

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
to be held online on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 2.00pm**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held online on 24 September 2020** Enclosed
 2. **Matters Arising**
 - a) **Electronic Business** - Special Circumstances and Covid-19 (14-19 October 2020), CAHSS PUC Chile (18 November – 25 November 2020), Virtual Boards of Examiners - concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations (23-26 November 2020)
 - b) **Convener's Action** - CSE Mathematics PUC Chile (23 October 2020)
- For Discussion**
3. **Una Europa Joint PhD in Cultural Heritage** CLOSED (A)
 4. **Board of Examiners 2020 Resilience Survey Analysis** APRC 20/21 2B
 5. **Virtual Boards of Examiners- amendment to Taught Assessment Regulations** APRC 20/21 2C
 6. **Coursework extensions – review of current policy** APRC 20/21 2D
 7. **CSE: Geophysics degrees placement year weighting** APRC 20/21 2E
- For information and formal business**
8. **Academic year dates 2022/23 and provisional academic year dates 2023/24 and 2024/25** APRC 20/21 2F
 9. **Any Other Business**
 - Mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on student assessment To follow (CLOSED G)

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting
held online on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 2.30pm**

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research (CMVM)
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, Students' Association
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Jean Grier	Investigations Manager
Roshni Hume	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Harish Lockhun	Edinburgh Global

Apologies for absence:

Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
--------------------	-------------------------------------

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous electronic business meeting held on 28 May 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

- a) **Convener's Action** – change of semester 2 dates for year 4 of BSc (Hons) Oral Health Sciences programme; change of start date for MBA to January in 2021 and 2022; approval of concession re: double marking of dissertations for an MSc

programme in Education for one year; approval of revised Degree Programme Specification Guidance; approval of minor revision to Student Appeal Regulations.

- b) Electronic Business** – 1-8 July 2020 Concession re: double marking of dissertations for an MSc programme in Education; 16-22 July 2020 MVM PGT paper (not approved); 27-28 July 2020 PGT dissertation re-submission window revised to be 40-49 as a temporary concession (previously 45-49).

3. Expected Behaviour Policy (APRC 20/21 1A)

Jean Grier presented this paper which set out a proposed new policy covering the 'expected behaviour' of parties in casework covering academic appeals, student conduct and complaints.

The Students' Association requested that specific wording be added to the policy (e.g. possibly in the description section) to ensure that it was clearer that legitimate complaints were very much welcomed/not being discouraged. Mrs Grier agreed to add something in to the policy to cover this point.

There were some further amendments to be made to the policy following some suggestions from the Students' Association, therefore the policy was not approved as presented. If the proposed changes were substantive the policy would come back to the full Committee for final approval, but if the proposed changes were not substantive the policy could be approved by Convener's Action.

<p>ACTION: Jean Grier and Dr Bunni to arrange meeting with the Students' Association to discuss proposed amendments to this draft policy.</p>
--

4. Academic Misconduct – Vivas of Affirmation (APRC 20/21 1B)

This paper provided an update on discussion which had taken place within the University and externally, at a sector-wide level in relation to contract cheating and academic misconduct, particularly with regards to remote examination. The paper also included a revised draft of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for approval.

In order to accommodate the vivas of affirmation within the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for the 2020/21 academic year, the following actions were proposed:

- A minor amendment to the procedures to state that the School Academic Misconduct Officers could nominate deputies with subject specific expertise to conduct vivas of affirmation in place of the preliminary meeting which would normally be conducted by the SAMO. It was also proposed that CAMOs could nominate deputies to act on their behalf where necessary, for example where there was a conflict of interest;
- Creation of online guidance which would explain how SAMO meetings may be used for vivas of affirmation, in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

The Committee approved the draft Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures as presented, for 2020/21.

ACTION: Academic Services to publish revised Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures online for 2020/21 at www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academicmisconductprocedures.pdf

- 5. Universities UK Principles for Effective Degree Algorithm Design (CLOSED C)**
Dr Bunni presented this closed paper. The Committee agreed to take no action in relation to the paper at this time, but to keep this matter under review, returning to the issue in one year's time.
- 6. CAHSS: Non-Standard Academic Year for Postgraduate Certificate in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care (APRC 20/21 1D)**

This paper was approved by the Committee.

- 7. Concession Request - Incoming Indian PG Students 2020 (APRC 20/21 1E)**

This paper was presented by Harish Lokhun, Edinburgh Global. This paper requested Committee approval for a concession to the regulation around conflicting studies (PG Degree Regulation 12) for incoming Indian students matriculating in 2020/21 for their postgraduate studies who may be affected by conflicting studies in India. This was based on the requirement for them complete their final examinations for their undergraduate degree at their home institution, alongside their studies at the University of Edinburgh.

The Committee raised concerns about how challenging it could be for any students affected to keep up with their programmes, and suggested that they were not keen to make a blanket concession without sight of the numbers. However, the Committee accepted that there were few options here, and agreed they were content to approve a concession which would allow Colleges to take decisions on this on a case-by-case basis as they saw fit.

- 8. APRC Membership and Terms of Reference 2020/21 (APRC 20/21 1F)**

The APRC membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/21 were approved, subject to an amendment to the reference to the Convener as the Assistant Principal, Academic Support. It was agreed that it did not make sense to tie the Convener's role to a specific role but to add something in the section on the composition, explaining that the Committee could appoint a Convener of its members. The Terms of Reference did not currently identify a term of office for the Convener role, for example a three-year term, but consideration would need to be given as to whether to incorporate this in future.

ACTION: Academic Services to consider additional wording for the Terms of Reference and bring back to the Committee as needed.

- 9. Senate Committees' Members' Guidance 2020 (APRC 20/21 1G)**

This paper was received for information.

10. Senate Committee Effectiveness Review 2019/20 – questionnaire responses initial analysis (APRC 20/21 1H)

This paper was received for information.

11. Any Other Business

a) A late paper was circulated in advance of the meeting from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in relation to advice for staff about authorised interruption of studies. The paper noted that there were instances where authorised interruptions of study requests could be approved and provided a list of these instances. Schools were to be invited to consider this list when deciding whether or not to grant an authorised interruption of studies. If Schools considered any or all of these points relevant in a request for the Authorised Interruption of Study, it was strongly recommended that such applications should be approved:

- 1) Why is this student impacted more than any other student on the same degree programme?
- 2) Why is this student impacted more than any other student who is studying remotely in the same country?
- 3) Is there a direct confirmation that core learning outcomes for the programme cannot be met through any suitable and acceptable alternative means?
- 4) Is there a threat of surveillance and risk to students arising from some material used which is core to their studies and which the Course Organiser is unable to replace with other material of equal pedagogic value.
- 5) Is there anything else to do with the request, such as mental health difficulties, which would give additional reasons to grant an authorised interruption of studies – so would it be granted in “normal” circumstances?

The Committee made suggestions for clarification/amendment to point 3 and point 4 in the list of instances provided by CAHSS. The Committee agreed that the list would be amended and circulated by the CAHSS College Office to the College Offices in CSE and CMVM and the Students’ Association for further comment. The agreed guidance would then be circulated to Schools via Colleges in the name of the Convener of APRC.

b) Dr Bunni raised an item relating to Special Circumstances and Covid-19. The Committee acknowledged that, for courses being undertaken in 2020/21, the “no detriment” approach and the other provisions of Annex A which applied to courses in Semester 2 of 2019/20 no longer applied. This was due to the fact that teaching and assessment for 2020/21 had been redesigned with the impact of Covid-19 in mind. However, the University also agreed in 2019/20 to extend the range of grounds for Special Circumstances, and reduce the evidence requirements due to Covid-19. Members agreed that it would be appropriate and necessary to take similar steps in the current session for 2020/21, and apply these as a concession to the Special Circumstances Policy.

The Committee agreed that Academic Services would liaise with the Colleges, the Students’ Association, and Sarah McAllister to agree some proposals for concessions. These would then be brought to the Committee for a decision electronically, in advance of its next meeting.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 January 2021

Board of Examiners 2020 Resilience Survey Analysis

Description of paper

1. This paper is the Board of Examiners 2020 Resilience project post-project survey analysis. This is a wide-ranging piece of work covering including policy, processes, systems and impact on staff.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To formally note, consider, and apply where appropriate and possible, recommendations.

Background and context

3. The Resilience project, begun in April 2020, was designed to ensure resilience across Schools and Colleges following the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic. The original remit included both Student Support and Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners work incorporated how to implement “Annex A”, which provided regulatory guidance on the University’s “no detriment” policy, though process and system development. This report analyses a survey conducted across the institution as part of the lessons learnt element of the Board of Examiners work and provides recommendations for similar future work.
4. The survey was written by the project team with input from Academic Services.

Discussion

5. The announcement of the “no detriment” principle, with policy developed to fit that, close to the Board period put an exceptional amount of pressure on staff, who often felt that they had not been able to inform that decision. The amount of work required to implement it, and the readiness of systems/tools to support it, had not been fully understood before the decision was announced. This massively increased workload for staff involved in Boards, both academics and, particularly, Professional Services staff. That workload caused many staff to feel stress, exhaustion and unable to prepare adequately for the start of semester.
6. While the impact on students wasn’t directly apparent from the survey, with little student challenges reported to Teaching Offices, we do know that the volume of appeals is lower than previous years, which is what would be expected given the “no detriment” principle. From that perspective, we can say there was a positive outcome for students. However, we cannot tell if that same benefit would have been achieved if a different approach had been taken to policy/Boards.
7. While respondents welcomed and used improvements to APT, and guidance/support from the College offices and project team, there was frustration with the BI Suite and Power BI tools being unable to model the students’

outcomes without lots of manual intervention and, commonly, duplication of effort in APT or other tools, such as local excel sheets.

8. The Executive Summary includes a number of high-level recommendations in response to the feedback received.
9. Detailed analysis of the survey provides justification for the recommendations and is grouped into the following themes:
 - a. Policy / Annex A
 - b. Assessment and Progression Tool (APT) development
 - c. Support Tools
 - d. Guidance and Support
 - e. Virtual Boards
 - f. Impact on Staff
 - g. Other lessons
10. Implementing recommendations relating to staff workload in particular will work towards the 2030 Strategy to ensure we have policies and procedures that are people focused, efficient and effective

Resource implications

11. If the above recommendations are deemed necessary and approved, resources to deliver them would be estimated, and requested from the Student strand of Adaptation and Renewal / Curriculum Student Experience Group.

Risk management

12. Risk assessment has not been undertaken on this paper, however implementation of any recommendations endorsed would have appropriate risk management.

Equality & diversity

13. An EQIA was not completed for the survey but if recommendations are endorsed and resourced, then the impact would be assessed for their delivery.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

14. Communications to Curriculum Student Experience Group (CSEG) and ART Students from the Project Team would be necessary, with evaluation of impact/resource requirements to be presented to them.

Author

Rosie Edwards and Ranald Swanson
13 January 2021

Presenters

Rosie Edwards and Lisa Dawson

Freedom of Information

The paper is open

BoE Resilience - Survey Analysis

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Key Themes Identified	5
Policy/Annex A	5
APT Development	9
Support Tools	12
Guidance and Support	17
Virtual Boards	19
Impact on Staff	21
Other Lessons	24
Appendices	25
School Response Breakdown	25
Initial Survey Request Text	27
Survey Notes and Questions	27

Version	Date	Description
0.1	20/11/20	Initial draft for project team review
0.2	24/11/20	Review with Adam Bunni and project team
0.3	11/12/20	Review with Sponsor, APT Lead, Project Team and Adam Bunni
0.4	06/01/21	Updated with feedback from APT lead, Adam Bunni and project team. Ready to circulate to Project Board members for review

Audience

- Review - Resilience Project Board members; Vice Principal (Students); Deputy Secretary (Student Experience); Learning and Teaching Committees
- Recommendations Consideration:
 - APRC – 21 Jan 2021
 - CSEG
 - ART Students Programme

Executive Summary

“It was intense. So intense. I am so proud of the way I handled it.”

Background

Covid19 had a big impact on the way UoE Boards of Examiners (BoE) ran in 2020, both the regulations governing the Boards, and the guidance and systems available to work with the updated regulations. To support that work, a BoE Resilience team developed tools, guidance and processes to support Boards. As part of the end of project lessons learned exercise, a survey was circulated to staff involved in Boards, both Professional Services and Academics. The purpose of carrying out this survey was to:

- **Development** - Identify further system tool updates that would benefit staff involved in BoE processing. Quick fixes will be merged into improvement project, subject to resources/commitment
- **Review Policy** - Review process for development and application of policy, and feedback any lessons to APRC for their consideration
- **Lessons** – Feed into lessons learned and proposals - Identify themes in processing and/or policy that need to be taken into consideration for any future projects. Gather an estimate on the additional effort expended on the recent BoE period, and to identify if the additional time built into the key dates was sufficient

Key Statistics

The survey was initially issued on 27 October, extended on 10 November and closed on 17 November. For CMVM and CSE colleagues it was sent to key Professional Services colleagues, with a request to cascade further, including to Academics. For CAHSS, it was distributed via College Offices. In that time the following responses were received:

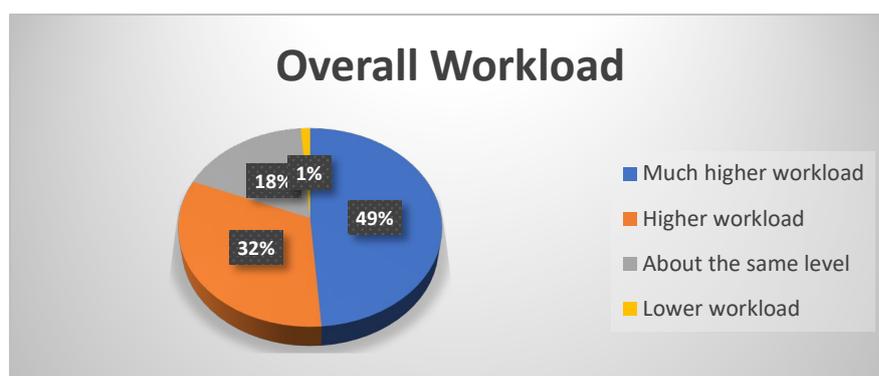
College	Professional Services	Academics	Total
CAHSS	18	16	34
CSE	6	4	10
CMVM	19*	16	35
Totals	43*	36	79

*Includes 1 Professional Manager within NHS Course Director. Of the responses, 51/79 gave a contact email address, if follow-up discussion needed, while the remainder were anonymous.

A complete breakdown by School/Deanery is in Appendices. **NB** There was a distinct weighting in the responses to certain schools with high numbers of responses, while others had only 1 respondent (or none at all).

Key Findings

The announcement of the “no detriment” principle, with policy developed to fit that, close to the Board period put an exceptional amount of pressure on staff, who often felt that they had not been able to inform that decision. The amount of work required to implement it, and the readiness of systems/tools to support it, had not been fully understood before the decision was announced. This massively increased workload for staff involved in Boards, both academics and, particularly, Professional Services staff. That workload caused many staff to feel stress, exhaustion and unable to prepare adequately for the start of semester.



While the impact on students wasn’t directly apparent from the survey, with little student challenges reported to Teaching Offices, we do know that the volume of appeals is lower than previous years, which is what would be expected given the “no detriment” principle. From that perspective, we can say there was a positive outcome for students. However, we cannot tell if that same benefit would have been achieved if a different approach had been taken to policy/Boards.

While respondents welcomed and used improvements to APT, and guidance/support from the College offices and project team, there was frustration with the BI Suite and Power BI tools being unable to model the students’ outcomes without lots of manual intervention and, commonly, duplication of effort in APT or other tools, such as local excel sheets.

Recommendations

If the following recommendations are approved, resources to deliver them would be requested from the Student strand of Adaptation and Renewal/CSEG.

Category	Recommendation	Description	Priority
Communication	Acknowledge	Senior managers to communicate with BoE staff the emerging themes from this survey, specifically acknowledging the impact on them, and lessons learned	High
APT Dev	BoE 2021 Prep	Further developments of APT (e.g. expand range of codes for course Boards flagging to Programme Boards; staff view of disregarded components) to improve modelling directly should be prioritised, to reduce the need for multiple tools	High
APT Dev	Transcripts	Review data provided on student record and transcripts to improve clarity of decisions taken, e.g. to disregard components	Med

Category	Recommendation	Description	Priority
APT Dev	Student Notes	Allow student-level notes to be added for clarity of decision-making	Med
APT Dev	Resources	An additional resource should be identified to provide cover for single point of failure in Student Admin team	Med
APT Dev	Credit on Aggregate	APT should be developed to allow CoA to be applied without time-consuming need to unpublish and re-ratify marks, while still preserving quality requirements	Med
Power BI	Replace Power BI Modelling	Functionality in Power BI tool was limited, due to limitations (Such as 20-student limit) and should be merged into BI Suite and/or APT if at all possible	Med
Power BI	BoE Dashboard	Retain tool and upgrade to make it work for any academic year	Low
Best Practice	Promote	The best practice guide should be retained, with a clear owner identified to maintain and improve it to make a resource available for all future Boards. This should be on the assumption that virtual Boards become the norm.	Med
Policy	Consultation Group	A group should be established, with flexible membership, that includes staff with operational experience to review proposals to identify impact on workload	High
Policy	Crisis Plan	Although exact nature of crises can vary, SLT should allow time for appropriate leadership to develop an implementation plan, which assesses impact on staff workload before committing to a decision	Med
Policy	Annex A	If Annex A, or any equivalent document, will apply in 2020/21 (or subsequent) Academic Year, it should be simplified where possible before reissue, with case studies and worked through examples provided, including addressing PGT requirements more clearly. It should also be available to Colleges in sufficient time to address logistics of implementation, and to set student expectations, and address their concerns	High
Policy	Key Dates	Any decision on Key Dates in AY 2020/21 should be taken by April 2021.	High

Key Themes Identified

Key themes have been identified in each of the following sections of the survey:

Policy/Annex A

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Complexity	<p>Many responses identified that the policy/guidance was very complex, both in the range of applicable scenarios, and in the language/structure of the document.</p> <p>The approach to no detriment taken at course level was the main source of complexity, and led to hugely onerous modelling work; this was felt to be unnecessary to some extent because of the need to also consider programme-level mitigation.</p>	<p><i>“The cross-referencing required within Annex A made the available courses of action more complex, for example we found that a single course of action agreed by the Board may have referenced up to 7 subsections of Annex A”</i></p> <p><i>“Academic staff didn't understand Annex A, which led to long and unnecessary discussions over individual cases, and in two cases referral to DoT (me) after the board to reverse decisions because of Academics forcing through inaccurate interpretations of the guidance.”</i></p> <p><i>“We would have benefited from maybe a presentation (recorded even) offering some further guidance and clarification as to the main points of reference and application before communication was sent to students in order for us to begin to fully understand Annex A before we were asked by our cohort to clarify to them.”</i></p>
Ambiguity	<p>Some responses noted that the policy was ambiguous, and needed significant work to tailor it to individual School/Deanery situation.</p>	<p><i>“Some of the language in Annex A was ambiguous, which made it hard to apply. Potentially training links or materials that linked from what Annex A was detailing to an example would have been helpful. I know that examples are provided in the College training, but they don't cover all variations.”</i></p>
Impact on Staff	<p>Although the provision of Annex and Guidance was welcomed, it was noted that the top-level policy decision had already been taken without appreciation of the workload that would be required to implement it.</p>	<p><i>“The 2020 Exam Board process was (and is) the most challenging thing I have ever encountered in my professional life. Due to extreme time pressures and demands, there was not a day when I was able to finish at 5PM for months. As well as that, I was frequently working weekends. This ultimately led to ... stress and anxiety. It's had a massive impact on my confidence, and continues to.”</i></p>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Timing	The late decision to implement “no detriment” policy meant that, even with delay in Key Dates, there was not enough time to implement the policy without significant overtime from staff.	<p><i>“The most unreasonable aspect was the suggestion very late in the process that Professional Services staff should look at every possible permutation of disregarding courses, for any possible corner cases where not simply disregarding every course below the average might make a practical difference.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sorry (and appreciate this may seem unfair)- but took too long to appear. 1st appearance of policy was months post lockdown and appeared just a couple of weeks before our PGT diet of examboards.”</i></p> <p><i>“in many ways Annex A is a remarkable piece of work. [But] It attempts to honour a pledge that should never have been made in the form it was made in the first place.”</i></p>
UG/PG	There was confusion about how to apply the policy for PGT students.	<i>“Central Univ still needs work on addressing on campus and particularly online PGT programmes in terms of providing guidance - still too much focus/assumption on UG”</i>
Discretion	Most respondents believed the discretion available to Schools/Deaneries was appropriate. However, of those that didn’t, there was a noticeable lean towards there having been too much discretion, which fits with the feedback that there was too much ambiguity.	<i>“I personally feel that it was appropriate. But I got the impression that some Schools at least would have preferred having less discretion”</i>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Consultation	Although there was some consultation, and respondents appreciated the situation limited options, a clear theme was the lack of consultation with Professional Services staff in particular about how the proposed policy would be implemented in practice.	<p><i>“We responded in the consultation but did not see any of our recommendations included in the final policy, leading to a lot of extra work at school level.”</i></p> <p><i>“The fact that one of the first communications students got about their awards was a promise that they would get their degree certificates by the end of July was in itself problematic. The University should not have promised that up front. It put enormous pressure on us to work stupid hours to deliver in frankly unrealistic timeframes.”</i></p>
Key Dates	80% of respondents thought the delay in key dates allowed sufficient time to address requirements.	<i>“Just in relation to the key dates, this was crucial because there was no way on earth we would have met the original publication dates. However, the negative side to this is that while we had the extra time to focus on getting the information ready for the boards we were losing out on planning time for the start of semester 2, so it all had a knock on effect.”</i>
Special Circumstances	It was unclear how to apply special circumstances mitigation over the top of no detriment.	<i>“Additional meetings were required to discuss modelled marks ahead of normal pre-board meetings to discuss the application of special circumstances. Duplication of work was at times required when applied modelling was removed as a result of special circs.”</i>

Selection Tables:

Q4 Complexity - How easy was it to understand how Annex A would apply to your courses and programmes?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Totals	
Yes – It was straightforward	6	14%	8	22.2%	14	18%
Clear after training/guidance	33	76.7%	19	52.8%	52	66%
Insufficient support – quite hard to apply	3	7%	4	11.1%	7	9%
Very hard to apply	1	2.3%	5	13.9%	6	6%

Interpretation Q4:

- From comments, training/guidance was not just that provided by the project team/APRC but also within the Colleges

- From comments, clear that Annex A was hard to understand, so high percentage that said clear after training/guidance hides how much effort had to go into that training/guidance in Schools

Q8 Key Dates - Did you feel that the amendment made to the key dates (delaying the publication of results) was sufficient to allow time to address the requirements of Annex A/Covid-19?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Totals	
Yes	34	79.1%	29	80.6%	63	80%
No	9	20.9%	7	19.4%	16	20%

Interpretation Q8:

- A strong endorsement of pushing back the key dates, backed up in the comments
- Comments indicate decision could have been taken earlier to change the key dates, but accept that dates themselves could not have been pushed back further without huge impact on Semester 1

APT Development

Themes	Description	Example Quotes
Student Displays	Little feedback received into Schools directly from students. However, how “disregarded” components are displayed, e.g. on transcripts, could be improved to reduce need for explanations.	<p><i>“Students were concerned what being “flagged” meant, but were happy when it was explained. So explaining took more time.”</i></p> <p><i>“The APT development showing which courses had been disregarded from classification was probably more meaningful from a student experience perspective. Ideally though this should be reflected on students’ transcripts/HEAR. The fact that it does not causes confusion and complaints.”</i></p>
Staff Displays	Personal Tutors were getting queries, but unable to see discounted courses in their staff view.	<i>“...the majority of queries I dealt with were from PTs trying to help their students who could not see in their staff view which courses had been discounted.”</i>
APT Usage	An existing and known issue that some Schools needed support in identifying which tasks, e.g. processing course marks, they can undertake in APT, and by which staff, was highlighted in the responses.	<i>“Since moving to Learn it has become apparent that we will need to use the APT much more than ever before and clear guidance on which staff members should be doing which APT tasks would be really useful in helping us getting up to speed with the system.”</i>
Averages	<p>Calculation and display of course averages was very hard to understand in APT, particularly where unratified courses.</p> <p>There was also lack of clarity around baselines/programme averages when doing programme-level mitigation.</p>	<p><i>“One suggestion for the future is for there to be a calculated average provided on the calculations screen in Progression and Awards that disregards any unratified course results that are flagged, to give a baseline average which can be used in modelling.”</i></p> <p><i>“The ability to run comparative reports with only sem 1 course averages would have been useful and made a comparison of semester averages quicker and easier.” [NB Applicable only to programmes with separate S1 and S2 courses]</i></p>
Connections	APT is very slow to run for those working remotely.	<i>“sometimes Euclid runs so slowly that simple amendments take a very long time.”</i>

Themes	Description	Example Quotes
APT Support (Single Point of Failure)	There is too great a reliance within Student Administration on a single person	<i>“There still do not seem to be enough people in Student Systems who can investigate and apply fixes within APT. If [APT lead] is on leave we are required to wait until his return for issues to be resolved...While we wait for APT fixes to be applied tempers frayed and it put extra pressure on Professional Services teams. We have fought hard to encourage buy in from Academics for APT and unfortunately all the issues we experienced with Annex A mitigation application did much to undermine that.”</i>
Credit on Aggregate	Confusing to have multiple codes, and time-consuming to have to unpublish and re-ratify to apply CoA.	<i>“...should be that there is just one code for credit on aggregate (CA) and that you should be able to apply this without having to unpublish and unratify marks.”</i>
Flag Consistency	Programme Boards did not always have a clear picture of meaning of use of flag	<i>“ there was inconsistency between how Schools used [flags], which made them much less useful as it was unclear how a 'receiving' Programme Board should interpret the flag signals 'sent' by Course Boards in different Schools ”</i>
Communication	Schools would like earlier consultation on APT developments	<i>“talk to Schools first!”</i>
Calculations Confidence	Schools did not have confidence in calculations within APT	<i>“From the view of an Academic, the APT modelling was effective but clunky - It worked only because of the input of the admin staff who picked up flaws quickly.”</i> <i>“almost every board uploaded reports late due to APT faults.”</i>
PGT Focus	A number of respondents highlighted that PGT developments had not been prioritised	<i>“despite UGT issue with classification and request for fixes for PGT, fixes were not in place for PGT”</i>

Selection Tables:

Q10 Utility - Please indicate how useful (easy to use, timesaving, etc) the following developments in APT were in preparing for and running Boards. (10.1 Flag)						
Flag	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very Useful	16	37.2%	3	8.3%	19	24.1%

Q10 Utility - Please indicate how useful (easy to use, timesaving, etc) the following developments in APT were in preparing for and running Boards. **(10.1 Flag)**

Flag	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Useful	13	30.2%	6	16.7%	19	24.1%
Neither hard nor disruptive	2	4.7%	2	5.6%	4	5.1%
Hard to use	1	2.3%	1	2.8%	2	2.5%
Very hard to use/ disruptive	0	0%	1	2.8%	1	1.3%
N/A – Didn't use	11	25.6%	23	63.9%	34	43%

Interpretation Q10 Flag:

- Most Professional Services staff used the flag and found it useful or very useful
- Academics did not generally use the flag, but those that did mostly found it useful
- Development of the flag was a worthwhile investment

Q10 Utility - Please indicate how useful (easy to use, timesaving, etc) the following developments in APT were in preparing for and running Boards. **(10.2 Disregard)**

Disregard	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very Useful	16	37.2%	2	5.6%	18	22.8%
Useful	12	27.9%	7	19.4%	19	24.1%
Neither hard nor disruptive	3	7%	3	8.3%	6	7.6%
Hard to use	1	2.3%	2	5.6%	3	3.8%
Very hard to use/ disruptive	1	2.3%	0	0%	1	1.3%
N/A – Didn't use	10	23.3%	22	61.1%	32	40.5%

Interpretation Q10 Disregard Functionality:

- Most Professional Services staff used the new disregard functionality and found it useful or very useful
- Academics did not generally use the functionality, but those that did mostly found it useful
- Development of the disregard functionality was a worthwhile investment

Support Tools

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Confusion	Many respondents were not clear on which tools were best to use in their preparations for Boards between APT, the new tools and in-house tools, such as excel.	<i>“We opted to use APT only for modelling purposes. Other tools offered were confusing and couldn't provide a clear, consistent experience for staff which could be easily supported internally. Don't recommend retaining these tools, but would strongly recommend moving to a system whereby calculations can be more easily shown via export. Our BoE members struggled to understand calculations via course and programme reports and often had to redo these manually while scrutinising materials in order to check for accuracy.”</i>
Usage	Most respondents, even amongst Professional Services staff, did not use the new PowerBI and BI suite tools.	<i>Usage tables below</i>
BI Suite/ Power BI Limitations	Many responses highlighted that limitation of PowerBI to display all students in a course, or to amend by the same criteria, meant high workload to adjust each student.	<p><i>“The tool was not able to facilitate more than a certain number of students at a time.”</i></p> <p><i>“BI needs to be made much more accessible if you want it to be the main tool for exam boards.”</i></p> <p><i>“[When] applying mitigation to an entire cohort the only one that was really any use was the Course modelling tool in BI suite. All of the other ones Power BI tools which involved entering the details into the tool for each individual student and then re-entering the detail in APT, was just not practical when dealing with hundreds of students”</i></p> <p><i>“Power BI course modelling: we did not use these as they did not have option to export and compare scenarios like the BI suite tool did, which was absolutely vital.”</i></p> <p><i>“I wish the BI report would spit out all the possible averages if you disregarded ME/SE flagged courses. I had to manually calculate these for my boards. It was IMMENSE.”</i></p>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Timing	The timing of the arrival of the support tools meant that many people were unaware of them, didn't have time to train on them, or didn't have time to feedback on issues. However, this did mean that a longer lead time for future Boards could make the tools more useful.	<i>"Stress was compounded by the sense of being ignored or poo-poo'ed by colleagues both locally (Academic) and centrally. E.g. the need for no-detriment modelling tools (BI or other) which I flagged to student systems as early as 31 March but then was told it would not be feasible."</i>
Training	Some respondents did say they would like to move to BI Suite, from local spreadsheets, but would need further training and support in advance of next Boards.	<i>"I didn't even know these were available and BI Suite is a mystery to me."</i>
Confidence	Respondents were not confident that the calculations in BI Suite were accurate, and so spent time verifying in APT (or excel).	<i>"The Power BI Progression tool was too time consuming and my team found that they didn't trust the results... based on their feedback we took a decision to stop using it and used the APT progression calculations and flagged courses there to find the best scenario for each individual student."</i> <i>"We found the Power BI tools hard to use. We've often found them to be inaccurate in the past so didn't have the confidence for using them for Exam Boards."</i>
Positives	Although many respondents had issues with the tools, a few found them very useful and saw potential in them being retained and improved.	<i>"The tools were somewhat clunky but nonetheless quicker than attempting to do the course modelling work manually, particularly when dealing with larger courses."</i> <i>"We were unable to use the Power BI course modelling at all in our school but the rest of the tools would be helpful for all future Boards and we would like them to be permanent."</i>

Selection Tables:

Q13 Appropriate Tools - How clear were you in preparing for Boards which tools (whether existing APT, local solutions, or new modelling/reporting) were most useful in each situation?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very clear	4	9.3%	2	5.6%	6	7.6%

Q13 Appropriate Tools - How clear were you in preparing for Boards which tools (whether existing APT, local solutions, or new modelling/reporting) were most useful in each situation?

	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Clear	12	27.9%	6	16.7%	18	22.8%
Not always clear	15	34.9%	6	16.7%	21	26.6%
Confusing	6	14%	4	11.1%	10	12.7%
Impossible	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
N/A – Didn't use any of the new tools	6	14%	18	50%	24	30.4%

Interpretation Q13 Appropriate Tools:

- Nearly half of Professional Services staff, and over a quarter of Academics, weren't clear which tool(s) would be best for their situation when preparing for Boards. As well as reviewing benefit of individual tools, recommend improving communication and training to understand their benefits/limitations and which can be best applied for the board specific requirements

Q14.1 Tools Utility - How useful did you find ...**BI Suite Course Modelling (Q14.1)**

	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	4	9.3%	1	2.8%	5	6.3%
Useful	8	18.6%	2	5.6%	10	12.7%
Hard to Use	5	11.6%	1	2.8%	6	7.6%
Worse than local tool(s)	1	2.3%	1	2.8%	2	2.5%
N/A – Didn't use	25	58.1%	31	86.1%	56	70.9%

Interpretation Q14.1:

- Only a quarter of PS staff (and less than 10% of Academics) found the Course Modelling tool useful. This contrasts strongly with the positive view of the improvements to APT
- Comments support this view, with respondents identifying complexity of tool as an obstacle

Recommendation: Focus on supporting Boards should be primarily on tools already being used, such as APT with guidance. Ideally, enhanced modelling functionality would be built directly into APT.

Q14.2 Tools Utility - How useful did you find ...Power BI Course Modelling (Q14.2)						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	3	7%	1	2.8%	4	5.1%
Useful	5	11.6%	1	2.8%	6	7.6%
Hard to Use	7	16.3%	1	2.8%	8	10.1%
Worse than local tool(s)	3	7%	1	2.8%	4	5.1%
N/A – Didn't use	25	58.1%	32	88.9%	57	72.2%

Interpretation Q14.2:

- Under 20% of PS staff (and less than 6% of Academics) found the Power BI Course Modelling tool useful. This contrasts strongly with the positive view of the improvements to APT

Q14.3 Tools Utility - How useful did you find ...Power BI Hons Progression and Award (Q14.3)						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	3	7%	1	2.8%	4	5.1%
Useful	5	11.6%	1	2.8%	6	7.6%
Hard to Use	3	7%	2	5.6%	5	6.3%
Worse than local tool(s)	2	4.7%	1	2.8%	3	3.8%
N/A – Didn't use	30	69.8%	31	86.1%	61	77.2%

Interpretation Q14.3:

- Less than 20% of PS staff (and less than 6% of Academics) found the Power BI Hons Progression and Award modelling tool useful. This contrasts strongly with the positive view of the improvements to APT

Q14.4 Tools Utility - How useful did you find ...Power BI PG Progression and Award (Q14.4)						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	3	7%	1	2.8%	4	5.1%
Useful	7	16.3%	3	8.3%	10	12.7%
Hard to Use	4	9.3%	2	5.6%	6	7.6%
Worse than local tool(s)	3	7%	1	2.8%	4	5.1%
N/A – Didn't use	26	60.5%	29	80.6%	55	69.6%

Interpretation Q14.4:

- Less than a quarter of PS staff (and less than 12% of Academics) found the Power BI PG Progression and Award modelling tool useful. This contrasts strongly with the positive view of the improvements to APT

Q14.5 Tools Utility - How useful did you find ...Power BI Publication Dashboard (Q14.5)						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	2	4.7%	1	2.8%	3	3.8%
Useful	8	18.6%	2	5.6%	10	12.7%
Hard to Use	1	2.3%	2	5.6%	3	3.8%
Worse than local tool(s)	1	2.3%	1	2.8%	2	2.5%
N/A – Didn't use	31	72.1%	30	83.3%	61	77.2%

Interpretation Q14.5:

- Less than a quarter of PS staff (and less than 10% of Academics) found the Power BI Publication Dashboard tool useful. However, from comments, clear that some individuals would use it to “present” at BoE meetings so still providing value
- This tool was, however, useful to Student Admin and College leads who could see that Boards were progressing, and identify any areas of concern

Q17 Tools and Workflow - Did you make use of any of the following when running your Boards?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Workflows (developed by CAHSS)	13	30.2%	5	13.9%	18	22.8%
Zoom	3	7%	3	8.3%	6	7.6%
Sharepoint	23	53.5%	20	55.6%	43	54.4%
MS Teams	41	95.3%	27	75%	68	86.1%
Email	30	69.8%	23	63.9%	53	67.1%
None of the above	0	0%	2	5.6%	2	2.5%
Other*	2	4.7%	5	13.9%	7	8.9%

*Identified Collaborate, wiki, OneDrive and Yammer

Interpretation Q17:

- The widespread adoption of MS Teams for managing Boards was welcomed by staff
- The University has proven the tools are in place to continue to run virtual Boards
- The workflows shared were developed in CAHSS and usage was correspondingly higher

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Communication	Many respondents were not aware of the Best practice Guide (BPG). Page was buried in volume of sharepoint locations.	<i>“Advertise it! I did not know about it so couldn't utilise it.”</i>
Templates	Page could be improved with lessons learned, case studies, document templates and troubleshooting/ “Do and Don’t” lists	<i>“Include anonymised tricky case studies that everyone can learn from. Top tips from early boards. Dos and don'ts.”</i>
Timing	Page was useful but updated version should be released earlier in Academic year	<i>“[Request] reminders of its existence closer to the next set of Boards.”</i>
Joint Degrees	Process for dealing with students on joint degrees needs more guidance	<i>“The process for Joint Degrees across schools felt rather haphazard.”</i> <i>“[It] seems that not all schools flagged courses in the same way. Dealing with joint degree programmes felt very ropey”</i>
Expertise	Although only a few respondents were aware of support available, those who did found it very useful. Others proposed having a dedicated contact in future for expertise on process/regulations.	<i>“A dedicated regulations expert answering questions, addressing practical examples in open sessions would also be useful (perhaps UG and PG separately) - with answers then being shared.”</i> <i>“It was busier and more stressful but the support provided helped.”</i>

Selection Tables:

Q19 Best Practice Guide - The project team maintained a SharePoint page compiling best practice guidelines, hints and tips, and links to useful resources. How useful did you find BPG?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Very useful	1	2.3%	2	5.6%	3	3.8%
Useful	15	34.9%	7	19.4%	22	27.8%
Neither useful nor confusing	7	16.3%	4	11.1%	11	13.9%
Confusing	1	2.3%	2	5.6%	3	3.8%
N/A – Didn’t use	19	44.2%	21	58.3%	40	50.6%

Interpretation Q19:

- While most staff didn't use the site, those who did generally found it useful or very useful
- This resource should not be lost, but continue to be developed, e.g. with links to College-specific pages, and better publicised

Q22 Support - Were you aware that BoE Resilience team members were available to provide support and/or guidance to Teaching Offices/Boards?						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Yes	12	27.9%	8	22.2%	20	25.3%
No	31	72.1%	28	77.8%	59	74.7%

Interpretation Q22:

- From the comments, those staff who were aware of the direct support available from project team members did find it very useful
- From team experience, having that direct access allowed them to improve other materials and tools, and not just support the individual approaching them

Virtual Boards

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Positive Experience	Many respondents found that virtual boards worked very well, and would continue them in future.	<p><i>"Participation at Boards and achieving quorum was much easier. We would be keen to keep virtual Boards as an option in future when we are out of the pandemic."</i></p> <p><i>"My preference would be to run the boards remotely in the future. It is easier for external lecturers and EE. In addition, many of our internal staff are clinic based and having the boards remotely will allow more clinical staff to attend."</i></p> <p><i>"I love not having to print papers any more!!!"</i></p>
Preparation	Respondents gave feedback on how to prepare for Boards to make them run smoothly, and this could be shared as improved guidance.	<p><i>"Technical details such as making meetings 'private', sharing documents beforehand and ensuring their deletion afterwards. Having a backup plan in case of technical failure."</i></p> <p><i>"1) focus your Board on results only 2) keep Conveners up to speed at all costs 3) templates for everything from pre-Board work, agendas, minutes, notes to students following publication, etc."</i></p>
Document Sharing	Staff would welcome improved standards/guidance on document sharing.	<i>"A single, UoE policy on document sensitivity would be appreciated"</i>
Quorate	Many respondents found that reducing numbers in each Board worked well, as did having asynchronous prep, and combining smaller Boards together. It also made attendance easier for external examiners.	<p><i>"Virtual boards were overall an improvement on the multiple, in-person live meetings of previous years. Single BoE allowed for greater consistency in decision making. A final 'synchronous' meeting to tie up any loose ends may be useful in future"</i></p> <p><i>"went very smoothly and had better attendance than when Boards are held in person"</i></p>
Recording	Recommendation that Boards are recorded to ease both writing up, and evidence for any appeals.	<i>"Record the meeting and subsequent proof should there be student challenges or a critical examiner not show up on time."</i>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Improved Logistics	Running virtual Boards meant that there was some improvements in process, e.g. having to organise external examiner accommodation and printing of papers.	<p><i>“Ability of members to view papers themselves, zoom in and scroll etc. rather than being dependent on a projected version was helpful to many”</i></p> <p><i>“Used Microsoft Teams to upload board reports beforehand which was a big time saver for us rather than having to print out multiple hard copies”</i></p>
MS Teams	Although some staff with low-bandwidth at home had issues, overwhelmingly MS Teams was seen as a reliable and easy to use platform.	<i>“[MS] Teams worked really well. We had inductions with examiners through Teams, the synchronous exam boards with the External Examiners were fine and helped to maintain the human side of the process.”</i>

Impact on Staff

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Excessive Workload	A significant proportion of respondents noted excessively high levels of workload over this period, far beyond even normal overtime for Boards in previous years.	<p><i>"I couldn't estimate - I worked till 2am most nights"</i></p> <p><i>"96 hours [overtime] (I kept a spreadsheet...)"</i></p> <p><i>"Did nothing else until small hours most nights."</i></p>
Increased Workload	Virtually all respondents (especially amongst Professional Services) noted a higher workload as a result of Annex A preparation	<p><i>"Hard to be certain but at least 8-16 hours extra"</i></p> <p><i>"Normal - 40-50 hr weeks; Covid - 60-65 hour weeks"</i></p> <p><i>"Personally, likely 10hrs. Others in team 20+"</i></p>
Course and Programme	Although both Course and Programme Boards saw increased workload compared to non-Covid years' frequent overtime, it was Course Boards that more commonly saw extremely high levels of workload, with Programme Boards a lower, but still noticeable, increase.	<p><i>"An additional 2 hours per [Programme] Board preparation."</i></p> <p><i>"About 25 additional hours, usually 6-8 h"</i></p>
Stress and Staff Health	Many respondents reported increased stress levels in preparing and running Boards	<p><i>"However, the general experience was of stress and uncertainty, as guidance arrived fairly close to the actual boards (understandably!) and there was a lot of work to do in a short space of time."</i></p> <p><i>"Stressful and exhausting... most of it was just feeling our way through every step of the process, scared to take decisions because we didn't know what the impact of those decisions would be."</i></p>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Staff Health	Many respondents reported staff at breaking point	<p><i>“I feel the need to be clear that the strain involved was far beyond anything a responsible university should tolerate. I also witnessed administrative staff at breaking point”</i></p> <p><i>“The workload was crushing, and I'm not sure that my team have quite recovered as yet.”</i></p> <p><i>“The 2020 Exam Board process was (and is) the most challenging thing I have ever encountered in my professional life. Due to extreme time pressures and demands, there was not a day when I was able to finish at 5PM for months. As well as that, I was frequently working weekends. This ultimately led to me needing to be signed off work for over a month due to stress and anxiety. It's had a massive impact on my confidence, and continues to.”</i></p>
Effect on Semester 1 and Other Work	Preparation for start of Semester 1 was affected by workload for Boards.	<p><i>“In quantifiable terms, a number of research obligations are now well out of schedule, and I was unable to undertake the kind of preparation for Hybrid teaching that might have made this semester more manageable.”</i></p> <p><i>“This task was only completed because Professional Services and Academic staff deprioritised or stopped work on other aspects of their work. This should be formally recognised at annual reviews, in REF submissions, and in future promotion applications.”</i></p>

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Academic/ Professional Services	Although Academics also saw increased workload and complexity, the bulk of the stress and excessive workload fell on Professional Services staff. While the positive outcome of that is that, generally, Boards themselves ran relatively smoothly (and in some cases more smoothly than normal years), that was only possible because of the incredible efforts made by many Professional Services staff.	<p><i>“Academic staff did not all actively engage with Annex A, and some just did not have the training or knowledge required to do so effectively, increasing the burden on our team.”</i></p> <p><i>“It was harder - but under the circumstances it was less challenging than I had feared it might be (from an Academic's point of view - I suspect Professional Services staff took the brunt of it)”</i></p> <p><i>“Some board convenors and board members did not have the time to review it properly and undue responsibility was put on board secretaries.”</i></p>
Marking	Staff involved in marking and moderating some assessments found it disheartening when they were subsequently discounted for most or all students.	<i>“For some courses the whole class had their exam mark discounted, leaving everyone in the same situation as the start of exam diet. The amount of work to get to that point significantly impacted morale.”</i>

Justification:

Q23 Overall Workload - Compared to previous years did you find the process of preparing for and running Boards of Examiners (Course and/or Progression)...						
	Professional Services		Academics		Total	%
Much higher workload	23	53.5%	16	44.4%	39	49.4%
Higher workload	13	30.2%	13	36.1%	26	32.9%
About the same level	6	14%	8	22.2%	14	17.7%
Lower workload	1	2.3%	0	0%	1	1.3%
Much lower workload	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Interpretation Q23:

- Both Professional Services and Academic staff reported a significant increase in workload for Boards, even compared to previous years where overtime is common
- Comments support this summary with many respondents reporting high levels of overtime, evening and weekend working, and stress

Other Lessons

Themes	Description	Example Quote
Pride	A number of respondent identified that they were proud of their own work, their School and the wider university in getting anything in place at all to support Boards given the situation.	<i>"[Annex A] amazing to have achieved at all in such an unexpected and short time frame"</i>
Local Groups	Schools/Colleges established local groups to provide support to Boards and these were invaluable. In some cases, they are now establishing as part of normal procedure.	<i>"[We] made the decision quite early to set up an 'Exam Board Group'. This group tackled many of the regulation queries that came out of the pre Exam Board work, the Exam Boards themselves, and post Exam Board queries. This group had representatives from each of the subject areas, and was key in ensuring that there was a consistent approach ...EBG is still ongoing for this academic year. It is now seen as crucial."</i>
Language	The output to students from Boards could still be improved to provide students with greater clarity and detail.	<i>"I would welcome more work on the student experience here - I find that students still tend to ignore &/or don't understand progression results in particular. The wording is not student friendly."</i>
EUCLID/Network	Some staff were frustrated with time in EUCLID to make amendments	<i>"sometimes Euclid runs so slowly that simple amendments take a very long time."</i>
Teamwork	Although a brutal time for many, a number of respondents mentioned how it had brought teams closer together (and forced them to review existing processes) in a positive way.	<i>"two positives: working closely with excellent PS and academic colleagues within the school; ensuring results were fair, accurate, and students graduated on time, despite the low probability of achieving this task"</i>

Appendices

School Response Breakdown

The responses received to the survey breakdown across Schools/Deaneries as follows:

Schools/Deaneries	Professional Services	Academic	Total
CAHSS College Office	0	1	1
Business School	2	0	2
COL	1	0	1
Divinity	0	1	1
ECA	5	2	7
Economics	0	0	0
Education	1	1	2
HCA	3	3	6
HiSS	0	3	3
Law	0	0	0
LLC	3	3	6
PPLS	1	0	1
SPS	2	2	4
CAHSS Totals	18	16	34
CSE College Office	0	0	0
Biological Sciences	3	2	5
Chemistry	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0
EPCC/DSTI	0	0	0
GeoScience	1	0	1
Informatics	1	0	1
Mathematics	0	0	0
Physics and Astronomy	1	2	3
CSE Totals	6	4	10
CMVM College Office	0	0	0
Biomedical Science	5	6	11

Clinical Sciences	3*	4	7
EMS	3	0	3
MGPHS	1	0	1
Vet	7	6	13
CMVM Totals	19	16	35
Total	43	36	79

- Including Professional Manager within NHS Course Director

Initial Survey Request Text

27 October 2020

Dear all

Covid19 had a big impact on the way our Boards of Examiners ran in 2020, both the regulations governing the Boards, and the guidance and systems available to work with the updated regulations. While we know this was an extremely stressful period for everyone involved, we're keen to get feedback on this process and build on positives that came out of the work done at this time.

*We'd really appreciate if you can complete this survey by **10 November***

<https://edinburgh.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/boe-review-live-version>

We estimate this will take 10-20 minutes.

*We have sent this email to key Professional Services contacts within each School/Deanery. **Please forward to Academic and Professional Services colleagues in your area** who were involved in the Board of Examiner processes this year. This could be Teaching Office colleagues processing marks and preparing paperwork to Regulations Experts and Conveners of Boards. We want to hear from a wide range of colleagues.*

Responses to the survey may be followed up by an in person focus group held in the week beginning 30 November.

We will use the survey responses and focus group output to:

- **System Development** - Identify further system tool updates that would benefit staff involved in BoE processing. Any quick fixes will be taken forward with others built into larger improvement projects, subject to resources/commitment*
- **Review Policy** - Review process for development and application of policy, and feedback any lessons to APRC*
- **Lessons** – Feed into lessons learned and proposals - Identify themes in processing and/or policy that need to be taken into consideration for any future projects. Gather an estimate on the additional effort expended on the recent BoE period, and to identify if the additional time built into the key dates was sufficient. Gather evidence to allow justification and prioritisation of potential enhancements*
- **Publication** - Teaching matters blog post on the key themes which emerged from the survey*

The survey may seem long at first glance, but most questions are optional to allow you to focus your response in 1 or 2 areas based on your role in the Board of Examiner process. Where there are compulsory questions, there is always a "N/A – Didn't use" or similar option.

Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey

Survey Notes and Questions

See attached PDF "Appendix – BoE Survey – Full Question Set" for details of questions asked in the survey.

BoE Review (Live Version)

Page 1: Introduction

Introduction

Survey Purpose - The purpose of carrying out this survey is:

- **Development** - Identify further system tool updates that would benefit staff involved in BoE processing. Any quick fixes will be taken forward with others built into larger improvement project, subject to resources/commitment
- **Review Policy** - Review process for development and application of policy, and feedback any lessons to APRC
- **Lessons** – Feed into lessons learned and proposals - Identify themes in processing and/or policy that need to be taken into consideration for any future projects. Gather an estimate on the additional effort expended on the recent BoE period, and to identify if the additional time built into the key dates was sufficient. Gather evidence to allow justification and prioritisation of potential enhancements.
- **Publication** - Teaching matters blog post on the key themes which emerged from the survey

Sections - The survey covers the following sections:

- About You
- Annex A and No Detriment - Page 10 onwards of [this document](#)
- APT Developments
- Modelling and Reporting Tools
- Process and Guidance
- Overall Experience and Workload

Useful links - For easy reference, we've included links to relevant materials you may wish to review before responding:

- [Best Practice Guide](#) - A page with useful hints and tips for running remote Boards
- [Course Modelling Guidance](#) - A page on guidance for choosing and using best tool for course modelling
- [Honours Progression and UG Award](#) - An equivalent page

- [CAHSS Course Board Workflows](#) - CAHSS recommended workflows
- [APT Pages](#) - Main APT updates page including updates on BoE changes deployed
- [BoE Data Protection Guidance](#)

Estimate survey length 10-20m

NB Although there are a lot of questions, that is purely to help you consider the different areas of how Annex A and the Boards of Examiners processes were supported. The large majority of the questions are optional, and you can always focus your response on one or two areas. Q26 allows you to describe your overall experience if it can't easily be put into those sections.

Page 2: About You

NB This survey can be completed anonymously, but we have provided the option of entering an email address so that we can follow up with you to answer any questions you ask, or to address any concerns raised.

1. School/College selection * *Required*

- CAHSS
- CSE
- CMVM
- Other

1.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

1.b. CAHSS - Schools

1.c. CSE Schools

1.d. CMVM - Schools and Deaneries

2. Role * *Required*

- Professional Services
- Academic
- Other

2.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

3. Please provide your email address if you are happy for the project team to follow up with you on any of your comments.

Your answer should be no more than 50 characters long.

Page 3: Annex A and No Detriment

The University developed guidance for Boards of Examiners to provide them with options to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 upon students' course and programme outcomes. This was based around a "no detriment" approach to some assessments undertaken in Semester 2, 2019/20. The guidance, Annex A, was developed by an Academic Contingency Group whose members included the Deans with responsibility for learning and teaching from each of the three Colleges. Where the guidance involved concessions to existing academic regulations or policy, these were approved by Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).

APRC is keen to understand what challenges Schools encountered in implementing the provisions of Annex A, to inform the approach the University takes to addressing significant unforeseen circumstances in the future. Feedback will be valuable regarding both the measures put in place, and the process by which those measures were developed and agreed.

4. Complexity - How easy was it to understand how Annex A would apply to your courses and programmes? (This is distinct from the time/workload involved in doing so)

* *Required*

- Yes - It was straightforward
- Clear after training/guidance
- Insufficient support - Quite hard to apply
- Very hard to apply

4.a. If you found this difficult, was there anything you feel could have made this easier?

5. Sections - Were there particular aspects of Annex A that you found unreasonably

difficult or confusing to apply?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

6. Discretion - Did you feel that the amount of discretion Annex A offered to Boards was appropriate, too much, or too little?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

7. Development of Policy - Development of Annex A was necessarily accelerated by the urgency of the pandemic situation, with consultation based primarily on input from the Colleges. How well did you feel your needs were represented in that process?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

8. Key Dates - Did you feel that the amendment made to the key dates (delaying the publication of results) was sufficient to allow time to address the requirements of Annex A/Covid-19? * *Required*

Yes

No

9. Do you have any other comments on the **difficulty of implementing** Annex A?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

Page 4: APT Developments

The following question asks about the usefulness of:

- **Flag** - Flag (SE, NM, SM) at course level to notify to progression Boards
- **Disregard** - Improvements to functionality to disregard components within Assessment Hub
- **Hide Disregarded Components** - Improvements to hide disregarded components within Student View until course mark publication
- **Show Disregarded Courses** - Improvements to Student View to show disregarded course in vera average, with aim of preempting student queries

Details of all these release can be read in the [APT Pages](#).

10. Utility - Please indicate how useful (easy to use, timesaving, etc) the following developments in APT were in preparing for and running Boards.

	Utility * <i>Required</i>					
	Very useful	Useful	Neither useful nor disruptive	Hard to use	Very hard to use/disruptive	N/A - Didn't use
Flag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disregard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Student View - Please summarise any feedback (from students) on changes to student view to **hide disregarded components from course marks** and if this made any difference to your workload/queries from students.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

11.a. Student View - Please summarise any feedback (from students) on changes to

student view to **show which courses were disregarded from year averages** and if this made any difference to your workload/queries from students.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

12. Future - Do you have any other feedback on the APT developments, or how they could be enhanced to facilitate preparing for and running Boards affected by Annex A.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

Page 5: Modelling and Reporting Tools

[RS to add intro text with narrative of tools provided]

[NB - no training question as we can get stats/feedback from Jon Taylor]

13. Appropriate Tools - How clear were you in preparing for Boards which tools (whether existing APT, local solutions, or new modelling/reporting) were most useful in each situation? * *Required*

- Very clear
- Clear
- Not always clear
- Confusing
- Impossible
- N/A - Didn't use any of the new tools

14. Utility - How useful did you find each of the following tools?

	Utility * <i>Required</i>				
	Very useful	Useful	Hard to use	Worse than local tool(s)	N/A - Didn't use
BI Suite - Course Modelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power BI - Course Modelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power BI - Hons Progression and Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power BI - PG Progression and Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power BI - Course and Programme Publication Dashboard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Do you have any other comments on these tools (accessibility, guidance, if they should be retained/expanded, training, etc)?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

Page 6: Process and Guidance Changes

16. Process Change - Do you have any comments on how you changed your processes in preparing for Boards and running them remotely?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

17. Tools and Workflows - Did you make use of any of the following when running your Boards: * *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

- Workflows (published by the CAHSS Board of Examiners Working Group?)
- Zoom
- Sharepoint
- MS Teams (Video and chat)
- Email (Direct or Mailing List)
- None of the above
- Other

17.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

17.b. Please highlight any positive uses of these tools, or challenges in using them.

18. Lessons - Do you have any lessons learned on the actual experience of running virtual Boards?

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

19. Best Practice Guide - The project team maintained a sharepoint page compiling best practice guidelines, hints and tips, and links to useful resources. How useful did you find this Best Practice Guide ([link](#))? * *Required*

Please select no more than 1 answer(s).

- Very useful
- Useful
- Neither useful nor confusing
- Confusing
- N/A - Didn't use

20. Please tell us if you have any suggestions for improving the Best Practice Guide.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

21. Future - Please tell us of any further improvements that could be made to post-Board processes and information sharing, whether from Course Boards to Progression Boards, or from Boards to students.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

22. Support - Were you aware that BoE Resilience team members were available to provide support and/or guidance to Teaching Offices/Boards? * *Required*

- Yes
- No

22.a. If you used this support, did you find it useful?

Your answer should be no more than 200 characters long.

Page 7: Overall Experience

23. Overall Workload - Compared to previous years did you find the process of preparing for and running Boards of Examiners (Course and/or Progression)... *
Required

- Much higher workload
- Higher workload
- About the same level
- Lower workload
- Much lower workload

24. Course Board Workload - We know that staff frequently work overtime during the week of Course Boards in "normal" years. How much **additional** time (in hours) would you estimate you personally spent, compared to those years, in the week of Course Boards this year?

Your answer should be no more than 50 characters long.

25. Programme Board Workload - Similarly, staff frequently work overtime during the week of Programme (Progression and Award) Boards in "normal" years. How much **additional** time (in hours) would you estimate you personally spent, compared to those years, in the week you held those Boards this year?

Your answer should be no more than 50 characters long.

26. Overall, how did you find the experience of preparing for, and running, Boards of

Examiners this year compared with previous years? Please add any other comments here on the experience that have not already been addressed in this survey, including any positive experiences where running a Board worked better than in previous years.

Your answer should be no more than 2000 characters long.

Page 8: Final page

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey - we really appreciate the feedback.

Key for selection options

1.b - CAHSS - Schools

CAHSS - College Office

Business School

COL

Divinity

ECA

Economics

Education

HCA

Health in Social Science

Law

LLC

PPLS

SPS

1.c - CSE Schools

CSE - College Office

Biological Science

Chemistry

Engineering

EPCC/DSTI

GeoScience

Informatics

Mathematics

Physics and Astronomy

1.d - CMVM - Schools and Deaneries

CMVM - College Office

Biomedical Science

Clinical Sciences

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 January 2021

Virtual Boards of Examiners- amendment to Taught Assessment Regulations

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes that the Taught Assessment Regulations are amended to permit Boards of Examiners to operate virtually whenever this is considered appropriate.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to approve the proposed amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations. Proposed wording is included in the Appendix to this paper.

Background and context

3. In March 2020, APRC approved a number of concessions to regulations, designed to support measures to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and industrial action on students' course and programme outcomes, and on the running of Boards of Examiners. APRC renewed one of these concessions in November 2020 for the 2020/21 session, permitting Boards of Examiners to meet virtually. The Taught Assessment Regulations otherwise require meetings of Boards of Examiners to be held in-person.

Discussion

4. Many University staff who are involved in the operation of Boards of Examiners are likely to continue to work from home for some or all of their time for the foreseeable future. More importantly, however, Boards of Examiners were held virtually following Semester 2 2019/20 without significant problems. In a recent survey of Schools conducted by the Board of Examiners Resilience team, respondents commented positively upon the benefits of virtual Board meetings. They highlighted the ease of achieving a quorum of attendees, relative to an in-person meeting; the ability to engage External Examiners without requiring them to travel; and a reduction in required printing.
5. The proposed amendment would continue to set an expectation that meetings of Boards of Examiners are held synchronously (i.e. in "real time") wherever possible, but would permit asynchronous meetings, provided a quorum of members take part. It would also retain requirements regarding quorum and participation of External Examiners. In May 2020, APRC approved an amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations, which required External Examiners physically to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners on a minimum of one occasion in the first year of their term, but did not require them to attend in-person thereafter, except as agreed with the relevant School.

6. **APRC is therefore requested to approve a permanent amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations from 2021/22, permitting meetings of Boards of Examiners to be held in-person or virtually, as considered appropriate by the relevant Convener.** Proposed wording for the amendment is provided in the Appendix to the paper.

Resource implications

7. As discussed previously, survey responses from Schools have commented positively upon the benefits of operating Board meetings virtually. The proposed amendment to the regulations does not require that Boards run virtually, it simply permits them to do so, where this is considered beneficial.

Risk management

8. Boards of Examiners following Semester 2 of the 2019/20 session ran exclusively virtually. There were no reports (internally or from External Examiners) that this led to any risks to the robustness of their operation or the decisions made.

Equality & diversity

9. Permitting the virtual operation of Boards of Examiners is likely to have positive implications for equality and diversity. Colleagues and External Examiners for whom travel is more challenging, for example due to disability or caring responsibilities, may be more able to engage with meetings held virtually.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

10. If APRC approves the proposed amendment to the regulations, Academic Services will include this in the revised Taught Assessment Regulations brought to APRC in June 2021. Academic Services will then communicate key changes to the regulations in an email to Schools and Colleges shortly afterwards.

Author

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and Regulation,
Academic Services

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and
Regulation
Academic Services

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix

Existing wording of Taught Assessment Regulation 39

Regulation 39 Board of Examiners: quorum

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

39.1 **“Attendance” means being physically present at the meeting of the Board of Examiners.** “Participation” by an External Examiner does not require physical presence at the meeting of the Board of Examiners, but involves the External Examiner contributing to the meeting, ideally by video, telephone or web-camera and otherwise by email. The External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board’s deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect their participation.

Proposed amended wording

Regulation 39 Board of Examiners: quorum

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

39.1 Meetings of Boards of Examiners may be held in-person or virtually, at the discretion of the relevant Convener. Where meetings are held virtually, these should operate synchronously wherever possible, with all present members participating in real-time. However, virtual meetings may operate asynchronously where necessary, provided that a quorum of members take part. Any External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board’s deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect the nature of their participation.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 January 2021

Coursework extensions- review of current policy

Description of paper

1. The paper considers information regarding the first Semester of handling of coursework extension requests by the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service, and proposes consideration of changes to the current policy regarding coursework extensions.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to consider the proposals regarding possible changes to policy around handling of coursework extension requests, and approve a process of further consultation around these proposals.

Background and context

3. From the beginning of the 2020/21 session, the handling of requests for coursework extensions from students taking taught courses was passed to the new ESC service. The policy regarding handling of coursework extension requests is set out in Regulation 28 of the Taught Assessment Regulations.
4. Students wishing to request an extension for a coursework assessment submit an application to the ESC service. Students must state a reason for the request, and provide a supporting statement. Students are not required (or permitted) to provide supporting evidence with requests. The ESC team evaluate whether the request is acceptable, according to the range of acceptable reasons set out in TAR 28.6. Where the request is accepted, the student is routinely given an additional seven days to complete the assessment, unless the School has specified that a shorter extension must be given for the assessment in question.
5. The University did not hold reliable data regarding the overall volume of coursework extension requests across Schools, prior to the introduction of the ESC service and centralisation of the process. However, it is apparent that the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to unprecedented demand for coursework extensions among students.

Discussion

Volume of applications; rejected applications

6. In the period from the beginning of Semester 1, 2019/20, until 23rd December 2020, there were 17,517 applications (appendix 1) for coursework extensions. Of this number, 157 (c.9%) applications were rejected. However, the overwhelming majority of these rejected applications would have been excluded had the

forthcoming ESC system been in place,¹ since they were incorrectly submitted for one or more of the following reasons:

- students not completing the correct form;
 - students completing the form incorrectly;
 - applications submitted after the deadline;
 - discrepancies between information on the application and information on APT;
 - assessments not allowing extensions.
7. The volume of applications which were correctly submitted but subsequently rejected was only 105, or 0.6% overall. This is unsurprising, given the fact that students are not required to submit supporting evidence when they apply for an extension, and must simply choose the relevant category of circumstance and provide a narrative description of the impact.

Use of staff resource

8. The original business case, supported by data gathered in 2015/16, assumed 4,000 coursework extension applications across the academic year. The team has processed approximately 4 times as many applications within the first semester. A similar volume, if not more, is expected for semester 2 with postgraduate taught dissertations and the increased movement from examination to coursework in response to current circumstances.
9. The average time spent by a staff member considering and processing an application for a coursework extension in Semester 1 was 9 to 10 minutes. This is due to staff working outside the ESC system. We are yet to measure the processing time within the new system. The current processing time equates to around 2800 hours overall, or nearly 400 staff days spent processing coursework extensions during one Semester. Bearing in mind the extremely high likelihood of each application being accepted, we would suggest that the marginal benefit gained by individually scrutinising coursework extension applications does not justify this level of staff resource. At peak of semester one from week 9, the core team expanded from 3.4 FTE to 17 FTE through redeployment from within Student Systems and Administration and temporary staff. The expenditure for temporary staff alone is estimated at £39,250 for semester 1. The cost for the core team is £130,654 per annum.

Potential changes to process

10. To support discussions, the appendix (2) to this paper contains some benchmarking information regarding coursework extension processes in place at other UK universities. We propose that APRC consider changes to the current policy regarding coursework extensions in order to streamline the process, either by:

¹ The ESC system is due to be introduced in February 2021.

- Students simply notifying the University of their intention to take an extension, and the reason they wish to do so; or
- Students submitting an application for an extension, which can be accepted by an automated system, provided that it cites one of a range of acceptable reasons for extension.

11. If APRC is supportive of a particular option or identifies alternatives, we propose consulting Schools, Colleges, and the Students' Association regarding their attitudes towards such a proposal.

Potential benefits

12. The potential benefits of a notification system approach predominantly relate to the allocation of staff resource. The time currently spent by staff handling extension requests could instead be spent on other tasks which may be more in students' interests, such as providing support to students who have alerted the University to serious adverse circumstances via the Special Circumstances process.

13. Students may consider the change to a more streamlined process for requesting extensions beneficial to them, as they will no longer have to provide as much information when requesting an extension, and should receive an immediate response to their request.

Potential risks

14. There is the potential that a change to an automated, or notification-only approach will lead to a further increase in coursework extension requests. However, the University has already experienced a significant increase in the volume of requests. As stated above, while some of this may be attributed to Covid-19, it is likely that the shift towards self-certification of requests has led to a change in students' attitudes towards requesting an extension. Students are more likely to consider the use of extensions as a tool to manage competing assessment deadlines. Schools cite difficulties with the marking and moderation process, where a large proportion of students' assessments are submitted after the initial deadline. However, it is likely to be the case that the volume of late submissions has already reached a critical mass, and may not get significantly worse. It is estimated that 25% of the coursework extension applications were submitted just before or on the day of deadline in semester 1.

15. There is also a risk that, were students still permitted to submit a free text description of their circumstances into a system without direct staff oversight, potential "red flags" relating to serious student welfare issues may be missed. However, we would propose that the solution to this would be to remove the option to provide free text, focusing on students choosing from a range of pre-populated reasons for extension, while providing clear guidance regarding routes to raise serious welfare issues with staff. This ought not to be a deficit relative to the current system, since the high volume of coursework extension applications already makes it extremely challenging for staff handling requests to be able to make supportive interventions.

Resource implications

16. Implications relating to the staff resource currently expended on handling coursework extension requests are considered above. Adaption to the system already in development would need to be made for both options.

Risk management

17. Risks associated with the proposed approach are covered above. However, it should be noted that this paper does not propose an immediate change in policy. It is possible that the proposed process of consultation would surface other potential risks. Any change in policy would ideally be at the start of an academic year but may be influenced by development timeframes.

Equality & diversity

18. All students may benefit from a more streamlined approach to requesting coursework extensions. Students with disabilities who are offered extensions as a reasonable adjustment would continue to be able to avail themselves of these, in addition to extensions offered to all students, where this is compatible with final deadlines for assessments (TAR 28.3).

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

19. Should APRC approve a process of consultation, Academic Services and the ESC team would seek to gather views from Schools and Colleges via a variety of routes, including attendance at relevant College Committees, and written responses.

Author

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy
and Regulation
Academic Services
13 January 2021

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and
and Regulation
Academic Services

Sarah McAllister
Head of Student Support
Operations
Student Systems and
Administration

Freedom of Information

Open

**Extensions and Special Circumstances
Semester 1 Data (Appendix 1)**

Overall Number of S1 assessments (UG and PGT)*	3,903
Overall Learning Adjustements processed	2,631

* We received 82% of required information

	CAHSS	CSE	CMVM	Total
Coursework Extensions	13,001	3,561	955	17,517

CAHSS	UG and PGT
Business School	1,031
School of Divinity	299
School of Economics	146
Edinburgh College of Art	1,514
Moray House School of Education and Sport	419
School of Health in Social Science	279
School of History, Classics and Archaeology	2,198
School of Law	697
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures	1,821
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	1,798
School of Social and Political Science	2,794
Centre for Open Learning	5
CSE	
School of Biological Sciences	559
School of Chemistry	103
School of Engineering	654
School of GeoSciences	1,027
School of Informatics	697
School of Mathematics	291
School of Physics and Astronomy	230
CMVM	
Edinburgh Medical School	108
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies**	-
Deanery of Biomedical Sciences	619
Deanery of Clinical Sciences	108
Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences	120

** Do not use coursework extensions

17,517

Extensions and Special Circumstances
Benchmarking of Coursework Extensions (Appendix 2)
January 2021

The following is a brief breakdown of the approaches used for coursework extensions (CE) across a selection of UK Higher Education Institutions by cohort size as detailed on their webpages:

1. Open University

Assessments are completed in sequence. CEs up to 7 days are available in advance of the deadline without evidence. End of course assessment requires mitigating circumstances with evidence.

<https://www.open.ac.uk/students>

2. University College London

CEs are available for up to 7 days with evidence. Beyond 7 days the extenuating circumstances policy applies.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-4-assessment-framework-taught-programmes/section-6-extenuating-circumstances>

3. University of Manchester

CEs are available through mitigating circumstances with evidence in advance of the deadline.

<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=4271>

4. University of Leeds

Practice determined by the school with some not allowing CEs but waiving late penalties with evidenced exceptional circumstances. Schools that do allow CEs utilise the extenuating circumstances policy and evidence is required.

https://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22169/assessment-related_policies/577/assessment_code_of_practice

5. University of Glasgow

CEs of less than five days are considered. CEs of more than five days are considered under a good cause claim with evidence. A good cause was considered illness, adverse personal circumstances, and failing to submit work on time.

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_420013_smxx.pdf

6. University of Bristol

CEs are available to apply for in advance of the deadline for work that contributes more than 25% of the overall course mark. Evidence is required and the policy focuses on significant impact. Extensions for assessments contributing less than 25% of the overall course mark at the school's discretion and evidence is required, where a student is making or has had multiple extension requests.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/considering-coursework-extension-requests.pdf>

7. University of York

CEs are available for serious and unusual circumstances via the special circumstances process supported by evidence (independent professional evidence, period specific).

<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/exceptional-circumstances/#tab-2>

8. University of Aberdeen

CEs are considered through the extenuating circumstances with evidence via their absence management reporting system.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/coronavirus/academic-session-20-21.php#i-am-unwell-or-i-have-experienced-extenuating-circumstances-which-have-affected-my-performance-in-an-assessment-or-have-led-me-to-miss-an-assessment-what-should-i-do>

9. University of Strathclyde

CEs are granted for under particular grounds for less than 7 days with self-certification online. For CEs of more than 7 days, the Personal Circumstances and Academic Appeals Procedure applies and evidence is required.

https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaffairs/policies/Policy_and_Procedure_on_Extensions_to_Submissions_of_Coursework.pdf

10. University of St Andrews

CEs are available when performance is significantly affected. The Extenuating Circumstances policy applies and evidence is required.

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/mms-guides/staffguides/mmstools/courseworktool/courseworkextensions/>

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Thursday 21st January 2021

Geophysics Degrees Placement Year Weighting

Description of paper

1. This paper presents a proposal to change the weighting for honours years in Geophysics degrees including a placement year from 20:40:40 to 30:30:40. This proposal was considered and endorsed by the College of Science and Engineering's Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2020. It is proposed that this change is approved for students entering junior honours (3rd year) from 2021/22 onwards.

Action requested / recommendation

2. This item is presented to APRC for consideration and approval, for implementation from the 2021/22 academic year.

Background and context

3. For their final degree mark, students on the Geophysics (BSc Hons) degrees have a 50:50 weighting between years 3 and 4, whilst students on the 5-year Geophysics (MEarthPhys) degrees have a 20:40:40 weighting between years 3, 4 and 5. This 20:40:40 weighting also applies to those students on the 'with Professional Placement' (MEarthPhys) 5-year degrees. The placement is taken in year 4.
4. The proposed change will reduce the weight of the placement year (4th year) from 40% to 30%, and increase the weight of the junior honours year (3rd year) from 20% to 30%.
5. The change is proposed in recognition of the fact that the placement provider is outside of the University and the School therefore has less control over the placement year compared to other years. The School would therefore like to reduce the contribution of the placement year to the final degree mark.

Discussion

6. The placement year comprises two 60-credit courses:
 - Geophysics Professional Placement (EASC10122), assessed by 30% literature review, 40% performance on placement and 30% reflective blog; and
 - Geophysics Professional Placement (EASC11006), assessed by 80% project report and 20% oral presentation.
7. The assessment is carried out by the Course Organiser and the placement provider. Because the placement provider is outside the University the School has less control over the assessment for the placement year compared to other years. For this reason the School would like to reduce the contribution of the

placement year from the current 40% to 30% of the final degree mark. There will be no change to the course structure or programme structure beyond the re-weighting of the years.

8. The School does not seek to reduce the contribution of the placement below 30% as they wish to retain a general increase in year weighting as the degree progresses, in order to reward students who improve over time. The 30:30:40 weighting is seen as the compromise between these two factors.
9. The School consulted with Geophysics and Meteorology students and staff in early autumn 2020. There were no objections, and the only significant comment was from one student who was slightly concerned if the weighting would increase the weight applied to the academic year 2019/20 due to the effect of Covid-19. Although the proposal being made would not affect marks obtained during 2019/20, the impact of Covid-19 remains an ongoing concern.
10. The School initially proposed that this change should be introduced for students entering junior honours in 2020/21 (the current academic year), affecting placement years taking place from 2021/22 onwards. Given that no significant objections were raised by the cohort consulted, the School was keen to implement this change as soon as possible.
11. The College is supportive of the change, and understands the School's desire to implement this as soon as possible. However, given that it is not normally accepted practice to change degree weightings in-year, and given the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and the challenges this represents, we recommend to APRC that this change should be implemented for students entering junior honours (3rd year) from **2021/22** onwards, therefore affecting placements from 2022/23 onwards.
12. Should APRC approve the change, an amendment will need to be made to Taught Assessment Regulation 55.3 for the 2021/22 academic year to clarify the exception for Geophysics degrees.
13. Additionally, the College will work with the School and colleagues in Communications and Marketing to implement a clear communication strategy to formally advise students affected by this change.

Resource implications

14. N/A

Risk management

15. The main identifiable risk in relation to this proposal is that the proposed change, if approved, will impact students that have already enrolled on the programme. Mitigating action has been taken by the School in respect of this risk by consulting with the student body prior to formally requesting the change, and we hope that the proposal to implement this change from 2021/22, rather than the current academic year, will address the concern about increasing the weighting of the junior honours year in the ongoing context of Covid-19. Further mitigation will

be achieved by developing a clear communication plan with the School and Communications and Marketing colleagues should APRC approve the change.

Equality & diversity

16. We have reflected on the EqIA requirements and there are no specific concerns or recommendations.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

17. If approved, the College will work closely with colleagues in the School and Communications and Marketing to implement a clear communication strategy to formally advise students of this change.

18. Relevant programme information within DPTs will be updated for existing and prospective students.

19. A change would need to be made to Taught Assessment Regulation 55.3 to clarify the exception for Geophysics degrees.

Author

Professor David S. Stevenson, Former Degree Programme Convenor (Geophysics), School of GeoSciences

Professor Wyn Williams, Current Degree Programme Convenor (Geophysics), School of GeoSciences

Heather Tracey, Deputy Head of Academic Affairs, College of Science and Engineering

13 January 2021

Presenter

Professor Judy Hardy, Dean of Learning and Teaching, College of Science and Engineering

Freedom of Information

Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 January 2021

**Academic Year Dates 2022/23 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2023/24
and 2024/25**

Description of paper

1. This paper provides proposed academic year dates 2022/23 and provisional academic year dates 2023/24 and 2024/25 for Committee approval (see Section A). The academic year dates for 2021/22 have already been approved by the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee and are available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates/202122

This paper also lists the programmes with non-standard academic year dates for Committee approval (see Section B). This information is available on the website and College Committee representatives are asked to check if this information is still correct at the time of the meeting (January 2021).

www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates/programmes-with-non-standard-academic-years

Action requested / recommendation

2. For approval

Background and context

3. Annual paper approving academic year dates

Discussion

4. See attached paper

Resource implications

5. No resource implications

Risk management

6. No key risks associated with this paper

Equality and diversity

7. Equality and diversity issues have been considered. No impact assessment is required

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

8. The information will be conveyed to Communications and Marketing who will re-format and formally publish at www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates

Author

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, January 2021

Freedom of Information Open

A. Academic Year Dates 2022/23, and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2023/24 and 2024/25**Academic Year Dates 2022/23**

1	12 September 2022	Induction
2	19 September 2022	T1
3	26 September 2022	T2
4	03 October 2022	T3
5	10 October 2022	T4
6	17 October 2022	T5
7	24 October 2022	T6
8	31 October 2022	T7
9	07 November 2022	T8
10	14 November 2022	T9
11	21 November 2022	T10
12	28 November 2022	T11
13	05 December 2022	Revision
14	12 December 2022	Exams
15	19 December 2022	Exams
16	26 December 2022	Winter vac 1
17	02 January 2023	Winter vac 2
18	09 January 2023	Winter vac 3
19	16 January 2023	T1
20	23 January 2023	T2
21	30 January 2023	T3
22	06 February 2023	T4
23	13 February 2023	T5
24	20 February 2023	Flexible Learning Week
25	27 February 2023	T6
26	06 March 2023	T7
27	13 March 2023	T8
28	20 March 2023	T9
29	27 March 2023	T10
30	03 April 2023	T11
31	10 April 2023	Spring vac 1
32	17 April 2023	Spring vac 2
33	24 April 2023	Revision
34	01 May 2023	Exams
35	08 May 2023	Exams
36	15 May 2023	Exams
37	22 May 2023	Exams
38	29 May 2023	Summer vac 1
39	05 June 2023	Summer vac 2
40	12 June 2023	Summer vac 3
41	19 June 2023	Summer vac 4
42	26 June 2023	Summer vac 5
43	03 July 2023	Summer vac 6
44	10 July 2023	Summer vac 7
45	17 July 2023	Summer vac 8
46	24 July 2023	Summer vac 9
47	31 July 2023	Summer vac 10
48	07 August 2023	Summer vac 11
49	14 August 2023	Summer vac 12
50	21 August 2023	Summer vac 13
51	28 August 2023	Summer vac 14
52	04 September 2023	Summer vac 15

Provisional Academic Year Dates 2023/24

1	11 September 2023	Induction
2	18 September 2023	T1
3	25 September 2023	T2
4	02 October 2023	T3
5	09 October 2023	T4
6	16 October 2023	T5
7	23 October 2023	T6
8	30 October 2023	T7
9	06 November 2023	T8
10	13 November 2023	T9
11	20 November 2023	T10
12	27 November 2023	T11
13	04 December 2023	Revision
14	11 December 2023	Exams
15	18 December 2023	Exams
16	25 December 2023	Winter vac 1
17	01 January 2024	Winter vac 2
18	08 January 2024	Winter vac 3
19	15 January 2024	T1
20	22 January 2024	T2
21	29 January 2024	T3
22	05 February 2024	T4
23	12 February 2024	T5
24	19 February 2024	Flexible Learning Week
25	26 February 2024	T6
26	04 March 2024	T7
27	11 March 2024	T8
28	18 March 2024	T9
29	25 March 2024	T10
30	01 April 2024	T11
31	08 April 2024	Spring vac 1
32	15 April 2024	Spring vac 2
33	22 April 2024	Revision
34	29 April 2024	Exams
35	06 May 2024	Exams
36	13 May 2024	Exams
37	20 May 2024	Exams
38	27 May 2024	Summer vac 1
39	03 June 2024	Summer vac 2
40	10 June 2024	Summer vac 3
41	17 June 2024	Summer vac 4
42	24 June 2024	Summer vac 5
43	01 July 2024	Summer vac 6
44	08 July 2024	Summer vac 7
45	15 July 2024	Summer vac 8
46	22 July 2024	Summer vac 9
47	29 July 2024	Summer vac 10
48	05 August 2024	Summer vac 11
49	12 August 2024	Summer vac 12
50	19 August 2024	Summer vac 13
51	26 August 2024	Summer vac 14
52	02 September 2024	Summer vac 15

Provisional Academic Year Dates 2024/25

1	9 September 2024	Induction
2	16 September 2024	T1
3	23 September 2024	T2
4	30 September 2024	T3
5	07 October 2024	T4
6	14 October 2024	T5
7	21 October 2024	T6
8	28 October 2024	T7
9	04 November 2024	T8
10	11 November 2024	T9
11	18 November 2024	T10
12	25 November 2024	T11
13	02 December 2024	Revision
14	9 December 2024	Exams
15	16 December 2024	Exams
16	23 December 2024	Winter vac 1
17	30 December 2024	Winter vac 2
18	06 January 2025	Winter vac 3
19	13 January 2025	T1
20	20 January 2025	T2
21	27 January 2025	T3
22	03 February 2025	T4
23	10 February 2025	T5
24	17 February 2025	Flexible Learning Week
25	24 February 2025	T6
26	03 March 2025	T7
27	10 March 2025	T8
28	17 March 2025	T9
29	24 March 2025	T10
30	31 March 2025	T11
31	07 April 2025	Spring vac 1
32	14 April 2025	Spring vac 2
33	21 April 2025	Revision
34	28 April 2025	Exams
35	05 May 2025	Exams
36	12 May 2025	Exams
37	19 May 2025	Exams
38	26 May 2025	Summer vac 1
39	02 June 2025	Summer vac 2
40	09 June 2025	Summer vac 3
41	16 June 2025	Summer vac 4
42	23 June 2025	Summer vac 5
43	30 June 2025	Summer vac 6
44	07 July 2025	Summer vac 7
45	14 July 2025	Summer vac 8
46	21 July 2025	Summer vac 9
47	28 July 2025	Summer vac 10
48	04 August 2025	Summer vac 11
49	11 August 2025	Summer vac 12
50	18 August 2025	Summer vac 13
51	25 August 2025	Summer vac 14
52	01 September 2025	Summer vac 15

B. Programmes with Non-Standard Academic Years

Committee members are asked to check that the following list of programmes with non-standard academic years is still correct at the time of the meeting (January 2021). This information is available on the University's website at:

www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates/programmes-with-non-standard-academic-years

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science

Business School

- Business Administration, Master of (MBA)(Full-time)
- Business Administration with International Exchange, Master of (MBA)(Full-time)
- Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Centre for Open Learning

- Access Programme
- International Foundation Programme

Edinburgh College of Art

Postgraduate

- European Master's in Landscape Architecture (European Masters)
- Urban Strategies and Design (MSc)

The Moray House School of Education

Undergraduate

- Community Education (BA Hons) (Full-time)
- Primary Education with Gaelic (Fluent) MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Gaelic (Learners) MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Earth Sciences MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with History MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Mathematics MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Modern Languages (German) MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Religious Studies MA (Hons)
- Primary Education with Scottish Studies MA (Hons)
- Physical Education MA (Hons)

Postgraduate

- Dance Science and Education (MSc)
- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary) (PGDE)
- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) (PGDE)
- Outdoor Education (MSc)
- Outdoor Environmental Education (MSc)
- Transformative Learning and Teaching (MSc)

Online learning

- Digital Education (Online Learning) (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
- Social Justice and Community Action (Online Learning) (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)

School of Law

Professional development

- Diploma in Professional Legal Practice

School of Health in Social Science

Undergraduate

- Nursing Studies BN (Hons)

Postgraduate

- Applied Psychology for Children and Young People (MSc)
- Clinical Psychology (DClinPsychol)
- Counselling Studies (PgCert)
- Counselling (PgDip)
- Interpersonal Dialogue (MCouns)
- Psychological Therapies (MSc)
- Psychotherapy and Counselling (DPsychotherapy)

School of Social and Political Science

Undergraduate

- Social Work (BSc Hons)

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Edinburgh Medical School

Undergraduate

- Oral Health Sciences (BSc)
- [MBChB Medicine \(6-year programme\)](#)

Postgraduate

- Endodontology (DClinDent)
- Oral Surgery (MClinDent & DClinDent)
- Orthodontics Dentistry (MClinDent & DClinDent)
- Paediatric Dentistry (MClinDent & DClinDent)
- Prosthodontics Dentistry (MClinDent & DClinDent)

Blended learning

- Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine (Online Learning) (PgCert)

Online learning

- Advanced Clinical Practice (Online Learning) (MVetSci)
- Anatomical Sciences (Online Learning) (PgDip)
- Clinical Education (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Clinical Trials (Online Learning) (MSc)

- Dental Sedation and Anxiety Management (Online Learning) (PgCert)
- Family Medicine (Online Learning) (MFM)
- Food Safety (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Global Food Security and Nutrition (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Global e-Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Global Health and Infectious Diseases (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Global Health Challenges (Online Learning) (PgCert)
- Global Health Studies (Online Learning) (PgCert)
- Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc)
- One Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Public Health (Online Learning) (MPH)
- Science Communication and Public Engagement (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Surgical Sciences (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (MSc)

[Royal \(Dick\) School of Veterinary Studies](#)

Undergraduate

- [BVM&S Veterinary Medicine \(5-year programme\)](#)
- [BVM&S Veterinary Medicine \(Graduate Entry Programme - 4-year programme\)](#)

Postgraduate online learning

- Applied Conservation Genetics and Wildlife Forensics (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Applied Poultry Science (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Clinical Animal Behaviour (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Conservation Medicine (Online Learning) (MVetSci)
- Equine Science (Online Learning) (MSc)
- International Animal Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
- International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (Online Learning) (MSc)
- Veterinary Epidemiology (Online Learning) (MSc)

College of Science & Engineering

Postgraduate online learning

- Data Science, Technology and Innovation (Online Learning) (MSc, PGDip, PgCert)