures

26. Where a student's degree programme is subject to Fitness to Practise requirements, the relevant College Committee must be satisfied at all times that in respect of health, conduct and any other matters which the Committee may reasonably deem relevant (whether such matters relate to the student's University programme or are unrelated to it) the student will not constitute a risk to the public, vulnerable children or adults or to patients and is a suitable person to become a registered member of the relevant professional body. Any student who fails to satisfy the relevant College Committee, irrespective of their performance in assessment, may be liable for exclusion.

### G.E. Exclusion for non-matriculation

New students:

27. Matriculation consists of three components: (i) registration; (ii) confirmation of attendance; (iii) full admission (i.e. adhering to other related admissions requirements). [www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm)

In order to matriculate, a new student must:

(i) within two weeks of his/her start date, be "registered" or have "attendance confirmed";

(ii) within five weeks of his/her start date, have completed both of these matriculation activities.

28. Any student failing to meet these requirements will be deemed not to have commenced his/her studies, and will be excluded from the University and have his/her record cancelled.

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## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

[29.](#) A new student will not be fully matriculated until he/she provides the appropriate documentation at the start of his/her studies, including immigration documentation where required.

Continuing students:

[30.](#) If a continuing student fails to have his/her attendance confirmed within five weeks of the anniversary of his/her start date he/she is deemed not to have commenced his/her studies and is excluded and his/her record cancelled.

[31.](#) Further details on matriculation are available from Student Systems:  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm)

### D-F. Exclusion for lapse of time

[32.](#) A student who is past the maximum end-date of his/her studies will be excluded by the University. Before such an exclusion is enforced, the University will seek to make contact with the student to inform them of the exclusion timetable.

[33.](#) Research postgraduate students must submit their thesis within 12 months of their prescribed period of study (excluding any periods of interruption of studies). Students who fail to submit a thesis by the deadline specified by the regulations will be excluded.

[34.](#) A research postgraduate who has been examined but not carried out the required corrections or re-submission within one month of the maximum timescale stipulated by the relevant exam committee will be excluded.

### E-G. Exclusion for disciplinary offence

[35.](#) In extreme cases the University's Student Discipline Committee may impose permanent exclusion of a student from the University. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) sets out expectations for student behaviour and the procedures the University uses to resolve matters when students' behaviour is unacceptable.

### F-H. Exclusion for debt

[36.](#) Exclusion can also result from non-payment of any debt to the University as detailed in the [Policy on Collection of Student Fees and Related Charges](#)

## Appeals

[37.](#) All individuals who have been excluded, irrespective of the reason for exclusion, may lodge an appeal against the exclusion through the normal University appeal procedure. The individual should be given details of the grounds on which an appeal against a decision may be lodged and specifically be informed that the College is regarded as the judge of the academic grounds for exclusion. Appeals should be sent directly to Academic Services at the email address [academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk)



## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

38. Details of the academic-appeal procedure can be found at:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals>

For undergraduate/ postgraduate taught students:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/academic-appeals](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/academic-appeals)

For postgraduate research students  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/postgraduate-research/academic-appeals](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/postgraduate-research/academic-appeals)

For individuals who are excluded for disciplinary reasons, details of the discipline procedures, including the appeal procedures can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline)

### Readmission

~~38-39.~~ After withdrawal or exclusion an individual is no longer a student of the University and loses student status and access to University facilities. After withdrawal or exclusion, a former student wishing to be considered for return to study at the University must go through the normal application procedures.

~~39-40.~~ 35. A former PhD student who has been excluded through lapse of time is entitled to ask the College to reinstate his/her registration at a later date to permit examination of a completed thesis. A decision as to whether or not a candidate should be reinstated will be taken by the College, and factors such as the passage of time and its implications for the topic of study will be taken into account. Approval of such a reinstatement is exceptional and attracts a fee.

~~31 May 2018~~  
~~February 2015~~

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Programme and Course Handbook Policy – Update**

**Executive Summary**

This paper asks the Committee to approve amendments to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Maintenance of the University's policy framework is a priority for the Committee.

**Action requested**

For approval

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The updated Policy will be made available on the Academic Services' website at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/learning-and-assessment> and will be communicated in the annual policies update email sent to key stakeholders in June.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Colleagues based in Schools will be required to update sections of the core content as part of the process of updating handbooks.

**2. Risk assessment**

There are no key risks associated with the paper – the amendments ensure that the Policy is consistent with other policies and practices.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The amendments made do not constitute a major change to policy or practice and therefore no changes are required to the current Equality Impact Assessment: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment/a-z-assessments/Academic\\_Services-Programme\\_and\\_Course\\_Handbooks\\_Policy-2015.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment/a-z-assessments/Academic_Services-Programme_and_Course_Handbooks_Policy-2015.pdf)

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

**Key words**

Programme, course, handbook

**Originator of the paper**

Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services  
22 May 2018

## Updates

### **Consumer and Markets Authority**

When they are available to prospective (or current) students, Programme and Course Handbooks form part of the University's 'contract' with students. It is therefore important that Handbooks are explicit regarding which session they apply to, so that students / prospective students do not infer that they constitute a commitment to the content of courses / programmes in future sessions. The Policy has been revised to make it more explicit that Handbooks should state the session.

### **Lecture Recording**

The Lecture Recording Policy has been drafted and approval will be sought by the end of the academic session. The draft Policy requires (1) students to be informed via programme and/or course handbooks whether lectures will be recorded or not, and (2) that an appropriate explanation is provided to students where a lecture is not recorded. The Programme and Course Handbooks Policy has been updated to include a reference to these requirements.

### **Student Wellbeing**

From April to June 2017, Dr Eve Hepburn was employed on a part-time basis by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to carry out explorative work into postgraduate research (PGR) mental health and wellbeing support. A key output of this was a comprehensive report into 'Postgraduate Research Student Wellbeing Strategies'. This fulfilled one of the objectives of the Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development programme, Work stream 2: Mentorship and Wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. The report sets out findings of an analysis of international and UK institutional best practice in supporting the wellbeing needs of PGRs. It also maps current practice at the University of Edinburgh. One of the recommendations made in the report proposed a change to the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy:

Ensure that every course guide and programme handbook in every College – at both undergraduate and postgraduate level – contains a paragraph on student wellbeing, to raise awareness of the need for self-care, as well as signposting the support services available to students.	Response from Director of Academic Services: I think this recommendation should involve the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. CSPC is responsible for the policy on Course and Programme Handbooks, so would need to consider any suggestions for adding further prescribed content. In fact the Policy already requires Handbooks to include signposts to the University webpages on Health and Well-being, so could be argued to already substantively address this issue. However, we would be happy to have another look at this element of the Policy.
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The Policy has been updated with text provided by Dr Andy Shanks, Director of Student Wellbeing which aligns with other key messages that have been developed to cover the student lifecycle.

### **Student Feedback**

The core content text has been updated to reflect one of the key principles of the Student Voice Policy, that students will be informed of action taken in response to feedback provided. A link to the Student Voice Policy has also been added.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education> for further information

### **Reference to University and Students' Association Support Services**

The headings and links have been update to reflect changes made to the academic life student webpages and the addition of core content on student wellbeing to the Policy (see above).

### **Data Protection**

The standard text has been updated to reflect changes to data protection law. The updated standard text was provided by Dr Rena Gertz, Data Protection Officer.

### **Supervision**

The core content wording has been changed from 'annual reporting' to 'annual progression review' to make it consistent with wording used in other documentation, including the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

### **Training and Development**

A link to the Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators has been added.

### **Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group recommendations**

Paper B proposes additional core content which, once approved by the Committee, will be added to the Policy.



# Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

## Purpose of Policy

To confirm the status, purpose and core content of programme and course handbooks.

## Overview

The main aim of this policy is to ensure that students know where to find particular information on their programmes and courses through the provision of core content in handbooks. Programme and course handbooks are part of the academic governance framework of the University. Additionally, there are external requirements in relation to the provision of information for students that the University must follow.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to all staff who are producing programme and course handbooks and applies to both taught and research programmes.

## Contact Officer

Nichola Kett

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Academic Services

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## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 14.04.16	<b>Starts:</b> 01.08.16	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 25.05.15	<b>Amendments:</b> <a href="#">31.05.18</a>	<b>Next Review:</b> 2018/2019
<b>Approving authority</b>	Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee				
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Staff in Schools, Colleges and support departments, Edinburgh University Students' Association, students, and the Project Board				
<b>Section responsible for policy maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	<a href="#">Creating Accessible Handbooks Guidance</a>				
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	Part C: Information about higher education provision				
<b>Policies superseded by this policy</b>					
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 651 4490.				
<b>Keywords</b>	Programme, course, handbook				



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

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### Status of Programme and Course Handbooks

Programme and course handbooks are part of the academic governance framework of the University and are referenced in the Degree Programme Regulations. Therefore, as well as providing information for students on their programme and courses, they can be used to stipulate requirements. Once approved and published, the details set out in programme and course handbooks must be adhered to by students and staff for the academic session to which it applies.

A **programme** of study is the sum of all the elements leading to a defined graduating curriculum. A **course** is a unit of teaching and learning formally offered within the University, which carries credit expressed in credit points and which may contribute to a University award.<sup>1</sup>

### Requirements

It is the responsibility of Schools to determine how best to provide students with programme and course information. The “home” School must ensure that students are provided with all the necessary information to cover their programme and courses (of particular importance for joint awards). Additionally, consideration should be given to ensuring that students who are taking outside courses are provided with all necessary information. It is not a requirement that handbooks are created for all programmes and courses, but students must be provided with the core content detailed below using an appropriate combination of programme and course handbooks. It is of particular importance that formal agreed assessment and feedback activities (as detailed in the course descriptor) and any related requirements are explicitly communicated in written form at the outset of each programme or course. This does not preclude additional formative assessment and feedback opportunities.

Other types of handbooks are not part of the academic governance framework of the University and are not required to adhere to this policy. Additionally, other types of handbooks (e.g. School or year level handbooks) should not contain any regulatory or academic compliance requirements.

Programme or course handbooks do not need to be physical documents. It may be that information is held on a website, wiki or virtual learning environment and forms the equivalent of a programme or course handbook. Students should be made aware of which form(s) of media their course and/or programme handbooks are held. This policy applies to all forms of media.

The [Creating Accessible Handbooks guidance](#) should be followed for programme and course handbooks. There are no other design requirements in relation to programme and course handbooks.

The core content listed below must be included in programme and course handbooks and can be presented in any order. Core content can be supplemented with any other information the School wishes to provide.

Where information is owned and maintained by another area, links should be provided rather than cutting and pasting it into handbooks. This approach aims to reduce the risk of misinforming students and also to reduce the time taken by staff to produce handbooks. Particular examples include course and programme information on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) and academic regulations, policies and guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> [University Glossary of Terms](#)



## **Programme and Course Handbooks Policy**

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Programme and course handbook content must align with the information on the DRPS (including the Degree Programme Specification, the Degree Programme Table and the course descriptor) which forms the definitive record of programme and course information.

Final versions of programme and course handbooks must be made available to students at the start of a programme or course. The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requires reading lists (at minimum indicative core texts) be made available at least four weeks before the start of the course (with additional reading that indicates priority/relevance provided nearer to the start date of the course). Therefore, if reading lists are only contained within handbooks, these need to be made available to students within this timeframe. Arrangements should be made to provide handbooks in an alternative format upon request.

### **Approval Process**

Boards of Studies have responsibility for the formal oversight of programme and course handbooks. In practice the approval of handbooks can be delegated to members of staff within a School as part of an approvals process that ensures accuracy of information and all handbooks are approved prior to the commencement of a course or programme. Boards of Studies need to have formal oversight of the approvals process and would be expected to record that handbooks had been approved at the relevant Board of Studies meeting.

### **Changes**

Exceptionally, changes may need to be made to a programme or course handbook after publication. In this case, all students who are affected by the change must be informed as soon as possible. Changes which differ from the approved programme and course information in the DRPS (including the statement of assessment) are not permitted.

## **Purpose**

### **Programme Handbooks**

- A source of information and guidance for students on a specific programme or group of programmes.
- Work in conjunction with degree programme tables, degree programme specifications, degree programme regulations, and assessment regulations to provide students with all the information they require for their studies.
- A collection of information and “signposts” to information that exists elsewhere.
- Contain core content.
- An information resource for staff, external examiners, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

### **Course Handbooks**

- A source of information and guidance for students on a specific course or group of courses.
- Work in conjunction with the course descriptor to provide students with all the information they require for a specific course.
- A collection of information and “signposts” to information that exists elsewhere.
- Contain core content.



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

- An information resource for staff, external examiners, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

### Core Content

Core Content	Description/further information		Reference/Source
<a href="#"><u>Session that the Handbook applies to</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>State the session that the handbook applies to and make it clear that the University may make changes to the course / programme for future sessions.</u></a>		
<b>Organisation</b> (for accessibility)	Contents page Glossary <sup>2</sup> <b>Standard text</b> (in Arial 14 bold): "If you require this document or any of the internal University Of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in this document in an alternative format please contact [name and contact details]" It is good practice to provide two methods of contact e.g. phone number and email or email and postal address		
<b>Details</b>	<b>Programme</b> Name, <a href="#"><u>year applicable</u></a> /date of publication	<b>Course</b> Name, code, level and credits, <a href="#"><u>year applicable</u></a> /date of publication	<a href="#"><u>Path</u></a>  Course descriptor in the <a href="#"><u>DRPS</u></a>
<b>Overview*</b>	<b>Programme</b> Structure and core courses, aims, learning outcomes and graduate attributes	<b>Course</b> Timeline of activities: lectures; tutorials; laboratories; placements; syllabus; learning outcomes	Degree Programme Tables and Degree Programme Specifications in the <a href="#"><u>DRPS</u></a>  Course descriptor in the <a href="#"><u>DRPS</u></a>
<b>Assessment and feedback information<sup>^</sup></b>	To include: submission and feedback deadlines, extensions procedures, late penalties, word count, submission procedures, dissertation (or equivalent) arrangements (including supervision), and exam diet dates		<a href="#"><u>Statement of Assessment in Taught Assessment Regulations</u></a>
<b>Referencing guidance</b>	Add referencing guidance		
<b>Marking scheme<sup>^</sup></b>			<a href="#"><u>Extended Common Marking Scheme</u></a>
<b>Lecture recording</b>	<a href="#"><u>If the course involves lectures, inform students which of their lectures will be recorded or not. An appropriate explanation should be provided to students where a lecture will not be recorded.</u></a>		<a href="#"><u>Lecture Recording Policy</u></a>
<b>Prioritised reading list<sup>3^</sup></b>	Or learning resources It is a requirement of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy that reading lists shall indicate priority and/or relevance.		<a href="#"><u>Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy</u></a>

<sup>2</sup> Can assist with the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requirement: Key technical words and/or formulae shall be provided to students at least 24 hours in advance of the class.

<sup>3</sup> Please note the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requirement: Course outlines and reading lists shall be made available at least 4 weeks before the start of the course. Reading lists at this stage may focus on the core texts only (where they are used). Additional reading may be provided nearer to the start date of the course.



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<b>Contacts</b>	Key programme staff contact details It is good practice to provide two methods of contact e.g. phone number and email or email and postal address	
<b>Dates+</b>	Important dates not detailed elsewhere (including timescales for online distance learning students)	
<b>Timetable^</b>	Link to student-facing timetabling service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">My Timetable</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Course Timetable Browser</a></li></ul>
<b>Key locations</b>	Teaching Office, laboratories, online environments (VLE, etc.), etc.	
<b>Progression requirements and award criteria</b>		Degree Programme Regulations in the <a href="#">DRPS</a>
<b>“Local” requirements+</b>	College, School, programme, or course-specific requirements	
<b>Attendance requirements</b>	Please note there are particular requirements for Tier 4 Students: Schools should ensure that students are made aware of their attendance, engagement and on-campus obligations. Handbooks should include this information, together with guidance on how all students should submit requests for absences (special circumstances, interruptions of study, leave of absence, etc.).	<a href="#">Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy</a>
<b>Reference to relevant University regulations</b>	Add links to University regulations, policies and procedures	<a href="#">Academic Regulations</a> <a href="#">Student Complaint Procedure</a> <a href="#">Academic Appeals</a> <a href="#">Academic Misconduct (including plagiarism)</a> <a href="#">Special Circumstances</a> <a href="#">Dignity and Respect</a>  For general information on rules, regulations and policies: <a href="#">Student Contract webpage</a>
<b>Student Support</b>	Including what happens when things go wrong	School Personal Tutoring Statements



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<b><u>Student Wellbeing</u></b>	<b>Standard text:</b> “As with all transitions in life, applying to and studying at university can be both exciting and challenging – whether it is your first time at university or you are returning to higher education, it is important to look after yourself. University can be busy and stressful at times, this can in turn cause our state of wellbeing to fluctuate. We all have strategies for coping with ups and downs in life and it is important to continue using and revising these skills, to help support and maintain your wellbeing which is crucial to allow you to experience a positive and happy university journey. We provide a range of resources, workshops and support to enable you to cope with the ups and downs of university life. These are provided by a number of different services, including the Centre for Sport and Exercise, Chaplaincy, Counselling Service and the Edinburgh University Students' Association. Connecting with other people and being active are key to maintaining physical and mental wellbeing and at the University of Edinburgh we're here to help you stay fit, have fun, try new things and feel your best.”	<a href="#">Health and wellbeing student webpages</a>
<b>Student Feedback</b>	Detail the opportunities available for students to provide feedback on their experiences <u>and how they will be informed of action taken in response to feedback provided</u>	<a href="#">Student Voice Policy</a>
<b>Student representative structure</b>	<b>Standard text:</b> “Staff members at the University of Edinburgh work closely with student representatives. Edinburgh University Students' Association coordinates student representation and provides training and support for student representatives across the University. Student representatives ('Reps') listen to you to identify areas for improvement, suggest solutions, and ensure that your views inform strategic decisions within the University, building a stronger academic community and improving your student life. All Schools are expected to facilitate communication between student representatives and the students they represent. Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent (following the guidelines in the <a href="#">Guidance</a> ) or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list.”	<a href="#">Students' Association Representation</a>



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<b>Peer Support+</b>	<p><b>Standard text:</b> “Peer Support in the context of the University means a student with more experience sharing their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise with a new or less experienced student. Peer Support may focus around advancing your academic work, providing opportunities to socialise with other students within your School or offering additional support to ensure your wellbeing while at University.”</p> <p>Detail available Peer Support opportunities</p>	
<b>Reference to University and Students’ Association Support Services</b>	Provide information via the thematic student website	<p><a href="#">My online resources</a>  <a href="#">My Personal Tutor</a>  <a href="#">Curriculum, assessment and exams</a>  <a href="#">Study Support</a>  <a href="#">My profile</a>  <a href="#">Student conduct</a>  <a href="#">Adapting well</a>  <a href="#">Exams and timetables</a>  <a href="#">Technology and libraries</a>  <a href="#">International students</a>  <a href="#">Support for Study</a>  <a href="#">Student Counselling Service</a>  <a href="#">Disability support</a>  <a href="#">The Chaplaincy</a>  <a href="#">Sport and exercise</a>  <a href="#">Health services</a>  <a href="#">Careers and opportunities</a>  <a href="#">Money, fees and finance</a>  <a href="#">Health and wellbeing</a>  <a href="#">Students’ Association – Advice Place</a></p> <p>Link to <a href="#">A to Z of University Student Services</a></p>
<b>Accreditation to external bodies, discipline-specific career/industry information+</b>	Detail here as appropriate	
<b>Name, position and institution of External Examiner(s)^</b>	Where an External Examiner is appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body, this will also be stated. Students must be informed in the handbook that they must not make direct contact with External Examiners, and that other routes exist for queries about the assessment process.	<p><a href="#">External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Handbook for External Examiners of Taught Programmes</a></p>



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<b>Health and safety</b>	<p><b>Standard text:</b> “The University has a duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and students while at work, and the safety of all authorised visitors and members of the public entering the precincts of the University. The University Health and Safety Policy is issued upon the authority of the University Court and contains the Health and Safety Policy statement and summary of the organisation and arrangements of health and safety within the University. The successful implementation of the University Policy requires the support and co-operation of all employees and students - no person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the University in the interest of health, safety or welfare.</p> <p><b>The University Health and Safety Policy</b> The University Health and Safety Policy is supported by a Framework document published in two parts on the Organisation and Arrangements of health and safety within the University. Individuals are required to comply with any procedures or arrangements formulated under the authority of this Policy. Any questions or problems about matters of health and safety can be taken up initially with the School Safety Adviser. Further guidance on health and safety matters can be found on the Health and Safety Department website at <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety">http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety</a> including contact details for all professional staff within the corporate Health and Safety Department.”</p> <p>Provide information on local health and safety arrangements (including for online distance learning students).</p>	<p><a href="#">Health and Safety Policy</a></p>



## Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
<b>Data Protection</b>	<p><b>Standard text:</b> “<del>Under</del>The Data Protection <del>Law, Act</del> regulates the use of personal data. <del>P</del>personal data includes all recorded information about a living, identifiable individual. Students using personal data as part of their studies must comply with the responsibilities as outlined in the linked guidance. Before using personal data as part of their studies students must become familiar with the linked guidance, discuss implications with their supervisor and seek appropriate <del>ethics</del><del>written</del> approval. <del>They must also obtain consent from the data subjects to take part in the studies.</del> Failure to comply with the responsibilities is an offence against University discipline, and could lead to a breach of <del>the</del>Data Protection <del>Law, Act</del>. A data protection breach can cause distress to the people the information is about, and can harm relationships with research partners, stakeholders, and funding organisations. In severe circumstances the University could be sued, fined up to £<del>20, 50</del>000,000, and experience reputational damage.”</p> <p>Provide information on local data protection arrangements (including for online distance learning students).</p>	<a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-responsibilities">http://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-responsibilities</a>
<b><i>PGR handbooks only</i></b>		
<b><u>Supervision</u></b>	<u>Information on supervisory arrangements and expectations, including annual <del>progression</del> review<del>reporting</del>.</u>	
<b>Thesis (or equivalent) requirements</b>	To include local context on expected thesis length	
<b><u>Training and development</u></b>	<u>To cover: research culture; professional development; research skills training; and teaching.</u>	<u><del>Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators</del></u>
<b>Code of Practice</b>	Provide a link to the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students	<a href="#"><u>Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students</u></a>

+ If applicable

\* As applicable for research programmes

^ Taught programmes only

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee  
31 May 2018

**Course Organiser: Outline of Role - Update**

**Executive Summary**

This paper asks the Committee to approve minor amendments to the non-mandatory Course Organiser Role Outline guidance document. The Role Outline has been updated to take into account the following initiatives: the Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators; changes to the student representative structure; and the requirement for mid-course feedback to be collated and responded to for all undergraduate courses.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This aligns with the University's strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

**Action requested**

For approval

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The updated Role Outline will be made available on the Academic Services' website at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum/programme-and-course-management> and will be communicated in the annual policies update email sent to key stakeholders in June.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are no additional resource implications associated with this paper that haven't already been considered as part of the initiatives.

**2. Risk assessment**

There are no key risks associated with the paper – the minor amendments ensure that the guidance document is now consistent with other documentation.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The changes made to the document are minor and do not warrant an update to the existing Equality Impact Assessment which is available at:

[http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/Course\\_Organiser\\_Role\\_Outline\(Academic\\_Services\).pdf](http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/Course_Organiser_Role_Outline(Academic_Services).pdf)

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

**Key words**

Course organiser

**Originator of the paper**

Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services  
24 May 2018



# Course Organiser: Outline of Role

## Purpose of Guidance

The guidance provides information of the role of course organisers. The Head of School or Director of Teaching appoints course organisers to take responsibility for individual courses. The scope of the course organiser's remit varies according to local school organisation, but in outline the course organiser is responsible for:

- general course management
- assessment and feedback
- advising and supporting students on course-related matters
- monitoring and reviewing courses
- agreeing minor changes to courses

## Scope: Guidance is not Mandatory

This guidance applies to all staff with the role of course organiser and those supporting them in this role.

<b>Contact Officer</b>	Nichola Kett	Head, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team	<a href="mailto:nichola.kett@ed.ac.uk">nichola.kett@ed.ac.uk</a>
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## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 2008	<b>Starts:</b> 2008/09	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 12.5.17	<b>Amendments:</b> <del>31.05.18</del> 01.06.17	<b>Next Review:</b> 2019/20
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<b>Approving authority</b>	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee
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<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Minor review in 2016/17 took account of recent updates to a number of key academic process which themselves were consulted upon.
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<b>Section responsible for guidance maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services
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<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	Curriculum information: <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum">http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum</a>
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<b>UK Quality Code</b>	UK Quality Code Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B1.pdf">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B1.pdf</a>
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<b>Guidance superseded by this guidance</b>	
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<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.
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<b>Keywords</b>	Course organiser, course approval, course monitoring, roles, course management
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# Course Organiser: Outline of Role

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## 1 General Course Management

1.1 Checking that sufficient lecturers and tutors have been allocated to teach the course and know what their duties and responsibilities are in regard to the course

1.2 Ensuring staff (including technical staff and demonstrators) know their commitments and that proper communication channels are in place; chairing meetings of the course team

1.21.3 Specifically, allocating tasks to tutors and demonstrators, supporting and overseeing their work, and carrying out annual reviews of tutors and demonstrators as detailed in the Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators  
[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators_policy.pdf)

1.31.4 Encouraging and supporting the course team in a variety of approaches to teaching; monitoring, advising and supporting new course team members. Advice on reviewing teaching is available from the Institute for Academic Development.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching)

1.41.5 Liaising with Teaching Office or equivalent support staff

1.51.6 Liaising with the relevant Student Support Services

1.61.7 Ensuring bookings are made for lecture theatres, laboratories, and tutorial rooms

1.71.8 Organising appropriate audio-visual and/or IT support through Information Services

1.81.9 Ensuring that the organisation of the course, and the materials given to students, take account of accessibility issues and any adjustments required for individual students (working with the School's Coordinator of Adjustments)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service)  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible\\_and\\_inclusive\\_learning\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf)

1.91.10 Checking that laboratories have been assessed for risks in accordance with the University Health and Safety Policy

1.101.11 Ensuring that there is a budget available for consumables required to run and organise the course

1.111.12 Ensuring the production and distribution of course documentation and materials, including the course handbook. Required core content for course handbooks is detailed in the Programme and Course Handbook Policy.  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/progcoursehandbooks.pdf>

1.121.13 Arranging for the allocation of students to tutorial groups, practical groups, etc. and ensuring that students, tutors and demonstrators know times and venues

1.131.14 Ensuring in due time that bookshops are aware of any set book requirements.

1.141.15 Monitoring library provisions, and ensuring regular updating of stock relevant to the course.



# Course Organiser: Outline of Role

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~~4.15~~1.16 \_\_\_\_\_ Liaising with the Information Services regarding any special equipment or arrangements. Reporting any problems with computer laboratories

~~4.16~~1.17 \_\_\_\_\_ Overseeing course web page and virtual learning environment, Learn, etc. if appropriate.

## 2 Assessment and Feedback

2.1 Co-ordinating the load and timing of assessments across the course and liaising with other course organisers to take into account other deadlines, including those for dissertation or project-based activities

2.2 Informing students about the structure of assessments, expected standard of presentation, marking criteria, timescales and arrangements for feedback on assessments, and an individual assessment's contribution to the overall course mark

2.3 Drawing students' attention to the University Taught Assessment Regulations  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations)

2.4 Advising students of the need to avoid plagiarism and drawing their attention to the University guidelines  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct/plagiarism>

2.5 Ensuring that assessments are set and returned within the stipulated timeframe

2.6 Co-ordinating marking in accordance with published School procedures for moderation and standard-setting, and ensuring that accurate records are maintained

2.7 Co-ordinating the secure preparation of examination papers or questions (class and degree exams), including question vetting and checking, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Examiners and the External Examiners

2.8 Preparing material for the Board of Examiners in line with published Policy and attending meetings.  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

2.9 Ensuring that students understand the operation of Special Circumstances procedures and the deadlines for presenting requests for consideration of Special Circumstances. Providing information to the Special Circumstances Committee if requested

## 3 Advising and Supporting Students

3.1 Dealing with queries from prospective students on the course, and from their Personal Tutors

3.2 Advising students on course matters

3.3 Ensuring that students are aware (normally through the initial course information) of the action they should take in case of difficulties, whom to consult, or what guidance material they should look at



# Course Organiser: Outline of Role

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- 3.4 Monitoring student engagement, contacting defaulting students, informing Personal Tutors about students who are absent or experiencing academic or other difficulties, and reporting to the relevant role within the subject area or School  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier\\_4\\_student\\_engagement\\_and\\_attendance\\_policy\\_fe\\_b\\_2017\\_update\\_0.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier_4_student_engagement_and_attendance_policy_fe_b_2017_update_0.pdf)
- 3.5 Liaising with the Student Disability Service regarding adjustments for disabled students
- 3.6 Ensuring that students are aware of the advice and help that can be offered through the Student Disability Service
- 3.7 Ensuring that the course or any elements of the course comply with Disability legislation and the University's Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy.  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible\\_and\\_inclusive\\_learning\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf)
- 3.8 Ensure that appeal and complaint procedures are ~~clearly established and~~ published to students, and that tutoring staff are aware of these

## 4 Monitoring and Reviewing Courses

~~4.1 For Schools that are retaining class representatives<sup>1</sup>: Arranging for the election/appointment of class representatives; Ensuring that feedback is obtained through class or Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings; and advising class representatives of Edinburgh University Students' Association resources, training and support~~  
~~<http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/classreps>~~

~~4.14.2 Proactively working in partnership with class-student representatives to address feedback, ensuring that the results of such ongoing consultation and evaluation are made known to students; and responding to points raised in the SSLC.~~

~~Advising class representatives of Edinburgh University Students' Association resources, training and support for class representatives. — <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/classreps>~~

~~4.3 Ensure that mid-course feedback is collated and responded to for all courses at undergraduate level~~  
~~<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentvoicepolicy.pdf>~~

~~4.24.4 On an annual basis, obtain written/electronic feedback from students on the course.~~  
~~<http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/data-matters/course-enhancement-questionnaire>~~

~~4.34.5 On an annual basis, obtain written/electronic feedback from staff involved in course delivery~~

~~4.44.6 Undertake annual course monitoring which will be taken into consideration as part of Annual Programme Monitoring Reporting.~~  
~~<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>~~

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<sup>1</sup> From 2018/19 the majority of Schools are moving to programme level student representatives.



# Course Organiser: Outline of Role

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[4.54.7](#) Implement and monitor changes made as a result of previous feedback

[4.64.8](#) Assisting in the preparation and presentation of course changes to the Board of Studies

## 5 Agreeing Minor Changes to Courses

5.1 Approving minor changes to existing courses in line with the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy (in some circumstances Boards of Studies approval is also required).

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog\\_course\\_approval.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf)

**13 June 2017**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Committees**

**Executive Summary**

This paper explains that the 2017 version of the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance requires the University to undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of Senate and its Committees, and an externally-facilitated review of Senate and its Committees every five years. The externally-facilitated review will take place in 2018/19.

As part of the annual review (the report of which will feed into the externally-facilitated review in 2018/19), members of the four Senate Committees will be asked to fill in a questionnaire over the summer 2018. The questionnaire will seek to gauge the effectiveness of the composition, support, engagement and impact of the Senate Committees.

Draft questions for the questionnaire are included in the paper.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This paper aligns with the University strategic objective of leadership in learning.

**Action requested**

To note the forthcoming reviews of Senate and its Committees.

Committee members are asked to reflect individually on the draft questions set out in the paper, and they will be asked to respond to these questions via an online questionnaire over the summer.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The outcome of the questionnaire will be reported to Senate at its meeting in October 2018 and the report of the annual review will feed in to the externally-facilitated review conducted in 2018/19.

The report from the externally-facilitated review will be communicated to Senate Committees.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

If the annual review identifies any potential changes to the operation of Senate's Committees, Academic Services will review the resource implications of implementing them.

**2. Risk assessment**

The paper will assist the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective and will enable the University to manage a range of risks associated with its academic provision.

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

One of the core principles of Senate and its Committees is to ensure that a diverse range of staff is represented on academic decision-making bodies. It is hoped that the questions asked in the questionnaire to all Senate Committee members will identify whether there are any equality and diversity issues in the make-up of the Committees and the way they conduct their business.

### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

#### **Key words**

Governance, committees

#### **Originator of the paper**

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services  
Theresa Sheppard, Academic Policy Officer  
23 May 2018

## **Review of effectiveness of Senate Committees**

### Requirement to review the effectiveness of Senate and its committees

The 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that institutions are expected to review the effectiveness of their Senate and its committees annually and to hold an externally-facilitated review every five years:

“49. The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the Institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward if necessary in these circumstances.”

In line with the requirements of the Code, during Spring/Summer 2018, Academic Services is conducting an annual review of Senate and its Committees. The outcomes of this review will be reported to Senate in October 2018.

The University is planning to undertake an externally-facilitated review of Senate and its Committees during 2018-19.

### Questionnaire regarding the effectiveness of the Committee

Members of the Senate Committees will be invited to fill in an online questionnaire over the summer 2018 and the draft questions for this exercise are set out below for comment.

#### ***Governance Structures***

- Are you clear about the Committee's remit and how the committee fits within the academic governance framework of the University?
- Do you feel that the Committee manages its business effectively?
- Is the Committee flexible enough to adapt to changes in priorities?
- Are you happy with your Committee's use of task groups? Is there anything that could be improved?

#### ***Roles and Responsibility of Committee and Committee Members***

- Are you clear on your role and responsibilities as a Committee member?
- If there is a lack of clarity, do you think there is anything that could improve this?

#### ***Composition***

- Do you think that the current composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit?
- Is the size of the Committee appropriate in order for it to operate effectively?

#### ***Support of the Committees***

- Do you feel that the Committee is supported effectively? Are there any things we could improve?
- Are you happy with the volume and layout of the papers/information you receive to make decisions?

***Participation of Members***

- If you were a new member in 2017/18, were you happy with the induction you were given to the Committee and its business?
- Do you think Committee members participate fully with the Committee?
- Does anything limit your levels of participation with the Committee?

***Stakeholder Engagement and Communications***

- Does the Committee engage and communicate effectively with stakeholders? For example, is the Senate Committees' Newsletter an effective vehicle?

***Making an Impact***

- Do you feel that the Committee makes the desired impact based on its remit and priorities?

***Equality and Diversity***

- Is the composition of Committee members suitably representative of the diverse University population?
- Are you satisfied that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business?

The University of Edinburgh

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

## **Review of the Code of Student Conduct**

### **Executive Summary**

The Code of Student Conduct (“the Code”) outlines the University’s expectations regarding student conduct, and explains the University’s process for investigating allegations of unacceptable behaviour relating to students. The Code is due for periodic review in the 2018/19 session. This paper asks CSPC to approve the proposed approach to reviewing the Code.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

The effective handling of allegations of student misconduct is vital to maintaining a safe and positive environment for students and staff.

### **Action requested**

For approval.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will contact relevant stakeholders for input into the review of the Code.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The proposed work can be accommodated within Academic Services annual plan of work. The review should require minimal staff time from other relevant stakeholders within Colleges, Schools, and Support Groups.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The University needs to ensure that our procedures for handling allegations of student misconduct are fit for purpose, and capable of dealing with the most serious and complex cases. Failure to deal appropriately and fairly with allegations could pose risks to the safety and wellbeing of members of the University community, and lead to complaint or legal action from individuals affected.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The paper does not propose any changes to policy or practice at this stage. Any proposed changes to the Code of Student Conduct will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words** Conduct; discipline

### **Originator of the paper**

*Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services*

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

## **Review of the Code of Student Conduct**

### **Background**

The Code of Student Conduct (“the Code”) outlines the University’s expectations regarding student conduct, and explains the University’s process for investigating allegations of unacceptable behaviour relating to students. The Code is due for periodic review in the 2018/19 session.

### **Current operation of the Code**

Since the Code was last reviewed in 2015, the volume and nature of conduct cases arising within the University has changed considerably, with a particular increase in the number of cases involving allegations of serious and potentially criminal misconduct, and those involving the use of social media. In general, the Code has been found to function satisfactorily: the range of examples of misconduct offences provided has allowed the University to act in any case where it would be appropriate to do so; and the procedures within the Code have supported the investigation of allegations, and the application of penalties where appropriate.

However, our experience of handling complex cases has raised several issues which would merit addressing in a review of the Code, especially with regard to the appropriateness of some aspects of procedure when handling sensitive cases, for example those relating to allegations of sexual violence. In addition, it would be helpful to take account of any relevant feedback we have received regarding our conduct processes from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

### **Related initiatives**

Alongside the review of the Code itself, Academic Services will be undertaking a piece of work with a group of relevant stakeholders in the coming months to consider our approach to providing training and support to Conduct Investigators. We do not anticipate that this will result in any proposed changes to the Code.

The University is establishing a formal group to develop a strategy relating to issues of sexual violence, focusing on prevention, encouraging disclosure of incidents of sexual violence, and providing support to students and staff who experience sexual violence.

### **Process and scope for review**

We propose that Academic Services undertake a review of the Code during Semester 1 2018/19, taking account of the issues identified above, and consulting with Colleges and Support Groups, the Students’ Association, Conduct Investigators, Student Discipline Officers, and Legal Services.

Academic Services would bring a draft revised Code to a future meeting of CSPC for discussion and approval. Should CSPC be satisfied with any changes proposed, the revised Code would require approval by Court and Senate via resolution in early 2019.

**CSPC is requested to approve the proposed approach to reviewing the Code.**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2018/19**

**Executive Summary**

This paper contains the membership of the Student Undergraduate and Postgraduate Appeal Committees, and the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, for Academic Year 2018/19.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Excellence in Learning, Excellence in Research

**Action requested**

CSPC are asked to approve the membership of the Appeal Committees and Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

N/A

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None

**2. Risk assessment**

Minimal risk.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The membership lists do not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open paper

**Key words**

**Appeal, Fitness to Practise, Membership, Committee**

**Originator of the paper**

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Policy Officer

23 May 2018

## **Student Appeal Committee Membership Academic Year 18/19**

### ***College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences -***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Gary West (Convener)  
Professor Alexis Grohmann  
Mr Alan C Brown  
Dr Esther Mijers  
Dr Alison Jack  
Dr Jonny Murray  
Dr Sarah MacPherson  
Dr Paul Norris  
Dr Daniel Carr

#### Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor John Amis  
Professor Simon Kirby  
Dr Roberto Rossi  
Dr Colin Chandler  
Dr Emily Taylor  
Dr Laura Bradley  
Dr Tim Milnes  
Dr Richard Jones  
Dr Angus Bancroft  
Dr Andrew Hancock

### ***College of Science and Engineering –***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Dr Caroline Nichol  
Dr Chris Mowat  
Dr Jennifer Skilling  
Dr Max Ruffert  
Dr Heather McQueen  
Mr Stephen Warrington

#### Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Judy Hardy (Convener)  
Dr Paul Taylor  
Dr Julian Hall  
Dr Prashant Valluri

### ***College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine –***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Dr Fanny Kristmundsdottir (Vice Convener)  
Dr Geoff Pearson  
Dr Claire Phillips  
Dr Simon Riley

Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Cathy Abbott (Vice Convener)

Professor Ruth Andrew

Dr Kim Picozzi

Professor Adriano Rossi

**Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee Membership Academic Year 18/19**

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Ms Emma Greville-Williams (Law)

Professor Tonks Fawcett (Health in Social Science)

Dr Simon Beames (Education)

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Professor James Garden (School of Clinical Sciences)

Professor David Argyle (R(D)SVS)

Professor Jane Norman (School of Clinical Sciences)

Dr Jen Foley (School of Clinical Sciences)

Professor Bruce McGorum (R(D)SVS)

Professor Moyra Whyte (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine)

Note of Thanks

Academic Services wish to thank, and ask CSPC to note their thanks to Professor Graeme Reid, who has served as Vice Convener of the Undergraduate Appeal Committee, and has been a member of the Appeal Committee for over a decade. Professor Reid has been an invaluable source of advice and knowledge during his time on the Appeal Committee.

Professor Reid stands down from the Appeal Committee following the end of this Academic Year (2017/18).

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

**Executive Summary**

To update CSPC on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee at its meeting on 23 March 2018.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Not applicable.

**Action requested**

CSPC is invited to note the report.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Not applicable.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**2. Risk assessment**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**4. Freedom of information**

This paper is open.

**Key words**

Knowledge Strategy Committee

**Originator of the paper**

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, May 2018

# REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

23 March 2018

## 1 City Deal Overview

The Assistant Principal Industry Engagement briefed the Committee on the University's participation in the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal and its key role in the ambition to become the Data Capital of Europe. The following points were raised in discussion:

- 300 possible projects in collaboration with public, private and third sector partners have been identified, these should be prioritised and a suitable governance framework established;
- Importance of engagement with secondary schools on data education – a pilot programme with Midlothian Schools will be launched;
- Incorporating the City Deal into 'normal' University activity over time and considering possible links with the City Deal for all new projects reviewed by the Committee; and,
- Ensuring existing data privacy and safeguarding policies are suitable and can be scaled appropriately for City Deal activity – collaborative work with the Scottish Government on data safe havens is underway.

## 2 Draft Information Services Group Plan 2018-21

The Chief Information Officer summarised the draft Information Services Group plan and investment recommendations for the period 2018-21, noting that this will continue the 10 year strategic programmes set out in 2016 and 2017. The following comments were made in discussion:

- The importance of seeking feedback from Heads of Colleges and Schools on the plans;
- The network replacement programme is a high priority;
- Improvements to the student experience that would benefit existing students should be prioritised;
- Important to engage academic staff if the 'every academic a digital educator' aspiration is to be achieved;
- 24/7 opening of the Library has been very successful and the Library is heavily used – further improvements to enhance the number of study spaces are planned and would be welcomed.

## 3 General Data Protection Regulation Update

The Data Protection Officer provided an overview of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), its likely implications for the University and work underway to ensure compliance. Members discussed: circulating the online data protection module to the Committee when completed; identifying GDPR local champions across the University – with those appointed typically already involved in data protection work in their area; producing frequently asked questions, case studies and other materials for University staff; and collaboration with the Data Stewards. The Committee welcomed progress to date and requested that an update be submitted to a future meeting.

#### **4 Information Security Update**

The Chief Information Security Officer presented an update on information security activity across the University. It was noted that, although there has been no information security event of the scale of the worldwide 'WannaCry' attacks in mid-2017, malicious activity is continuing. Improving information security awareness and compliance was discussed, with a new Information Security Policy and Framework introduced in January. Access to University networks and systems by staff who have left the University was discussed, with a risk based approach expected to be taken.

#### **5 Network Replacement Procurement Update**

The Director of IT Infrastructure provided an update on the current status of the network replacement procurement project. Remedial work will be undertaken as required in the interim before the main network replacement activity is undertaken from January 2019 to January 2020. Scheduling of the network replacement in each building will be determined through consultation with stakeholders, with the work not expected to be intrusive or noisy. The decision of the Schools of Informatics and Engineering to join the University network and interest from the University's Accommodation, Catering and Events subsidiary in joining the network was welcomed, with the historical reasons for the current position discussed. These changes would impact on cost and will require appropriate scrutiny and approval.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

31 May 2018

**CSPC Meeting Dates 2018/19**

**Executive Summary**

CSPC meeting dates for 2018/19:

- Thursday 20 September 2018 - Raeburn Room, Old College
- Thursday 22 November 2018 - Room 235, Joseph Black Chemistry Building, King's Buildings
- Thursday 24 January 2019 - Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
- Thursday 21 March 2019 - Raeburn Room, Old College
- Thursday 30 May 2019 - Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

**Action requested**

For information

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

N/A

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

No major resource implications

**2. Risk assessment**

No risks identified

**3. Equality and Diversity**

No major equality impacts

**4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words**

**Originator of the paper**

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services 9 April 2018