

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee (CSPC)  
held at 2.00pm on Thursday 21 March 2019 in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

**Present:**

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Claire Vallance	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Representative of Researcher Experience Committee
Ellie Tudhope	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development
Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration

**In attendance:**

Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Miss Theresa Sheppard	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

**Apologies for absence:**

Diva Mukherji	Vice President Education Students' Association
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 24 January 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

**2. Matters Arising**

**a. Postgraduate Assessment and Progression**

Dr Bunni updated the Committee on the initial responses from Schools to the Committee's proposal to explore Model C – retaining the current pass marks whilst removing the progression hurdle.

**b. Support for Study**

Tom Ward noted that the Committee would consider further proposals on this policy in May, following further consultation.

**3. Wednesday Afternoon Teaching (CSPC 18/19 4 A)**

The Committee noted the analysis of current adherence to the Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance, provided by the Head of Timetabling and Examination

Services. The paper acknowledged that core teaching should only take place on Wednesday afternoons in exceptional circumstances and noted the concern by students that that this Policy was not being implemented in full in some cases, and that this was disproportionately weighted towards PGT activity.

While there was no appetite by the Committee to conduct a wider review of the Policy, it agreed that the Wednesday afternoon hard constraint should only be relaxed where colleges have approved exemptions. The Committee therefore approved the following actions:

- That Timetabling and Examination Services would only agree to schedule teaching activities on a Wednesday afternoon once colleges had approved requests for exemptions to the policy and had informed Timetabling and Examination Services of this approval
- That Timetabling and Examination Services would give colleges a list of those courses that are currently scheduling teaching activities for Wednesday afternoons
- That Timetabling and Examination Services and Academic Services would provide colleges with guidance on what criteria to apply when considering requests for exemptions

The Committee also made the following points in discussion:

- The constraint on Wednesday afternoon teaching should not necessarily extend to teaching for members of staff on credit-bearing courses (e.g. the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice).
- Timetabling and Examination Services should convey to colleges the current disproportionate weighting towards PGT activity on Wednesday afternoons
- Preventing courses from teaching on Wednesday afternoons could potentially reduce the flexibility of the curriculum in some cases; it was not yet known whether some students would prefer this flexibility to free Wednesday afternoons.

<b>Action:</b> Timetabling and Examination Services and Academic Services to liaise with colleges on exemptions from the Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance
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#### **4. Academic Year Dates (CSPC 18/19 4 B)**

The Committee noted the further analysis by the Head of Timetabling and Examination Services which assessed the options for compressing the December 2020 examination dates into the optimally identified 10-day period for the first semester of 2020/21. The analysis identified that the 2020/21 December examination diet could be delivered within a 10-day period in the event that additional estate provision of 400-500 seats were secured, along with holding examinations on Saturdays.

The Director of Student Systems and Administration indicated that she was confident that the department could secure the additional budget in order to rent external space for this purpose, and that the Committee should therefore plan on the basis that the University could deliver this option.

The Committee endorsed this proposal as a solution to the challenge created by Semester 1 starting a week later in 2020, and made the following observations:

- This proposal could be rolled forward for future years in which the academic year followed the same pattern
- Academic Services would prepare a communication to Schools to encourage them to avoid teaching on the Thursday and Friday preceding the revision period in 2020/21.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare a communication to Schools about the revision period 2020/21
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## 5. Service Excellence

### a. Service Excellence Programme: Student Administration and Support Update

Brian Butler, the Service Excellence Programme Manager, updated the Committee on the Service Excellence Programme project on Student Administration and Support, presenting a proposed future model.

Under the proposed model, Service Excellence would implement student hubs at school level, which will serve to provide information to students without them needing to engage with a range of different University structures. In order to be effective, the model would require clear responsibilities at University, college and school level. The proposed model would involve transferring to school level a range of individual student-related functions currently handled at college level.

The proposed model will be presented to the Student Administration and Support Board at the end of April.

The Committee noted that some areas of administration would still require college scrutiny, for example where there is a need for a separation of decision-making from the local area. The Service Excellence Programme Manager confirmed that the next stage of the process would determine whether there would be any exceptions to the proposed model. The Committee also noted that, prior to transferring any functions to School level, the University would need to establish that all Schools would have the infrastructure and management arrangements to deal with the functions in a rigorous way.

### b. Service Excellence Programme: Study and Work Away – Proposed change in arrangements for progression boards and Exchange Coordinators (CSPC 18/19 4 C)

The Committee approved proposals to change the planned progression board arrangements for students returning from optional study abroad, which would allow College Progression Boards in the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering continue to fulfil these functions in 2019/20, rather than a Board at University level. The Committee also agreed to change the planned current arrangements for the Study and Work Away Service to take on responsibilities held by Exchange Coordinators.

The Committee noted that proposals would involve changes to Undergraduate Degree Regulations 27-34 and that these changes would be added to those proposed in Paper CSPC 18/19 4 E.

The Committee noted that Service Excellence should agree the name of the Work and Study Away Service by early in the following week in order to include this with the Degree Regulations.

**Action:** Academic Services to update the Degree Regulations to reflect changes to Regulations 27-34

**Action:** Service Excellence to notify Academic Services of the name of the Work and Study Away Service

**c. Service Excellence Programme: Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (CSPC 18/19 4 D)**

The Committee noted the update on the proposals for the Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions project, and that the Service Excellence Programme planned to submit proposals for policy changes to the Committee for its approval at a later date.

**6. Degree Regulations**

**a. Draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 E)**

The Committee discussed and agreed the Undergraduate Degree Regulations for the academic year 2019/20, subject to adjustment to Regulation 5 (Disclosure of Criminal Offences) which Academic Services would agree with colleges after the meeting (this would apply to both undergraduate and postgraduate degree regulations).

**Action:** Academic Services to agree wording with colleges for Regulation 5.

**b. Draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 F)**

The Committee discussed and agreed the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for the academic year 2019/20, subject to adjustments to Regulation 7 (Disclosure of Criminal Offences). Academic Services also agreed to consider the wording for Regulation 9 further, since the question was raised as to whether this could apply to students on CDT programmes.

**Action:** Academic Services to agree wording with colleges for Regulations 7 and 9.

**7. Curriculum Opt-Outs**

**a. Update on planned MBChB for Healthcare Practitioners (Closed - G)**

The Committee noted the revised proposals for the programme, which reflected the changes agreed by the short-term task group appointed by CSPC at its last meeting.

**b. CMVM: Paediatric Emergency and Critical Care Medicine Cert/Dip/MSc Programme (CSPC 18/19 4 H)**

**c. CMVM: MSc Clinical Education: proposal route to complete degree without dissertation/research project (CSPC 18/19 4 I)**

The Committee noted the requests for both these programmes to offer an alternative to undertaking a dissertation in the final MSc year. The Committee agreed that, before reaching a decision, it would appoint a short-term task group to agree the criteria to apply when considering the academic rationale for these and other similar cases in future, and that this group would then decide on these two proposals on behalf of CSPC.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to set up the short-term task group to discuss the opt-out from a Master's dissertation.
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#### **8. Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure: Proposed Amendments and Opt-Outs (CSPC 18/19 4 J)**

The Committee approved the proposed amendments and request for an exemption to the Policy, subject to minor adjustments to the wording.

#### **9. New Degree Programmes: Collaboration with the Gujarat Biotechnology University (Closed - K)**

Professor David Gray, Head of the School of Biological Sciences presented the paper which included preliminary information on the planned collaboration with the Gujarat Biotechnology University (GBU) to deliver postgraduate Master's degree programmes in Biotechnology.

The Committee considered the proposals and observed that the School should clarify following in future proposals:

- The use of technology for the programme, specifically whether it would be underpinned by Edinburgh VLEs and supported by the Information Services Group staff.
- The student and academic support infrastructure and the training which GBU would provide in relation to this support.
- The mechanisms for the student voice, including Staff-Student Liaison Committees and Course Enhancement Questionnaires.
- The ownership of the programme's intellectual property.
- Whether the regulatory arrangements would follow the University of Edinburgh's, or whether these would be replicated, and subsequently owned by GBU.

The Committee observed that, unlike other dual award arrangements, GBU would be entitled to award a degree for a programme of studies that it had not been delivering itself in the first few years; this issue would require further scrutiny by CSPC before the Committee was invited to approve the dual element.

#### **10. Distance Learning at Scale (Closed - L)**

The Committee considered and approved the non-standard credit structure for a University of Edinburgh 'MicroMaster's' and non-standard approaches to allowing repeats of the MicroMaster's assessment and email communications, noting the following against each of the three exemptions:

- The non-standard 30-credit MicroMaster's course structure, which represented an opt-out from the University's Framework Curriculum – the Committee noted

that colleges had agreed that a MicroMaster's would be a 30-credit award; the term 'MicroMaster's' was a brand name, however, and other institutions awarded different credit loads for awards with the same name. The University should therefore be mindful of this when marketing these programmes.

- The non-standard approach to allowing students to repeat the MicroMaster's Capstone assessment, which represents an opt-out from the Taught Assessment Regulations – the Committee agreed that the School Board of Studies would need to consider how to take account of resit results for the MicroMaster's when making progression and award decisions on the proposed Master's programme.
- The non-standard approach to email communications for MicroMaster's students, which represents a slightly different way of operating from that set out in the Policy on University use of Email as a Method of Contacting Students.

## **11. Senate Committees**

### **a. Review of the Structure of the Senate Committees – initial proposals for consultation (CSPC 18/19 4 M)**

The Committee discussed the proposals and suggested 'Academic Regulations and Policy' as its future title. The Committee also noted the importance of ensuring that its membership included the expertise required to consider an increasingly diverse set of issues, and agreed that the best approach to this was to co-opt members on a case-by-case basis, so that the Committee would not become too large in future.

### **b. Senate Committees Planning 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 N)**

The Committee identified that agreement around an institution-wide algorithm for borderlines should be included in its priorities for the coming session.

## **12. Additions to the membership of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee (CSPC 18/19 4 O)**

The Committee approved the addition of two members of staff to the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee.

## **13. Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee (CSPC 18/19 4 P)**

The Committee noted the report from the meeting of the Knowledge Strategy Committee on 18 January 2019.

## **14. Any Other Business**

Professor Murray thanked Tom Ward for his valuable contribution to CSPC as Director of Academic Services.