

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)  
held online on Thursday 31 March 2022 at 2.00pm**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

<p><b>Present:</b> Dr Paul Norris (Convenor)</p> <p>Professor Judy Hardy (Vice-Convenor) Professor Jeremy Crang Professor Patrick Hadoke</p> <p>Professor Antony Maciocia Professor Jamie Davies Dr Adam Bunni Alexandra Laidlaw Sarah McAllister Rachael Quirk Tara Gold Charlotte MacDonald Dr Deborah Shaw</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b> Olivia Hayes Dr Winston Kwon Professor Andrew Steven</p> <p><b>Apologies for absence:</b> Kirsty Woomble Stephen Warrington Dr Cathy Bovill</p> <p>Rebecca Shade Lisa Dawson</p>	<p>Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) Dean of Students (CAHSS) Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) Dean of Taught Education (CMVM) Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Student Systems and Administration Head of Taught Student Administration &amp; Support (CAHSS) Vice President Education, Students' Association The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Dean of Students (CMVM)</p> <p>Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services Programme Director, MSc in Global Strategy and Sustainability. Convenor of Board of Examiners, School of Law</p> <p>Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS) Dean of Student Experience (CSE) Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement, Institute for Academic Development (IAD) Policy and Projects Officer – Student Experience Interim Deputy Secretary of Students</p>
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Thanks were extended to Ailsa Taylor for her support of APRC, Ailsa's role has changed and she will no longer be supporting APRC.

Welcome to Olivia Hayes who will be taking over support of APRC.

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting held online on 27 January 2022</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 January 2022 were approved as an accurate record, subject to clarification of a point made about item 4 of the previous meeting. This point indicates that similar proposals related to Master's Dissertations would not be subject to the same level of scrutiny at APRC, this clarification would be addressed under Matters Arising.</p>	<b>Enclosed</b>
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2.	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
	<p><b>Masters/Dissertations</b></p> <p>At the previous meeting of APRC a general discussion on the number of non-standard dissertation proposals being seen by the Committee was had. It was agreed that proposals similar to those seen previously do not need to be subject to the same level of scrutiny in the future.</p> <p>The previous discussion did not conclude how APRC would like to manage MSc proposals that do not meet the current degree model, and it is being raised again for the Committee to agree a clear approach. It was acknowledged that any agreed approach may shift once the Curriculum Transformation project has concluded.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the options available and noted that as APRC has already approved a broad range non-standard approaches, it is unlikely that the Committee would refuse similar requests to those already seen. It was agreed that the Convenor and Vice-Convenor are aware of the boundaries of what has been approved and it would be reasonable for similar cases to be considered by Convenor’s action in the first instance.</p> <p>There is value in retaining central records on what deviations have been approved, and this may be useful for the Curriculum Transformation project. These records will continue to be maintained by Academic Services.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that any deviation from the regulations must still be submitted to APRC for formal approval. Requests which are similar to those which have already approved by the wider committee will be considered by Convenor’s action in the first instance, with circulation to the wider committee as required.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> the note on the 40/20 split would be recirculated to confirm that cases like this do not need to be submitted to APRC for formal approval.</p>	
	<p><b>Support for Study</b></p> <p>At the previous meeting the Committee agreed to amend wording in the Support for Study Policy, with the exception of the proposed change in section 7.4 where it referred to “making clear reference to the relevant section of this policy with regards to the case”. This change was not to be made at this time, but would be kept under review. The mandatory nature of 7.4 was reiterated to be of specific concern to the Committee.</p> <p>Lisa Dawson and Rebecca Shade intend to return to the May meeting of APRC to discuss the Support for Study policy. Lisa Dawson requested that members please identify specific aspects of the policy which are deemed to be of concern at least two weeks in advance of the May meeting. Members are asked to send any specific concerns to the APRC Secretary, Olivia Hayes, for these to be collated and shared with Lisa Dawson and Andy Shanks in advance of the next meeting</p> <p><b>Action:</b> APRC Secretary to circulate reminder to members to send any concerns through. These will be collated and shared with Lisa Dawson and Andy Shanks two weeks prior to the next APRC meeting.</p>	

	<b>For discussion</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Response to Senate Questions</b></p> <p>Dr Paul Norris, Convenor of APRC, introduced this item. The paper details two questions received from Senate members after the Senate meeting held on 9 February 2022. The paper is provided to ensure committee members are aware of the questions raised, and the concern put forward about the status of “closed papers”.</p> <p>Members were asked to provide any observations on the paper and invited to discuss their views on closed papers. The Committee agreed that APRC has a very limited number of closed papers and there is generally good reason for papers being closed, which may include but is not limited to, data protection or commercially sensitive reasons. The position of the Senate Education Committee is that papers are open by default, and if a paper is to be closed then rationale for this must be provided. The Committee agreed to adopt the same approach, with a rationale to be provided for any closed papers.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> the Convenor will take forward APRC’s position with the secretary and other Senate sub-Committee Convenors.</p>	<b>APRC 21/22 4A</b>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Coursework Extensions regulation: proposals for interim amendments</b></p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Adam Bunni (AB), Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services.</p> <p>The paper proposed a range of short-term options for amending the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to coursework extensions for the 2022-23 academic year. It was noted that it was felt to be too late in the year for major policy changes to be considered and consulted on in time for next academic session. Members were asked to discuss the options put forward with further consultation to be carried out before a request for approval at the May meeting of APRC.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the options put forward. Members agreed that this was a complicated and challenging issue and, given the time left, the most viable option for Colleges to consult on was reducing the default time granted for coursework extensions from 7 to 3 days.</p> <p>Concern was raised, especially by EUSA members, around the positioning of changes to students and that a short-term change which reduced the default extension available may be perceived as a punitive, rather than supportive measure. Communicating changes to students would be of vital importance and positioning these changes as part of a longer-term review of coursework extensions, special circumstances and the expanding the support around these would be useful.</p> <p>Concern was raised around the viability of the ESC service to cope with changes to the coursework extension process. It was agreed that if evidence for extensions is introduced, this would impact on ESC’s ability to turnaround of extension requests within 2 working days.</p>	<b>APRC 21/22 4B</b>

	<p>The reduction of the default time granted from 7 to 3 days was agreed to be the most viable option and Academic Services would consult Colleges and EUSA on this interim measure ahead of a broader review in 2022-23.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would also be helpful to understand whether flexibility on feedback deadlines were expected from the current Assessment and Feedback Working Group so this information could be included alongside the proposal. Academic Services would confirm with the Convenor of the working group to clarify and include this information in the consultation paper which will go to Colleges and EUSA for consultation.</p> <p>Academic Services are committed to undertaking a wider review of coursework extensions and special circumstances in 2022-23.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Management of Late Online Examinations</b></p> <p>This item was introduced by Ms Rachael Quirk, Head of Taught Student Administration and Support, CAHSS.</p> <p>A small number of Schools have raised the management of late online exams with the College Office and flagged their concern that the current approach is disproportionate given the weighting of exams and the sliding scale of penalties which is available for coursework submissions. This issue has arisen since the “silent window” (which permitted late submission by up to 10 minutes without penalty) was removed.</p> <p>During discussion, colleagues noted that there was varying concern and practice between Schools. It was noted that a clarification in the regulations may be useful, though guidance was produced for the most recent exam diet and there were still Schools which departed from the guidance.</p> <p>Academic Services agreed to review the regulations in relation to online exams to see if clarification was necessary to help distinguish between varying methods of assessment, for example, online exams, take home exams,</p> <p>ESC colleagues noted that one of the challenges in supporting late online examinations was the evidence that students were required to provide to support an application for special circumstances on these grounds. ESC received an increased number of applications though many with evidence which was inappropriate to support the circumstances.</p> <p>A number of options to address this point were considered however APRC agreed that in the short term, it is up to Colleges and Schools to advise students on how online examinations work and to manage their time appropriately, ensuring enough time is left to upload their exam. There is also additional information available from ESC, which clarifies what information or evidence is required if a student does encounter special circumstances at the point of submission.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Update</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23</b></p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Adam Bunni (AB), Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services.</p>	<p><b>APRC 21/22 4C</b></p>

	<p>The key changes for APRC to consider are set out in the paper.</p> <p>There was one late addition, which was a minor change to Regulation 5 – Disclosure of Criminal Offences. The proposal removes reference to Schools and replaces this with ‘Student Conduct Team’. The Student Conduct Term determine whether disclosure of a criminal offence warrants further action, and this change minimises the number of people at the University who are aware of the disclosure. The same change has been proposed for the PG Degree Regulations. The student facing information on this would also be updated to reflect this change.</p> <p>A number of practical concerns were raised on the disclosure of criminal offences, and these would be taken forward separate from the DRPS approval.</p> <p>It was noted that there may be further amendments to the job titles and roles introduced under the Student Support and Personal Tutor model may occur before the start of the 2022-23 academic year. It was agreed that if there were changes to the role titles, these would be incorporated where possible and if known by the start of the 2022-23 academic year. Academic Services would raise a note with Court Services about the job titles within the DRPS and the possibility that these may change over the coming months.</p> <p>APRC approved the Undergraduate Degree Regulations for 2022-23 and approved the change to Regulation 5- Disclosure of Criminal Offences.</p> <p>APRC was also supportive of role titles related to the SSPT model being updated in the DRPS as these were confirmed ahead of the 2022-23 academic year.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23</b></p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Adam Bunni (AB), Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services.</p> <p>There was one late addition, which is a minor change to Regulation 7 – Disclosure of Criminal Offences. Further information about this is provided under item 6, above.</p> <p>There was one addition raised during the meeting, which is a minor change to Regulation 31 – Withdrawal and Exclusion. The committee discussed removing the word permanently from the regulation and agreed that this stipulation was not appropriate as students may apply to return to their studies at a later date after having previously withdrawn. APRC agreed to remove ‘permanently’ from Regulation 31.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about Regulation 45 and the rights offered to students when they have been excluded. The Committee agreed that any changes to this regulation require further consideration and no change was made.</p> <p>It was flagged that there is no mention of Distance Learning PhD’s in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. It was suggested that these programmes require clarity from a regulations perspective for the purposes of immigration and fees.</p> <p>Programme-specific situations would not usually be covered by the DRPS and these would generally cover all programme types, however there are programme specific regulations in the DRPS which may indicate a departure from the main regulations.</p>	<p><b>APRC 21/22 4D</b></p>

	<p>It was suggested that this be taken forward with the Doctoral College and the Student Immigration Service for clarity. If a change to the regulations is required to support these programmes, this can be reviewed by APRC.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to minor changes to job titles and roles which have been introduced under the Student Support and Personal Tutor model. They agreed that further changes to job titles would be permitted if agreed in time for the next academic year. Further information about this is provided under item 6, above.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to changes to Regulation 7 – Disclosure of Criminal Offences. Further information about this is provided under item 6, above.</p> <p>APRC approved the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2022-23 and approved the change to Regulation 5- Disclosure of Criminal Offences and Regulation 31 – Withdrawal and Exclusion.</p> <p>APRC was also supportive of role titles related to the SSPT model being updated in the DRPS as these were confirmed ahead of the 2022-23 academic year.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>CAHSS – Business School – Joint Challenge Dissertations</b></p> <p>This paper was presented by Dr. Winston Kwon, Programme Director of the MSc in Global Strategy and Sustainability.</p> <p>As part of the new MSc in Global Strategy and Sustainability (GSS), the Business School propose a new format for the dissertation to be available to students (as an alternative to the 60-credit individual dissertation) that allows students to engage with complex topics within the time constraints of their MSc programme. The proposed Joint Challenge Dissertation would combine 20 credits of joint study project with 40 credits of individual work.</p> <p>Students would receive a group mark for the 20 credit component and an individual mark for the 40 credit component.</p> <p>Concern was raised around how the group work component would be managed in a range of circumstances, such as where a member was impacted by special circumstances, needed to withdraw, or where there was conflict between group members. It was confirmed that tools currently utilised in the Business School can mitigate these kinds of circumstances.</p> <p>It was confirmed that students who cannot proceed with the Joint Dissertation have the option of reverting to the traditional dissertation and relying on existing University systems such as extensions and special circumstances to mitigate any impact on the individual.</p> <p>APRC approved Paper E and advised the Business School to carefully consider the information which is provided to students on special circumstances, group work dynamics, and how issues within groups will be managed.</p> <p>It was also suggested that the Business School reach out to EFI for best practice as EFI have previously submitted similar proposals to APRC for approval.</p>	<p><b>APRC 21/22 4E</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>UCU Industrial Action – update</b></p>	<p><b>Verbal Update</b></p>

	<p>A brief update on UCU Industrial Action was given by the Convenor, Dr. Paul Norris. It was noted that there has been a very small number of external examiners resigning and there may be need to consider a concession to regulations due to resignations. The Committee agreed that these should be managed by Convenor’s action in the first instance.</p> <p>APRC will be the Committee responsible for deciding when industrial action has impacted on teaching and assessment to the point that further concessions may need to be considered. Members were reminded of this power under Regulations 70 and 71 of the Taught Assessment Regulations.</p> <p>There is a further UCU ballot which concludes in the coming weeks and following the outcome of the ballot, APRC may be required to meet and consider whether further mitigations are needed. This will depend upon the nature of any further action being called by UCU.</p> <p>The Academic Contingency Group (ACG) has met several times and has agreed that there is not currently a need to request concessions to regulations due to the impact of industrial action.</p> <p>If APRC receives such a request from ACG, members agreed that a live meeting held over Teams would be preferable to reach an agreed position. For members unable to join the live meeting, feedback can be submitted via email.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>CAHSS – School of Law - Postgraduate Degree Regulations 85a 2022/23</b></p> <p>This paper was presented by Professor Andrew Steven, Convenor of the Board of Studies, School of Law.</p> <p>An anomaly in Regulation 85a of the Postgraduate Degree Regulations has been picked up and the paper is to rectify this change for the 2022-23 academic year, and ahead of a broader review of the Diploma of Legal Practice being undertaken in the 2022-23 academic year.</p> <p>It was flagged that there was an additional ‘in’ in paragraph 2 of the regulation. APRC approved the change to Regulation 85a in 2022-23, subject to the deletion of the additional “in” from paragraph 2 of the regulation.</p>	<p><b>APRC 21/22 4F</b></p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>The APRC Convenor, Dr. Paul Norris has received a request to update number of policies as a result of the Student Support Model changes coming into effect. The vast majority of changes are to update job titles as a result of the Student Support Model changes. It was noted that job titles are still being confirmed and there may be some revisions to those policies received so far.</p> <p>APRC has received the first tranche of changes, and the revisions received thus far are to update job titles, and replace ‘Tier 4 student’ with ‘International student’. Policies received so far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorised Interruption of Study</li> <li>• Course Organiser: Outline of Role (CSPC)</li> <li>• International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy</li> <li>• Performance Sport Policy</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate Degree Regulations</li> <li>• Programme and Course Handbooks Policy</li> <li>• Protection of Children and Protected Adults</li> <li>• Support for Study Policy</li> <li>• Taught Assessment Regulations</li> <li>• Undergraduate Degree Regulations</li> <li>• Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy</li> <li>• Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed that where changes were limited to updating role titles as a result of the Student Support Model changes, these could be approved by Convenor's action.</p> <p>The Advice Place noted that they are also considering updating job titles as a result of the Student Support Model changes. It was requested that this be flagged to the Student Support Model Project Team.</p>	
	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>The next formal meeting of APRC will be held on 26 May 2022.</p> <p>An additional meeting of APRC may be arranged subject to any further industrial action being called.</p>	