

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting
held online on Thursday 28 May 2020 at 2.00pm**

Present:

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

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Faten Adam	Service Excellence Programme

Apologies for absence:

Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Rayya Ghul	Institute for Academic Development

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous electronic business meeting held between 19 March 2020 and 12 April 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

a) Any Other Business (concessions in response to Covid-19) - Convener's Action 2 April 2020 - the award of credit on aggregate for pre-Honours students

Convener's Action had been taken by Professor Murray on 2 April 2020 to approve the award of credit on aggregate for pre-Honours students where appropriate. The Academic Contingency Group had had a discussion about the award of credit on aggregate for pre-Honours students, following APRC's discussion of the issue in

March 2020. The College Deans on the Academic Contingency Group had then had further discussion with their Schools, and felt that use of credit on aggregate would be needed in some circumstances. Since this was in keeping with what APRC had discussed, and key members of APRC from each College were on the Academic Contingency Group, Professor Murray considered that it was appropriate to approve this on behalf of APRC by Convener's Action. Members agreed that this approach had been appropriate. The agreed parameters for credit on aggregate for pre-Honours students were as follows:

- up to 40 credits on aggregate could be awarded by a Board of Examiners;
- the expectation was that it would primarily apply to outside courses (i.e. not "core" courses), but Schools were to explain to students how it could be used locally, i.e. they could choose to apply it to (some or all) core courses, if they felt this would not be to students' disadvantage in the longer term.

b) Electronic business - 24 April 2020 - 1 May 2020 - Extensions and Special Circumstances Service (amended paper attached)

Members had considered a paper about the Extensions and Special Circumstances Service by electronic business between 24 April 2020 and 1 May 2020. Some edits had been proposed by members and these edits had been incorporated and a revised paper had been provided. The revised paper was approved by the Committee.

c) Electronic business - 23 April 2020 - 29 April 2020 – MBChB

Members had approved a paper about the MBChB programme (Y1-2 course structure and Y4 exit award) by electronic business between 23 April 2020 and 29 April 2020. APRC had therefore approved:

- concessions for deviations from the standard curriculum framework in permitting 120 credit, whole-year courses in MBChB Years 1 and 2;
- the proposed procedure for awarding credit for students failing to complete Year 4 of the MBChB.

d) Any Other Business (response to Covid-19) – Convener's Action 20 May 2020 - Appointment of additional Deputy Conveners for Boards of Studies

Professor Murray had taken Convener's Action to approve a request that had originated from the College of Science and Engineering about the appointment of Deputy Board of Studies Conveners. A query had been raised about approval of course-level changes that were permitted post-Degree Programme Table publication. It had been anticipated that there could be changes to learning outcomes/ assessment weightings, and it had been proposed to delegate authority from the Board of Studies Convenor to programme year leads in order to enable prompter decision-making in the current circumstances with Covid-19. Professor Murray believed that this was reasonable, as long as a clear record was kept by the Board of Studies Secretary of the changes approved and the programme leads operated within clear parameters. It had been agreed that in terms of governance, Heads of School should be allowed to nominate additional temporary Deputy Conveners of the

Board of Studies who could approve course-level changes on behalf of the Board of Studies Convener, which would be a slight change to the process set out on page 7 of the [Prog & Course Approval Policy](#) which allowed the Head of School to appoint one Deputy Convener. It had also been agreed that information was to be communicated more widely and placed on the Covid-19 SharePoint site.

3. Service Excellence Programme – Special Circumstances Policy (APRC 19/20 6B)

The Committee received Paper B and also a late paper that had been circulated which provided information about the latest position on the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) Service.

Subject to the following amendments to the Special Circumstances Policy, Paper B was approved as presented:

7.3 To be quorate a Special Circumstances Committee will consist of an academic Convener along with at least two other members of staff, one of whom must be a member of academic staff (and the other of whom can be a member of academic staff or professional services staff).

11.2 The table still referred to CSPC and this should be amended to APRC.

4. External Examiners: attendance at taught Boards of Examiners (APRC 19/20 6C)

The Committee received Paper C which asked them to consider a proposal to relax the existing requirements regarding physical attendance by External Examiners at meetings of Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes.

University HR Services had confirmed that, for External Examiners acting on taught programmes (but not those involved in examining postgraduate research degrees), we are required to carry out Right to Work checks by the UK Home Office. These checks involved receiving electronic copies of identification documents on appointment, and the scrutiny of the original documents when the External Examiner attends the University. There was no requirement that these checks should be carried out annually.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to amend the requirements from 2020/21 to state that External Examiners were required to attend the University physically on at least one occasion in the first year of their term, but that any further physical attendance could be as agreed with the relevant School. These proposals did not affect the existing requirement for participation by at least one External Examiner in each meeting of a Board of Examiners.

A query was raised about incorporating data protection training and information security awareness training information for External Examiners in to the relevant policy. Dr Bunni agreed to explore this further, to consider where best to locate information about data protection training and information security awareness training for External Examiners.

ACTION: Academic Services to amend relevant External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy and Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21 to reflect agreed new position.

ACTION: Academic Services to consider where best to provide information about data protection and information security awareness training for External Examiners.

5. Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21 (APRC 19/20 6D)

Subject to the following amendments, and correction of any typos, the Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21 were approved as presented:

4.1 The Head of School* informs the College Office about the appointment of the Convener by the beginning of the relevant Semester for the Board of Examiners responsible for courses assessed in each Semester, and by the beginning of Semester 2 for the Board responsible for programme decisions for each programme.

27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. Students on a Tier 4 visa can only take a fourth assessment attempt where they have valid special circumstances (in line with the Special Circumstances Policy), and specific additional conditions are met....[deletion of previous reference in brackets after immigration control to Non-European Economic Area "EEA" nationals].

44.3 (c) where a student being considered for progression on a postgraduate taught programme has achieved an average of 50% or more across 120 credits of taught courses, and a mark of 50% or more in 60 or 70 credits, with a further course or courses carrying a mark of 48 or 49%.

ACTION: Academic Services to arrange for revised Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21 to be published.

6. Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21 (APRC 19/20 6E)

Subject to correction of any typos the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21 were approved as presented.

ACTION: Academic Services to arrange for revised Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21 to be published.

7. Student Appeal Regulations Review (APRC 2019/20 6F)

Dr Bunni presented this item. Members agreed that if Ground C was to be fully removed then specific wording should be added to Ground B so that it was clear that Ground B included "lack of due diligence" within it. Subject to this amendment, the Student Appeal Regulations were approved as presented, and were to be published for 2020/21.

ACTION: Academic Services to arrange for the revised Student Appeal Regulations to be published.

8. Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students (APRC 2019/20 6G)

Dr Bunni presented this item. The revised Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students was approved as presented. Changes were minor to reflect regulation/policy changes, and Students' Association, Institute for Academic Development, English Language and Complaints had provided some updated content. References to special circumstances had been amended to refer to "adverse circumstances" to avoid confusion with the special circumstances process, which applied only to the taught components of research programmes.

ACTION: Academic Services to arrange for the revised Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students to be published.

9. Programme and Course Handbooks Policy (APRC 19/20 6H)

The Programme and Course Handbooks Policy was approved as presented, subject to the following amendment:

- page 234 on peer support. Not all PALS schemes are run by the Students' Association so the wording will need to be adjusted.

It was also noted by a member that there could be more reference to postgraduate research in the policy, which was something that might be looked at in the longer term.

ACTION: Academic Services to arrange for revised Programme and Course Handbooks policy to be published.

10. Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2019/20 (APRC 19/20 6I)

This paper was received by the Committee. Any further comments were to be passed to the author of the paper.

11. APRC committee priorities 2020/21 (APRC 19/20 6J)

This paper was received by the Committee. Any further comments were to be passed to the author of the paper.

12. Senate themes for 2020/21 meetings (APRC 19/20 6K)

This paper was received by the Committee. Any further comments were to be passed to the author of the paper.

13. Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees (APRC 19/20 6L)

This paper was received by the Committee. Any further comments were to be passed to the author of the paper.

14. Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Update (APRC 19/20 6M)

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

15. Any Other Business

There was no further business.