

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)**  
**Hybrid meeting held online via Teams and in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**  
**Thursday 2 May 2023 at 3.00-4:30pm**

**AGENDA**

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| <b>1.</b>             | <b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b><br>For approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 23 March 2023 (enclosed)</li><li>• March e-business (enclosed)</li></ul> | APRC 22/23 8A |
| <b>For discussion</b> |                                                                                                                                                                         |               |
| <b>2.</b>             | <b>Industrial action: variations to academic policies and regulations</b><br>For discussion                                                                             | APRC 22/23 8B |

**e-Business Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations  
Committee (APRC)  
Thursday 30 March – Thursday 6 April**

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTE**

| <b>To note</b>                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                      |
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| <b>1.</b>                                         | <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>Activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 70</b><br/>The Committee were informed that the relevant guidance on responding to the impact of industrial action has been updated and communicated to Schools,</p> <p>It was noted by a committee member that a paper on responses to industrial action was scheduled for discussion at the Senate meeting on 29 March 2023, but that a vote on the proposals was not possible because that meeting was not quorate at that point, but Senate members may intend to raise this issue again at the next opportunity. The committee member asked that it be noted that some Senate members consider the activation of TAR Regulation 70 profoundly inappropriate. The Senate member queried whether the temporary relaxation of specific regulations was being done under a proper process as this appears to undermine strike action.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising: Clarification of Support for Study Policy Following 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 Meeting of APRC</b></p> <p>The Committee noted the clarification on the Support for Study Policy.</p> | <b>APRC 22/23 7A</b> |
| <b>2.</b>                                         | <p><b>Reminder of follow up items</b></p> <p>Members were made aware the relevant deadlines for follow up items.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                      |
| <b>For discussion and recommendation to Court</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                      |
| <b>3.</b>                                         | <p><b>PG DRPS – Regulation 33 and 34</b><br/>For discussion and recommendation to Court</p> <p>The Committee supported the Regulations be recommended to Court. Court will take forward approval of the Regulations in line with the process for the approval of a Resolutions.</p> <p>A member raised concern that the wording of Regulation 33 may discriminate against part-time continuous students and noted that a revision to the Study Period Table would provide more appropriate timescales for part-time continuous students and reduce administrative burden. These comments were noted and will be considered during a more detailed review of Regulation 33 over the next academic year.</p> <p>Members supported the proposed amendments to Regulations 33 and 34 as an interim measure for 2023/24 and ahead of a more detailed review of these specific regulations ahead of the 2024/25 academic year.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>APRC 22/23 7B</b> |

| <b>For approval</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                      |
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| <b>4.</b>           | <p><b>Late Special Circumstances Deadline for August resit diet</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>The Committee approved a revised late special circumstances deadline for the August 2023 resit diet.</p> <p>Amendments to the late special circumstances deadline for PGT dissertations in 2022/23 will be proposed to APRC at their meeting in May 2023.</p> <p>Some members raised concern that the revised deadline would reduce the time available to submit special circumstances and noted that the change should be clearly communicated to students.</p> | <b>APRC 22/23 7C</b> |
| <b>5.</b>           | <p><b>Approval for non-standard programme start dates for the Online MBA</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>The Committee approved the non-standard programme start dates for the Online MBA.</p> <p>It has been confirmed that students will be able to access central University induction resources when commencing a programme on non-standard start date. A member noted in future that it would provide more security for these assurances to be provided in writing.</p>                                                                                     | <b>APRC 22/23 7D</b> |

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)  
Hybrid meeting held online via Teams and in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House  
Thursday 23 March 2023 at 2.00pm**

**Unconfirmed Minute**

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| <p><b>Present:</b><br/>Dr Aidan Brown<br/>Dr Adam Bunni<br/>Philippa Burrell<br/>Professor Jeremy Crang<br/>Professor Jamie Davies<br/>Dr Murray Earle<br/>Professor Patrick Hadoke (Vice-Convenor)<br/>Clair Halliday<br/>Karen Howie<br/>Professor Antony Maciocia<br/>Sarah McAllister</p> <p>Sam Maccallum<br/>Dr Kathryn Nicol<br/>Dr Paul Norris (Convenor)<br/>Callum Paterson<br/>Rachael Quirk<br/>Professor Tim Stratford<br/>Stephen Warrington<br/>Kirsty Woomble</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b><br/>Dr Matthew Bell<br/>Olivia Hayes (Minutes)<br/>Dr Sarah Henderson<br/>Professor Sabine Rolle</p> <p>Professor Veronica Ruiz Abou-Nigm<br/>Dr Paula Smith<br/>Tom Ward</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b><br/>Dr Donna Murray</p> <p>Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif<br/>Dr Deborah Shaw</p> | <p>Elected member of Senate<br/>Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)<br/>Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)<br/>Dean of Students (CAHSS)<br/>Dean of Taught Education (CMVM)<br/>Elected member of Senate<br/>Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)<br/>The Advice Place, Deputy Manager<br/>Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services<br/>Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)<br/>Head of Student Support Operations, Student Systems and Administration<br/>Vice President Education, Students' Association<br/>Head of Academic Policy and Regulation<br/>Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)<br/>Academic Engagement Coordinator (Co-opted member)<br/>Head of Taught Student Administration &amp; Support (CAHSS)<br/>Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)<br/>Dean of Student Experience (CSE)<br/>Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>College Academic Misconduct Officer (CSE)<br/>Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services<br/>CMVM Director of Postgraduate Taught Education<br/>Dean of Education (CAHSS), Convener of the CE &amp; SC Task Group<br/>Edinburgh Law School<br/>MSc Critical Care Deputy Programme Director<br/>Director of Academic Services</p> <p>Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic Development<br/>Elected member of Senate<br/>Dean of Students (CMVM)</p> |
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| <p><b>1. Welcome to new members</b></p> <p><i>APRC formally welcomed two new members to the Committee, who joined in February:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Callum Paterson, Academic Engagement Coordinator. The Academic Engagement Coordinator position was co-opted to the Committee in September 2022.</li> </ul> |
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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clair Halliday, The Advice Place, Deputy Manager. Attendance at APRC will be shared between the Manager and Deputy Manager of The Advice Place. This will be formally reported to Senate when the 2023/24 membership of the Committee is presented at the May meeting.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2. | <p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting - APRC 22/23 6A</b><br/>For approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 January 2023 (enclosed)</li> </ul> <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the January meeting.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3. | <p><b>Matters Arising - Verbal Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update on Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate and its Standing Committees: January 2023 Meeting</b><br/>Tom Ward provided an update on the Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate and its Standing Committees. The review is ongoing and the consultants have reported that there has been excellent engagement with the survey with focus groups and individual interviews scheduled for the end of March.</li> <li>• <b>Approval for non-standard programme start dates for the Online MBA: January 2023 Meeting</b><br/>Sarah McAllister confirmed that the Systems implications of the non-standard start had been considered and the proposal can be supported. The formal approval of the Online MBA would be included in a March e-business meeting of APRC.</li> <li>• <b>Provisional Academic Year Dates 2026/27: January 2023 meeting</b><br/>Olivia Hayes contacted ResLife regarding the provisional dates and they have confirmed that the provisional dates for 2026/27 do not allow sufficient time to prepare for Induction Week following the end of the Edinburgh Festival. The provisional dates will be revised in light of this and presented to APRC for approval in May.</li> <li>• <b>Curriculum Transformation: Sept 2022 &amp; January 2023 meeting</b><br/>The Convener, Paul Norris, confirmed that there has been no business for APRC arising out of Curriculum Transformation since the previous meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Report of Convener's Action</b><br/>The Convener updated APRC on the actions which have been taken by Convener's action since the Committee last met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Summary of approved concessions</b><br/>A total of 19 individual student concessions have been approved. There have been no cohort concessions received since the previous meeting. The Convener gave a broad overview of approved concessions approved by category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extensions and AIS: 16</li> <li>○ DPT variation, progression requirements and credits: 3</li> </ul> There are four concessions currently under consideration, equally split between the two categories given.</li> <li>• <b>Handling of concessions in relation to Industrial Action</b><br/>There have been no concessions relating to Industrial Action considered since APRC met in January 2023. This would be revisited under item 9.</li> </ul> |
| 4. | <p><b>LLB (Hons) Global Law - APRC 22/23 6M</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>The Deputy Convener, Professor Patrick Hadoke, convened this item.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

This item was introduced by Professor Veronica Ruiz-Abou Nigm, School of Law.

This paper is seeking permission for the proposed new LLB (Hons) Global Law programme to deviate from Taught Assessment Regulation (TAR) 55.2.

The Global Law programme contains a compulsory Junior Year Abroad (JYA) in Year 3, which is core to the structure of the programme. The JYA will be level 10 and assessed on a Pass / fail basis with the degree classified on the 120 credits of Level 10 courses completed in Year 4. There would be no resit opportunity if a Year 3 student fails and students would be offered an exit award of the MA Laws.

The School anticipate approximately 30 students for the first four years of the programme.

APRC approved a new sub-clause of TAR 55.2 being created, in which the LLB (Hons) Global Law programme is explicitly named as a programme where regulation 55.2 does not apply. This would read identically to 55.2(c), where an exemption is already in place for the MA International Business programme.

**Action:** Academic Services to update the Taught Assessment Regulations to include the new sub-clause.

#### 5. Proposed Changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures - APRC 22/23 6B

For discussion

Dr Matthew Bell, College Academic Misconduct Officer (CSE) introduced the item, which is for discussion. A paper would be returned to APRC for approval in May. The paper proposes changes to the procedures around cases of collusion, and the addition of a 50 mark penalty.

The Committee discussed the paper. The following points were made:

- It would be useful to receive further legal advice on the proposals provided under 1.5 and to clarify if a non-disclosure agreement can be included, and that the processes around handling of academic misconduct and code of conduct cases align.
- 1.5 should to provide further clarity around why the names of individuals are being shared. It may be necessary to also distinguish between groups of students colluding and a student having their work stolen or used without their consent.
- A concern was raised regarding the sharing of exam numbers with students. The Students Association representatives on the Committee did not believe this to be an issue and noted that in collusion cases students are generally aware of the other individuals involved.
- There was discussion on the interaction of the Special Circumstances Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedures. It was confirmed that these are separate processes and it is at the discretion of the relevant Boards of Examiners to consider cases that interact with both policies. The Board of Examiners cannot waive an academic misconduct penalty, however can consider actions provided under the Special Circumstances Policy. The Procedure should clarify the interaction with the Special Circumstances Policy and ensure advice aligns across University policies and procedures.

In addition to the comments provided, a number of drafting points were raised by the Committee, to be shared with the paper authors:

- 1.5: the wording is to be redrafted to take account of comments. The wording should be revised to indicate that a student interview is not a requirement.
- 3.4: the wording is to be redrafted to clarify that students will have an opportunity to respond before a penalty is applied.
- 5.3: the wording is to be revisited to take account of comments and discussions with the CE & SC Task Group.

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.4F: there is a discrepancy between the paper and the draft Procedure in relation to contract cheating. The reference to duty of care included in the Procedure is to be clarified.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee were invited to provide further comments to Roshni Hume by 10 April.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 6. | <p><b>Update from the Coursework Extension &amp; Special Circumstances Task Group - APRC 22/23 6C</b><br/>For discussion</p> <p>Professor Sabine Rolle, Convener of the Coursework Extension &amp; Special Circumstances Task Group introduced this item.</p> <p>The paper provides APRC with the findings and positions reached by the Coursework Extension and Special Circumstances Task Group, a summary of the findings of the ESC Reviews: discussions with Schools 2022/23 and of the service in 2022; and an overview of the proposed next steps to bring together the findings of work underway across ESC including responses from APRC and Heads of Schools to these proposals, to be overseen by the Deputy Secretary, Students. A final set of recommendations will be coordinated by the Deputy Secretary, Students and presented to the May meeting of APRC.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the paper. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is urgent of change needed ahead of the 2023/24 academic year, and there is a lack of clarity around a plan to take the policy forward. The Committee noted that if the current position remains, there is a high risk that Schools will introduce local changes which are at odds with the desire to develop greater consistency across the student experience and Schools.</li> <li>The Committee agreed that a plan for implementation should be considered, with particular focus on what changes can be implemented for 2023/24 and a plan to communicate what measures are to be introduced, and what will be held over to future years and why.</li> <li>The volume of coursework extensions may not change, regardless of a possible policy changes. Students do not see the use of coursework extensions as problematic and this is seen as part of the package of support available to students.</li> <li>The Committee noted the challenge for the Task Group in attempting to produce recommendations in the absence of data to support thinking.</li> <li>There was concern from some members regarding the proposed reduction of time available for a coursework extension coming from the CE &amp; SC Task Group, and in particular the impact on disabled students.</li> <li>A clarification was made regarding self-certification in Special Circumstances. It was confirmed that Special Circumstances applications do not permit self-certification, however depending on the circumstances, a students' own word may be taken into account in determining the validity of an application.</li> <li>There is concern from some members regarding the feasibility of taking forward substantial changes ahead of 2023/24 without clarity on the systems implications that such changes would present.</li> <li>A general reflection on the feasibility of making policy changes via Task Group was shared with the Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> The Convener would share comments with the paper authors to establish what action can be taken and a plan for taking this forward.</p> <p>The Committee were invited to provide further comments to Olivia Hayes by 10 April.</p> |
| 7. | <p><b>Online exam arrangement for 2023/24 – submission deadlines - APRC 22/23 6D – CLOSED</b><br/>For discussion</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|    | <p><b>This item of business was closed:</b> its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 8. | <p><b>Industrial action: variations to academic policies and regulations - APRC 22/23 6E</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.<br/>This paper invites the Committee to consider whether to approve any temporary general variations to academic policies and regulations.</p> <p>The Academic Contingency Group (ACG) have monitored the impact of industrial action and believe that significant disruption has occurred and recommend that APRC activates Taught Assessment Regulation 70 (Significant Disruption: Concessions and Standards) and considers two modest and proportionate variations.</p> <p>A paper is due to be presented to Senate on 29 March which proposes changing the delegation of powers under Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71 from APRC to Senate, this includes all concessions relating to significant disruption and individual student concessions being considered by full Senate. A query was raised as to whether APRC could delay consideration of the proposals outlined in the paper until after Senate has met.<br/>The Committee felt that the current position is urgent and it is necessary to consider activating Taught Assessment Regulation 70 based on the current powers of the Committee. APRC agreed that any temporary variation to regulations should be implemented immediately.</p> <p>APRC considered the proposals outlined in the paper in turn.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed that it supports a staged approach to considering the case for general variations to academic regulations and policies.</p> <p>The Committee agree that significant disruption has occurred and the Committee supports the activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 70.</p> <p>The University has a responsibility to its students to ensure that students can progress and graduate as expected. The ACG has reviewed the options available and at this stage, recommends two specific action be taken. The ACG will continue to monitor the situation and may recommend further action at a future point.</p> <p>APRC considered the proposals for two temporary variations outlined in the paper. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conduct of assessment has been disrupted for specific groups of students. The feedback from Colleges indicates that Schools will need to consider changing the content or weighting of assessments in response to this.</li> <li>• The industrial action does not call on external examiners to resign, however there may be disruption to the availability of external examiners during this time. There is a disparity in regulations which require external examiners to comment on exam papers and not other forms of assessment.</li> <li>• Schools should continue to seek external examiner input where possible, and where this is not possible, Schools should undertake additional internal scrutiny.</li> </ul> <p>APRC approved a temporary variation to permit schools to make changes after the start of a course without the approval of College or consultation with students and external examiners.</p> <p>APRC approved a temporary variation to relax the requirement to consult External Examiners when setting examination papers.</p> |



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|                   | <p>The two temporary variations to regulations would take effect immediately, and remain in place until no later than the end of session 2022-23 (including the resit diet in summer 2023):</p> <p>APRC revisited the position agreed at the 26 January meeting on the handling of concessions relating to industrial action. The Committee agreed that the agreed position should continue until the next meeting of APRC on 25 May.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Convener of APRC would update the Convener of Senate on the actions taken by APRC to be outlined at Senate on 29 March.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare guidance and issue to Schools as soon as practicable.</p>                                                                |
| <p><b>9.</b></p>  | <p><b>Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2023/24 - APRC 22/23 6F</b><br/>To recommend to Court</p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Kathryn Nicol, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.</p> <p>This is a routine paper that contains the draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations for 2023/24.</p> <p>APRC supported the Undergraduate Degree Regulations being recommended to Court subject to one amendment. Regulation 9 is to be amended to apply to students in all years, rather than only commencing students.</p> <p>Court will consult with Senate and the General Council before the Regulations return to Court for approval.</p>                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>10.</b></p> | <p><b>Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2023/24 - APRC 22/23 6G</b><br/>To recommend to Court</p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Kathryn Nicol, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.</p> <p>This is a routine paper that contains the draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2023/24.</p> <p>An amendment to Regulations 33 and 34 would be considered by the Committee during a period of e-Business.</p> <p>APRC supported the Postgraduate Degree Regulations being recommended to Court subject to Regulation 9 being amended to apply to students in all years and agreeing the position on Regulation 33 and 34 via e-Business.</p> <p>Court will consult with Senate and the General Council before the Regulations return to Court for approval.</p> |
| <p><b>11.</b></p> | <p><b>Schedule of review for policies, regulations and guidance – update - APRC 22/23 6H</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Kathryn Nicol, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.</p> <p>This paper updates the Committee on the schedule for reviewing policies, regulations, and guidance documents which are the responsibility of the Senate Committees. The Senate Education Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee are both content with the revised schedule.</p> <p>The Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Policy was intended to go to the Senate Education Committee in May. A note would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting to confirm when this policy will be reviewed.</p>                     |

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|     | <p><b>Action:</b> Kathryn Nicol to circulate an update to the Committee to confirm when the Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Policy will be reviewed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 12. | <p><b>Proposed Policy Changes related to Implementation of Student Support Model - APRC 22/23 6I</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>This item did not have a presenter.</p> <p>The Committee considered the proposed Student Support Project related changes for APRC on the following policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Authorised interruption of study</li> <li>2. Course Organiser: Outline of Role (CSPC)</li> <li>3. Performance Sport policy</li> <li>4. Programme and Course Handbooks Policy</li> <li>5. Protection of Children and Protected Adults</li> <li>6. Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure</li> <li>7. International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy</li> <li>8. Support for Study</li> </ol> <p>APRC supported the recommended changes to these policies subject to 'programme director' being reinserted into the relevant policies.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to consider a statement being added to each policy to ensure consistency when dealing with dealing with Schools, Deaneries and Institutes.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Sarah McAllister to feed back to the project on the lack of clarity on what happens to students returning from AIS and their named contact.</p> |
| 13. | <p><b>Revised Proposals for Coordinating Institutional Activities on Assessment and Feedback - APRC 22/23 6J</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.</p> <p>At its meeting on 26 January 2023, APRC discussed proposals for establishing these new task groups to coordinate these activities – focussing in particular on the Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation group (which would report to APRC and SQAC). While the Committee was strongly supportive of those proposals, it made suggestions for amendments to the membership and remit of that task group. The revised proposals set out in this paper take account of the feedback from the three Committees.</p> <p>Mr Ward noted that expanding the membership to include all suggestions would lead to very large groups. No powers would sit with the task groups and there would be no change to the responsibility of relevant Committees for affected policies.</p> <p>APRC approved the updated remit and membership for these new Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group, as set out in paragraph 13.</p>                                                                                  |
| 14. | <p><b>Major Change to an Existing Programme: MSc in Critical Care - APRC 22/23 6K</b><br/>For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Dr Paula Smith, Deputy Programme Director for the MSc Critical Care.</p> <p>This paper proposes the introduction of a fully taught Year 3 for students enrolled on the MSc in Critical Care programme, to be offered as an alternative to the current 60-credit dissertation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

The programme team asked for APRC's view on whether to remove the Year 3 progression hurdle as the courses are derived from Year 2 of the programme. The programme team believe that Regulation 56 should be waived for the programme. APRC noted that as the award requirements will not change and therefore the progression requirement is not a key concern.

APRC approved the option of a fully taught Year 3 for students enrolled on the MSc in Critical Care programme, as an alternative to the existing 60-credit dissertation.

The School were advised to give further thought to the progression hurdle and APRC agreed to consider any business arising from this at the March e-business meeting.

**15. Amendment to Support for Study Policy - APRC 22/23 6L**

For approval

The Deputy Convener, Professor Patrick Hadoke, convened this item.

This item was introduced by Dr Paul Norris, Convener of APRC.

This paper is to submit draft changes to the Support for Study Policy in relation to ongoing discussions from January 2022. The Committee were invited to approve the proposed change, which has been discussed with Colleges and the Disability and Learning Support Service. The Deputy Secretary, Students is continuing to consult on substantive changes to the policy, however this update is being presented for approval ahead of a further and more in-depth review of the policy.

The Students Association and The Advice Place noted that they are eager to be involved in any future discussions and consultation on the policy.

There was concern raised regarding the wording under 9.2 and a request that the following text be removed from the policy: 'they have been discharged from hospital.'

There was concern regarding making this change without due consideration and this would be referred back to the Deputy Secretary, Students to take forward as part of the in-depth review of the policy.

APRC approved the revised wording presented, subject to the second bullet under 7.4 being amended to read 'inviting the student to attend...'

**16. Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2021/22 - Verbal Update**

To note and comment

This item was introduced by Ms Olivia Hayes, Academic Policy Officer, who provided an update on the Committees recent progress against actions in response to the 2021/22 review, approved at the January meeting.

The External Review of Senate and its Committees is currently underway and Committee members were invited to complete a survey and volunteer to attend a focus group.

There has been a coordination of work for items of common business across Committees, including the Assessment and Feedback work. This will be ongoing throughout the year.

Standing Committee Conveners are considering how to respond to a motion approved at the 12 October Senate meeting relating to reasonable additions to their committee to improve BAME, student, and trade union representation. A paper will be presented to Senate's 29 March meeting.

The Senate Committees Newsletter has resumed with the first issue circulated in December. A subsequent issue is in the pipeline however has not been produced as yet due to Academic Services capacity constraints.

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| <b>17.</b> | <b>Committee Priorities for 2023-24 - APRC 22/23 6N</b><br>To note and comment<br><br>This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.<br><br>This paper invites Committee members to comment on potential priorities for the Committee to focus on in 2023-24. This will assist the Conveners of the Standing Committees to present a plan for approval by Senate at its meeting on 24 May 2023.<br><br>The Committee made the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ongoing work around Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances should be added to the priorities.</li><li>• There is a suggestion that Assessment Regulations should be reviewed alongside the Curriculum Transformation work to allow this to be fed into CTP discussions. This would be considered however Academic Services capacity may be a constraint.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>18.</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tom Ward invited members to submit expressions of interest by 31 March to be a member of the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group.</li><li>- Members were reminded that Senate will take place on 29 March. Members who also sit on Senate were encouraged to attend.</li><li>- An email would be circulated to the Committee with a survey on the Student Partnership Agreement consultation. The deadline for responses is 10 April.</li><li>- Paul Norris will be demitting his College role at the end of the academic year and the Convenorship of APRC will become available. An expression of interest will be circulated to members ahead of the next meeting.</li><li>- Thanks were extended to Tom Ward for his support to the Committee and best wishes for the future. Tom is leaving the University at the end of March.</li><li>- Apologies were extended to the Committee for the late circulation of papers for the 23 March meeting, which was unavoidable due to unforeseen circumstances. This would be rectified moving forward.</li></ul> |

**Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee****2 May 2023****Industrial action: variations to academic policies and regulations****Description of paper**

1. The nature and impact of the industrial action has escalated since APRC last considered a temporary variation to regulations and therefore a broader range of temporary variations are being brought to the Committee for consideration and implementation this academic session. The aim of any steps taken by the Committee would be to mitigate the academic impact on students of the University & College Union (UCU) industrial action, and ensure the consistent treatment of students, while maintaining academic standards and the value of the University's awards. The use of any temporary variations by Boards of Examiners is considered an exceptional measure and is only to be considered when Boards have exhausted all other available options.
2. The temporary variations recommended in this paper are considered exceptional and are only intended to be used by Boards of Examiners when all other options have been exhausted. This includes regulations previously relaxed by APRC in March 2023, as outlined in paragraph 21. Boards of Examiners are instructed to give priority to the consideration of work and awards for graduating students.
3. This paper invites the Committee to consider whether to approve further temporary general variations to academic policies and regulations under Taught Assessment Regulation 70 (Significant disruption: concessions and standards), which are proportionate to the current position.
4. This paper invites the Committee to consider whether to approve any temporary general variations to academic policies and regulations. Specifically, it proposes that the Committee activates Taught Assessment Regulation 71 (Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards) and considers a suite of variations proportionate to the current position.

**Action requested / recommendation**

5. The paper invites the Committee to:
  - Note the update on the industrial action (see paragraphs 6 to 8);
  - Confirm that it agrees to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 70 (Significant Disruption: concessions and standards) and decide whether to approve a suite of variations to academic regulations (see paras 22 to 28 and Annex A). These exceptional measures would take effect immediately, and remain in place until no later than the end of session 2022-23 (including the 2023 summer assessment period).
  - Confirm that it agrees to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71 (Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards) (see para 26) and decide whether to approve a suite of variations to academic regulations (see paras 29 to 40 and Annex A). These exceptional measures would take effect immediately, and remain in place until no later

than the end of session 2022-23 (including the 2023 summer assessment period).

## **Background and context**

### ***Industrial action***

6. To date, the University and College Union (UCU) has held twelve days of strikes (three in Semester One and nine in Semester Two):
  - Thursday 24, Friday 25 November 2022
  - Wednesday 30 November 2022
  - Wednesday 1 February 2023
  - Thursday 9, Friday 10 February 2023
  - Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15, Thursday 16 February 2023
  - Wednesday 15, Thursday 16, Friday 17 March 2023
  - Monday 20, Tuesday 21, Wednesday 22 March 2023
7. UCU also announced that action short of a strike would start from Wednesday 23 November 2022, and would continue until an agreement is reached or the end of the ballot mandate, which has been extended to 31 September 2023. This includes working to contractual hours and duties only and not volunteering to do more, not rescheduling classes and lectures cancelled due to strike action, not covering for absent colleagues, removing uploaded materials related to or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes cancelled as a result of strike action.
8. The UCU has announced that a marking and assessment boycott (MAB) commenced on 20 April 2023. The marking and assessment boycott will continue until the disputes are settled, UCU calls off the boycott, or at the end of the industrial action ballot mandate. The MAB will be continuous throughout the mandate period and there is no known end date for the action. The MAB covers all marking and assessment processes that contribute to summative assessment decisions for students, whether final (i.e. graduation) or interim (i.e. progression decisions).

### ***Action to date to mitigate the impact of the industrial action on students***

9. As a University we are required to seek to minimise disruption to our students' studies while maintaining academic standards. To this end, Schools and Colleges should take all reasonable steps available to them within University guidelines to ensure that their students' ability to learn, progress and graduate is not compromised by the industrial action, whilst maintaining academic standards. Schools and Colleges will seek to minimise and mitigate against the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) having a disproportionate impact on any one cohort of students, for example graduating students, whilst maintaining academic standards.
10. The University's Academic Contingency Group (ACG), which includes representatives of Colleges, the Students' Association, and key professional services, has monitored the impact on students of the current industrial action,

and has issued guidance to Schools and Colleges on options for mitigating the impact on students within normal academic policies and regulations and with the two temporary variations approved by APRC at its 23 March meeting. The latest version of the guidance is available at:

<https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/AcademicServices/SitePages/Guidance-for-staff-on-mitigating-the-impact-of-Industrial-Action-on-teaching-and-learning.aspx>

11. During previous periods of industrial action and other forms of significant disruption (eg Covid-19 pandemic), the Committee has approved temporary general variations to normal academic policies and regulations in order to provide Schools and Colleges with additional options for mitigating the disruption, where it judged that doing so would be compatible with maintaining academic standards. As in previous rounds of disruption, the use of any temporary variations by Boards of Examiners is considered an exceptional measure and is only to be considered when Boards have exhausted all available options.
12. In March 2023, the ACG considered that nature and extent of disruption resulting from strike action to be at a level where some degree of mitigation was necessary. The ACG made a recommendation to APRC to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 70 and recommended two temporary variations to regulations. At its 23 March meeting, APRC confirmed that it supported ACG's recommendations, and agreed to take a staged approach to considering the need for any further temporary variations to academic policies and regulations.
13. The ACG notified APRC that it would continue to monitor the impact of the industrial action in the weeks following the APRC meeting on 23 March and, should action escalate and there be a compelling case for a broader range of temporary variations, the ACG would return to APRC with a recommendation that APRC to consider a broader range of temporary variations to regulations. The ACG agree that the upcoming escalation of the action will require a wider range of temporary variations to the operation and powers of Boards of Examiners. Colleges have advised that most undergraduate and taught postgraduate Boards of Examiners will begin meeting from the first week of June 2023. Therefore, should the Committee wish to support a broader range of general temporary variations, approval is required by mid-May 2023 to allow Academic Services and Colleges time to communicate any temporary variations to Schools ahead of the scheduled Boards of Examiner meetings.
14. The Committee agreed by electronic business in November 2022 that the Convener and Vice-Convener would consider any requirements for temporary concessions regarding policies and regulations around External Examiners in the context of the industrial action, on the understanding that any concessions would run no longer than the end of session 2022-23. Were there sufficient time to allow the Convener or Vice-Convener to consult Committee members ahead of reaching a decision, the Committee would have a short window of up to 48 hours to feed comments in. The final decision would rest with the Convener or Vice-Convener and in urgent cases they would have the authority to make a decision without Committee consultation. The Committee revisited the arrangements in March 2023 and confirmed that remains content with them.

## Discussion

15. In mid-April 2023, the ACG reviewed the impact to date of the industrial action and the potential impact of the next phase of planned industrial action, which includes a marking and assessment boycott. The University's formal reporting processes of collecting and verifying levels of participation in the next round of action is still in its early stages, and it is not yet possible to establish the full extent of participation in the action. In recent rounds of UCU industrial action University staff participated in strikes during February 2023 (c. 1,215 staff) and in March 2023 (c. 1065 staff), with a mixture of academic and professional services, out of a total of c. 17,000. The levels of participation varying considerably between different academic and professional services units.
16. The impact of action held to date has led to significant amounts of disruption to teaching and assessment in some specific areas (for example, in areas of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), but more limited or no impact in other areas. This has included the loss of scheduled teaching activities for a large number of courses, and, in a relatively small number of cases, the cancellation of assessment activities (for example, presentations) that were scheduled for strike days.  
Based on feedback from Colleges, it is anticipated that the overall impact of industrial action, including the MAB, on the assessment of Semester Two courses is likely to be very significant. It is expected that there will also be significant impact on the consideration of progression and award decisions. It is unlikely that Boards of Examiners will be able to take adequate steps to mitigate this impact on students without additional options.
17. The ACG believes it is now necessary for the University to consider a broader range of general variations to academic policies and regulations in the following areas:
  - Award of Pass/Fail grades
  - Operation of Boards of Examiners
  - Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming course results
  - Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming programme-level (progression and award) decisions for undergraduate programmes
  - Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming programme-level (progression and award) decisions for postgraduate taught programmes
18. The ACG advises that there is a strong case for activating additional variations under Taught Assessment Regulation 70: Significant Disruption: concessions and standards, and putting in place temporary variations to academic policies and regulations, which would assist Schools to conduct Boards of Examiners over the coming period, whilst maintaining academic standards. Annex A sets out the proposed temporary variations, and paragraphs 22 to 28 below provide further information.



19. The ACG advises that there is a strong case for activating Taught Assessment Regulation 71: Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards and putting in place temporary variations to academic policies and regulations, which would assist Schools to make progression and award decisions over the coming period, whilst maintaining academic standards. Annex A sets out the proposed temporary variations, and paragraphs 29 to 40 below provide further information.
20. Annex B sets out the wider range of potential general temporary variations to academic policies and regulations that the Committee could consider. In the ACG's view, it does **NOT** recommend that APRC consider general variations to relax the requirement for Postgraduate Taught Boards, nor in relation to progression reviews for Postgraduate Research students at this stage. The ACG believe that the existing flexibility around the timing of Postgraduate Research progression reviews provides sufficient flexibility and there is concern around further reducing the volume of progression reviews for Postgraduate Research students. The ACG believe that relaxing the requirement for progression reviews may have a detrimental impact on students at an early stage of their programme.

***Approved temporary variations to academic policies and regulations made under TAR 70.***

21. APRC has already activated TAR 70 with regards to two specific variations:
- Changes to the weighting of components of assessment of courses – to allow Schools to make changes after the start of a course without the approval of College and consultation with students and external examiners
  - Relax the requirement to consult External Examiners when setting examination papers.

***Activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 70: Significant disruption: concessions and standards***

22. The ACG recommends further variations be activated to mitigate against the escalated impact of industrial action which includes a Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB).

***The ACG invites the Committee to consider further variations under Taught Assessment Regulation 70: concessions and standards. Is the Committee content to do this?***

23. The ACG believes it is now necessary for the University to consider general variations to academic policies and regulations in the following areas.

**Changes to the award of Pass/Fail**

24. The ACG recommends variation to these regulations for the following reasons:
- The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) will be continuous over the examination period and will cause significant disruption to the operation of Boards of Examiners. It is highly likely that Boards will need to modify their operation during this time to mitigate against the impact of the MAB.

- It is possible that a Board may not have the complete information required to determine a reliable numerical mark, even after making changes the weighting of components of assessment. In this situation, the Board may be content that a student has demonstrated sufficient achievement for credit to be awarded for a course on a pass/fail basis.

25. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation:

- **Taught Assessment Regulation 35: Common Marking Scheme**, to temporarily relax the requirement for Boards of Studies to have approved the operation of assessment on a Pass/Fail basis, and to permit the award of Pass/Fail at Honours level.

The final mark, grade, result and award and classification decision must be expressed using the relevant Common Marking Scheme: [www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

~~35.3 Where the relevant Board of Studies has approved the operation of assessment for a course on a Pass/Fail basis, Boards of Examiners may award credit for the course without awarding a mark or grade under the Common Marking Scheme. Courses whose assessment operates on a Pass/Fail basis are permitted during the pre-Honours stage of undergraduate Honours programmes, or on non-Honours undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes. Courses with Pass/Fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption.~~

**Changes to the operation of Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes – relaxation of quorum requirement and external examiner involvement**

26. The ACG recommends variation to these regulations for the following reasons:

- The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) will be continuous over the examination period and will cause significant disruption to the operation of Boards of Examiners. It is highly likely that Boards will need to modify their operation during this time to mitigate against the impact of the MAB.
- The ACG recommend the following variations which are proportionate to the action and seek to mitigate against the MAB having a disproportionate impact on any one cohort of students whilst maintaining academic standards.
- Taught Assessment Regulations 37 and 39 outline the requirements for Boards of Examiners. It is likely that in many cases that Boards will not be able to operate in line with the regulations, and the ACG recommend a temporary variation to specific regulations to allow Boards to take place during this time. In many cases, Schools would need to move rapidly to make these changes once they are clear about the impact of the marking and assessment boycott on the operation of Boards scheduled to take place during this time.

- In all cases, where Boards of Examiners can take place as normal and in line with existing regulations, then Boards should take place in the usual way.

27. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulations:

- **Taught Assessment Regulation 39** which outlines the quorum requirement for Boards. Boards to be permitted to take place with a minimum of two internal examiners participating. No Board may have fewer than two internal examiners participating. Board of Examiner Conveners should only allow Board meetings to go ahead where not only will the Board be quorate under the relaxed requirements, but it will have sufficient expertise and participation of those with key roles in order to make robust decisions.
- **Taught Assessment Regulation 39.2** which outlines the requirements to accept substitute representatives in lieu of internal examiners. The requirement to seek approval from the Head of College is to be relaxed. The requirement to seek prior written agreement to accept substitute members is to be relaxed. Boards will be instructed to record substitute members in the minute of the relevant meeting. The existing regulations are not compatible with agile decision-making. While the Committee could consider variations to these normal consultation and decision-making processes on a case-by-case basis, that would in itself prevent Schools from taking rapid decisions where required, and would be unmanageable were decisions required at short notice or in a large number of cases.
- **Taught Assessment Regulation 37** to allow Boards to take place without the participation of an External Examiner. Where the External Examiner is available, their involvement in the Board should be sought. While there has been limited evidence of disruption to External Examiner arrangements to date, it has nonetheless been an issue in some specific areas and it is possible that it would become a more substantive issue if the industrial action continues. Therefore, a requirement for External Examiners participation could impede Schools from taking appropriate action to mitigate the impact on students.
- The temporary arrangements would enable the University to maintain academic standards.

28. The ACG recommends the temporary variation apply on the following basis:

- Schools can only use this temporary arrangement to address disruption to Boards of Examiners associated with the industrial action. They can only do so if they are satisfied that all students on a cohort, or a particular part of the cohort, would be disadvantaged unless the temporary variations were available.
- In the absence of normal decision-making arrangements, Schools must secure approval from the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. In the event that the Convener is not available, the Head of School has the power to appoint an alternate member of staff to this role.

- Academic Services would provide Schools with guidance on how to manage decision-making and communications where required.

***Activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 71: Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards***

29. The ACG advises that the disruption to assessment associated with the industrial action and marking and assessment boycott to date constitutes 'significant disruption' as outlined under Taught Assessment Regulation 70.1. The industrial action is out with the University's control as relates to a sector-wide dispute and is not within the power of a single institution to resolve this.

***The ACG invites the Committee to formally activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71: Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards. Is the Committee content to do this?***

30. ACG has identified the specific regulations under TAR 71 that it anticipates Boards of Examiners are most likely to utilise in Annex A.

***Proposal for temporary variations to academic policies and regulations***

31. The ACG believes it is now necessary for the University to consider general variations to academic policies and regulations in the following areas.

***Relaxation of the progression requirements for Undergraduate students.***

32. The ACG recommends variations to Undergraduate progression requirements for the following reasons:

- While the University's normal regulations require students to achieve specific credits to progress to the next year of study, as a result of protracted industrial action, there has been significant disruption to the learning and teaching for students throughout Semester 2 and this is likely to impact on the availability of course results to Progression Boards to be able to reach a decision in line with normal regulations.
- In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board will consider a student's progression under normal regulations.

***Pre-Honours***

33. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation in the specific circumstances outlined:

- **Taught Assessment Regulation 51** to include provision for Boards of Examiners to award up to 40 credits on aggregate for courses affected by industrial action for pre-Honours students providing the students has an average of 40% over the courses with an available numeric grade.

*If a profile of marks is incomplete due to industrial action, and the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more in the available credits with a numeric grade, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the courses affected by industrial action.*

- The expectation is that credit on aggregate will be awarded for courses in the following cases:
  - The course has been affected by industrial action.
  - The Board of Examiners has established that a pass/fail grade cannot be awarded.
  - There is reasonable expectation that the grades for the assessment will not become available at a future point due to industrial action, i.e. An assessment has not taken place
- Where a course does not meet the criteria specified above, then a Board should continue to follow its usual processes for confirming course marks. This may include awarding a resit in circumstances where it would normally award a resit assessment.
- The award of credits on aggregate is not likely to be applied to core courses (i.e. courses which must be taken and passed). However, Boards of Examiners responsible for making progression decisions may also award credit on aggregate for such courses at their discretion.
- Where a Board does not have a complete profile of marks then the progression decision should be deferred.

### Honours

34. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation in the circumstances outlined:

- **Taught Assessment Regulation 52** to reduce the credits which students must pass, relax the requirement for an overall average of 40% or more across 120 credits, and the requirement to satisfy degree specific criteria, with the exception of professional qualifying or PRSB programmes. The revised Regulation is as follows:
  - (a) pass at least **60** ~~80~~ credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
  - (b) have an overall average of 40% or more ~~for the 120 credits in the available credits~~ of study taken in the relevant honours year; and
  - (c) ~~must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook. Regulation 52.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.~~

Where an incomplete profile of marks is available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least **60** ~~80~~ credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits in the available credits~~, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the ~~failed~~ courses *affected by industrial action*.

- The reduction of credits that a student is required to achieve for progression is intended to mitigate the volume of disruption experienced by students, and which has the potential to lead to a high level of course results being unavailable for Boards to reach decisions in line with the existing regulations.
- University regulations do not allow final year students to take additional credits and this temporary variation is intended to avoid a circumstance where students are carrying credits into their final year of study.
- In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board will consider a student's progression under normal regulations. The temporary variation is an exceptional measure which Boards should only consider when they have exhausted all other options.
- The temporary arrangements would enable the University to maintain academic standards.

**Relaxation of the progression requirements for Postgraduate Taught students.**

35. The ACG recommends variations to Postgraduate progression requirements for the following reasons:

- As a result of protracted industrial action there may be significant disruption to the learning and teaching for students throughout Semester 2 and this is likely to impact on the availability of course results to Progression Boards to be able to reach a decision in line with normal regulations.
- In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board will consider a student's progression under normal regulations.

36. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation in the circumstances outlined:

- ACG recommends relaxing **Taught Assessment Regulation 56: Postgraduate assessment progression**. ACG recommends relax the requirement to attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision to account for the volume of disruption which has the potential to lead to a high level of course results being unavailable for Boards to reach decisions under the existing regulations.

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

(a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and

~~(b) attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression; and~~

~~(c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks. Regulation 56.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.~~

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

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

- In instances where the temporary variation to the progression requirements has been applied, the classification of the Masters award would be undertaken using a minimum of 80 taught credits.
- In instances where the temporary variation to the progression requirements has been applied, the same calculation applied for progression should be applied when calculating a student's eligibility for the final award to ensure consistency of outcome for the student.

**Relaxation of the requirements for making Undergraduate award and classification decisions.**

37. The ACG recommends variations to Undergraduate award requirements for the following reasons:
- There may be instances where Course Boards of Examiners have awarded a pass/fail grade for a course where a numeric mark would normally be returned. This is likely to be in cases where a Board has an incomplete mark profile for a course, however the Board has sufficient information to determine if a student has passed or failed a course and therefore a pass/fail grade can be awarded.
  - To mitigate against the impact of a student received a pass/fail grade in a course where a Board would normally have a numeric grade on which to base its award decision.
  - Where an Award Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the existing Regulations, then the Board should consider a student's award as normal.

***Award of undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees***

38. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation in the circumstances outlined:
- The addition of the following text to **Taught Assessment Regulation 53: Award of undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees:**  
*When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved*

*PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the available credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the courses affected by industrial action.*

- The expectation is that credit on aggregate will be awarded for courses in the following cases:
  - The Board of Examiners has established that a pass/fail grade cannot be awarded.
  - There is reasonable expectation that the grades for the assessment will not become available at a future point due to industrial action, i.e. An assessment has not taken place
- Where a Board does not have a complete profile of marks then the award decision may be deferred, for example until after the resit diet.

### **Award of Undergraduate Honours**

39. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to the following regulation in the circumstances outlined:

- ACG recommends relaxing **Taught Assessment Regulation 54: Undergraduate honours degree award**. ACG recommends APRC apply a temporary variation to the requirement to attain an average of at least 40% for the 120 credits of study to account for the volume of disruption which has the potential to lead to a high level of course results being unavailable for Boards to reach decisions under the existing regulations.

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

- (a) pass at least ~~60~~ 80 credits at SCQF level 10 or above in their final honours year; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more for *courses which return a numerical mark* ~~the 120 credits of~~ final honours; and
- ~~(c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme.~~ *Regulation 54.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.*

When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least ~~60~~ 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more *in the available credits over the full 120 credits*, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the ~~failed~~ *courses affected by industrial action.*

40. The ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:

- The temporary variation to these regulations is intended to support Boards to make robust decisions to allow students to graduate from their programme in line with expected timelines.
- The altered requirement for credits on aggregate is intended to mitigate against the impact of receiving a pass/fail grade in a course which the Board



would normally expect to return a numerical mark. In these cases, the requirement to achieve an overall average of 40% across 120 credits has been relaxed, however a student must achieve an average of 40% across the courses which return a numeric mark.

- The classification calculation for these awards is to be undertaken using courses which return a numeric grade.
- Where the Board has sufficient credits to award a degree, but an incomplete mark profile, the Board may consider whether it has sufficient information available to classify an award on the information available and, where the Board believes it is reasonable and robust to do so. There is no minimum credit requirement on which to base a classification decision, however Boards must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of performance at the required level to justify a particular classification. This is an existing requirement which aligns with normal regulations.
- Where Boards have exhausted all available options, it may consider awarding a degree without a classification, in line with Undergraduate Degree Regulation 59. The Board would be required to revisit the classification decision when it determines that sufficient credits are available to classify the award in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 64.
- Where a Board has determined that an award cannot be made either under existing regulations or by utilising the exceptional measures in place, then the Board may establish that no award can be made. The Board would be required to revisit the decision when it determines that sufficient information is available to revisit the decision in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 64.

### **Resource implications**

41. The application of variations, where they are needed, would have workload implications for staff in Schools and Colleges, for Academic Services staff, and for staff involved in making the decisions. These activities would be temporary and this paper does not attempt to quantify them given the uncertainty regarding the extent to which it would be necessary for Schools to operate them.

### **Risk management**

42. The paper aims to assist the Committee to manage the risks associated with maintaining academic standards while minimising the academic impact of the industrial action on students.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

43. Not applicable.

### **Equality & diversity**

44. Were the University not to provide Schools with the appropriate range of options for mitigating the impact of industrial action on students, it is likely that there would be an adverse impact on particular cohorts or sub-cohorts of students on courses. It is possible that this could have a disproportionate impact on specific categories of students who may be more likely to experience other forms of disruption to their assessments or who may require particular forms of adjustments in relation to those assessments, for example students with disabilities.

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

45. Academic Services will communicate to Schools and Colleges regarding any temporary variations to normal policies and regulations.

**Author**

Academic Services  
25 April 2023

**Presenter**

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Group

**Freedom of Information**

Open

**For information: Temporary variations to academic policies and regulations – approved by APRC in March 2023.**

**1 *Changes to the weighting of components of assessment of courses – allow Schools to make changes after the start of a course without the approval of College and consultation with students and external examiners***

Taught Assessment Regulations:

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

13.3 Boards of Studies and the relevant College Committee approve the assessment and satisfactory performance requirements for courses and degree programmes before their delivery. Individual course elements and options available to students can change and there are annual changes to degree programme tables and course availability. However, the approval of the relevant College Committee must be obtained if it is exceptionally necessary to ~~change the weighting of assessment of a course after students have entered it; or to change progression, classification or award requirements for a programme after students have entered their honours years or a postgraduate programme.~~

~~(a) Before approval can be given, written evidence of the results of consultation with the students must be submitted. Every student affected needs to be informed of the changes and given the opportunity to comment. The expectation is that the College will not approve changes in the face of significant student objections, unless changes are compelled by external factors.~~

~~(b) The relevant external examiners must also be informed. and consulted.~~

~~(c) Students may be given alternative course options, where this is possible. The expectation is that course assessment requirements will not change after students are registered on it.~~

**2 *Setting examination papers – remove the requirement to consult External Examiners***

Taught Assessment Regulations:

8.1 The responsibilities of the Convener of the Board of Examiners are outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

These include:

(a) approving the content of examination papers, ~~taking account of the comments of External Examiners; ...~~

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

10. The College appoints a Course External Examiner to each course. The Course External Examiner is expected to:

- a) assess and comment on whether the course enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes and whether the assessment is appropriate in this regard;
- b) consider the level of achievement of students on the course, in relation to standards elsewhere in the sector for the same kind of course within similar degree programmes;
- c) review and approve, if appropriate, ~~all examination papers and~~ assessment criteria for the courses examined

~~40. External Examiner(s) must review and approve draft examination papers. Draft examination papers should be accompanied by model answers, where applicable and appropriate, or solutions and the marking schemes to be applied.~~

## Annex A- proposal for temporary variations to academic policies and regulations

Text to be waived is struck through. Additional text is marked in red and underlined.

### **1 Award of Pass/Fail grades**

***Give Boards of Examiners the authority to award Pass/Fail grades without prior approval from Boards of Studies for the operation of assessment on a Pass/Fail basis, and to permit the award of Pass/Fail at Honours level.***

Taught Assessment Regulations:

~~35.3 Where the relevant Board of Studies has approved the operation of assessment for a course on a Pass/Fail basis, Boards of Examiners may award credit for the course without awarding a mark or grade under the Common Marking Scheme. Courses whose assessment operates on a Pass/Fail basis are permitted during the pre-Honours stage of undergraduate Honours programmes, or on non-Honours undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes. Courses with Pass/Fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption.~~

### **2 Operation of Boards of Examiners**

#### **2.1 Give Conveners of Boards of Examiners (rather than Heads of College) the authority to approve any amended membership of a Board in exceptional circumstances.**

Taught Assessment Regulations:

~~39.2 In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the College and the Convener of the Board, representatives nominated and authorised by them may substitute for internal examiners.~~

#### **1.2 Vary the arrangements on quorum in relation to internal and external examiners**

Taught Assessment Regulations:

~~39. 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.~~

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

~~37. In order to be quorate, at least one External Examiner must participate in and approve the decisions of the Board of Examiners.~~

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

~~45. The Programme External Examiner approves jointly, as a member of the Board, the decisions of the Board of Examiners regarding students' programme outcomes, including award and classification. The Programme External Examiner confirms that these decisions are taken in line with University regulations and published criteria.~~

## **2     *Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming course results***

If it is satisfied that significant disruption “has occurred” it could decide to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71 (Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards), which gives Boards various powers in relation to determining course results:

71.4 At the start of the meeting to determine course outcomes, the Board of Examiners must agree on any specific elements of assessment without whose marks they cannot proceed to determine a student's result for the course. Before making such a decision, the Board should consider carefully whether there is sufficient other information already available to allow it to take a view on such elements of assessment. If it is not possible to determine a result or decision then the Board will reconvene when information is available.

71.5 Where a very high proportion of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is possible that the Board may decide it is able to determine a student's marks and grades for the course. The Board must be satisfied that, in its academic judgement, the mark and grade assigned is correct, and that the outcome will not need to be changed when further assessment results become available.

71.6 As a guide, where results for less than four-fifths (by weighting) of the assessment for a course are available for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will be able to determine a mark or grade for the course for that individual. However, if at least half of the assessment results are available, then the Board may decide it is able to confirm a pass for the student. If unable to reach a decision, even on a pass, the Board should record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.

71.7 Where less than half of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will have sufficient information to reach any decision, even on a pass, and the Board may need to record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.

71.10 Once all assessment results are available, Boards should reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to determine outstanding marks, grades, and

progression and award decisions and to review the status of any decisions where significant information is now available

**3 *Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming programme-level (progression and award) decisions***

**6.1 *Determining progression and award based on partial results – give Boards of Examiners additional powers***

If it is satisfied that significant disruption “has occurred” it could decide to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71 (Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards), which gives Boards various powers in relation to determining progression and award results:

71.9 Boards of Examiners responsible for progression and award decisions may be required to make decisions on these matters where students have incomplete or unreliable profiles of course results. This may occur where students have yet to receive final results for some courses; or where students have been awarded a pass but not a mark or grade for some courses; or where marks for some courses are not regarded as a reliable indicator of students’ ability due to disruption. In some circumstances, Boards may be in a position to address this using existing provisions of these regulations, such as the award of credit on aggregate for Honours and postgraduate taught students. Boards may also consider excluding missing or adversely affected course results when making calculations regarding credit on aggregate, progression, award, Honours degree classification, and the award of Merit and Distinction on postgraduate taught degrees. Boards may also wish to take account of the impact of disruption for students who are in the borderline for progression or award purposes.

71.10 Once all assessment results are available, Boards should reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to determine outstanding marks, grades, and progression and award decisions and to review the status of any decisions where significant information is now available.

Taught Assessment Regulation 51: Undergraduate progression: pre-honours and into honours

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

***If a profile of marks is incomplete due to industrial action, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more in the available credits with a numeric grade, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the courses affected by industrial action.***

Taught Assessment Regulation 52: Undergraduate honours assessment progression:

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

- (a) pass at least ~~60 80~~ credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more ~~for the 120 credits~~ in the available credits of study taken in the relevant honours year; and
- (c) ~~must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook.~~ Regulation 52.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.

Where an incomplete profile of marks is available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least ~~60 80~~ credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits~~ in the available credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the ~~failed~~ courses affected by industrial action.

### **3.3 Award of Ordinary undergraduate degrees – give Boards of Examiners greater flexibility to award degrees on the basis of credit on aggregate**

#### Taught Assessment Regulation 53: Award of undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees:

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

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

#### Taught Assessment Regulation 54: Undergraduate honours degree award

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

- (a) pass at least ~~60 80~~ credits at SCQF level 10 or above in their final honours year; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more for courses which return a numerical mark ~~the 120 credits of~~ final honours; and
- (c) ~~must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme.~~ Regulation 54.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.



When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least ~~60~~ 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more in the available credits ~~over the full 120 credits~~, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the ~~failed~~ courses affected by industrial action.

### **3.4 Taking account of disruption to teaching and assessment when confirming programme-level (progression and award) decisions for postgraduate taught programmes**

#### Taught Assessment Regulation 56: Postgraduate assessment progression:

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

- (a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
- ~~(b) attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression; and~~
- ~~(c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.~~ Regulation 56.c will continue to apply to professionally qualifying or PRSB programmes.

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

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

**Annex B – wider range of potential options for general variations to academic policies and regulations which are not being recommend to APRC for consideration.**

**1.3 Remove the specific requirement for PGT Boards to meet to approve progression**

Taught Assessment Regulations:

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

(a) Postgraduate Boards of Examiners are normally convened at least twice during the year for full-time students. ~~The initial meeting to decide matters relating to progression (to masters), or failure, is held at the end of the coursework component.~~ A second meeting to consider the dissertation results and the final award of degrees (or diplomas) is held soon after completion of the programme. Both meetings are equally important

**6.2 Progression requirements for undergraduate programmes – create flexibility for Boards of Examiners to waive normal minimum progression requirements:**

General Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations:

~~38. In order to progress to the next year of programme, a student must attain the following minimum number of credits:~~

- ~~• 80 credit points by the end of Year 1;~~
- ~~• 200 credit points by the end of Year 2;~~
- ~~• 360 credit points by the end of Year 3;~~
- ~~• 480 credit points by the end of Year 4;~~
- ~~• 600 credit points by the end of Year 5 for Integrated Masters.~~

**4 Timing of progression reviews for postgraduate research students – waive normal requirements**

Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulation 13: Progression review

The first progression review will take place for all students ~~within nine to 12 months of their enrolment.~~ The student must participate in a meeting and may be required to make a written submission and/or prepare an oral presentation. Progress in the subsequent years (~~at 9 to 12 months~~) is assessed until the thesis is submitted. The online progression report form must be completed.