

**e-Business Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations
Committee (APRC)
Friday 18 November – Tuesday 29 November 2022**

AGENDA

1.	<p>Welcome to new members APRC welcome four new members to the Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Aidan Brown (CSE) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate - Dr Murray Earle (CAHSS) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate - Dr Donna Murray joins APRC as the representative for the Institute for Academic Development - Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif (CMVM) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate <p>APRC extends its thanks to departing member Professor Catherine Bovill, formerly the Institute for Academic Development representative, for her service on the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee will formally welcome new members and thank departing members at the next Ordinary meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Code of Conduct</u> There may be minor changes to the draft Code approved by APRC at its 26 May 2022 meeting. These minor changes will be based on observations from Senate and the General Council. Court requested observations from both of these bodies prior to considering approval of the revised Code. Due to the timing of feedback being received from these bodies and the timing of the next Court meeting, there is insufficient time to present changes to APRC. Any minor changes will be presented to the Convener of APRC for approval, prior to the updated Code being presented to Court for final approval at their meeting on 5 December 2022.</p>	
For approval		
3.	<p>Proposed amendments to the Academic Misconduct Procedure - responses to queries For approval</p>	APRC 22/23 2A
4.	<p>Online exam arrangements for 2022/23 For approval</p> <p>This paper is closed: Disclosure of the contents would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.</p>	APRC 22/23 2B CLOSED
5.	<p>Exceptional permission to consider a Higher Degree For approval</p> <p>This paper is closed: This paper contains information relating to a process which is still to be conducted. Disclosure of the contents would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.</p>	APRC 22/23 2C CLOSED
6.	<p>Industrial action: External Examiners For approval</p>	APRC 22/23 2D

For information		
7.	Update from the Coursework Extensions & Special Circumstances Task Group & November 2022 ESC Review Update For information	APRC 22/23 2E

Comments should be directed to the paper author and Convener of APRC, Dr. Paul Norris (P.Norris@ed.ac.uk), copied to APRC Administrator, Olivia Hayes (Olivia.Hayes@ed.ac.uk).

Comments should be returned by 5pm, Tuesday 29 November 2022.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

18 – 29 November 2022

Proposed amendments to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

Response to queries raised at 22 September 2022 meeting of APRC

APRC considered proposed changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures on 22 September 2022 and asked Academic Services to provide a response to queries which had been raised at the meeting. The response is provided below.

If APRC approve the proposed amendments to the Academic Misconduct Procedures following review of the response below, the updated Academic Misconduct Procedures will be finalised and will be implemented from the date of APRC approval.

1. Record Keeping

APRC raised a query in relation to how misconduct offences and penalties are currently recorded and how this information is shared between Schools e.g. in the event that a student is enrolled on a joint degree or is taking an outside course in another School.

As the academic misconduct investigation process is devolved to Colleges, Academic Services contacted Colleges to enquire about their practice in relation to this. All three Colleges confirmed that records are held at College level and that School Academic Misconduct Officers are and will continue to be encouraged to check whether a student has a previous record. It is also understood that proven instances of academic misconduct are reported to the student's 'home-School' in the event that the misconduct takes place in relation to an outside course. It is envisaged that this information will be reiterated to School Academic Misconduct Officers by Colleges as part of an update if the proposed amendments to the procedures are approved. Additionally, the expectation is that College Academic Misconduct Officers will take responsibility for asking School Academic Misconduct Officers to share information in relation to penalties applied in a timely fashion to ensure that accurate records are held.

2. How will penalties be applied in Pass/Fail courses?

Academic Services contacted each of the Colleges to propose that in situations where the misconduct is significant enough to change a student's outcome from a Pass to a Fail, then this should be referred to a College Academic Misconduct Officer for consideration. If the extent of the misconduct is not as significant and can be dealt with by a warning or further advice, then this should be handled by the School Academic Misconduct Officer. The Colleges were in agreement with the proposal. It is envisaged that this will be communicated to School Academic Misconduct Officers by Colleges as part of an update if the proposed amendments to the procedures are approved.

3. APRC had raised a query regarding the application of penalties by School Academic Misconduct Officers in relation to the weight of the assignments that they are dealing with i.e. in courses where there is a single piece of assessment and the application of a 10 mark penalty could have significant implications for the student's grade.

The Colleges explained that they would expect School Academic Misconduct Officers to exercise their judgement in cases such as these and confirmed that School Academic Misconduct Officers

are encouraged to communicate with College Academic Misconduct Officers with regards to any cases which are complex or are likely to have significant implications for the student. It is therefore, envisaged that School Academic Misconduct Officers will continue to be encouraged to discuss such cases with the College Academic Misconduct Officers before deciding how to proceed.

4. APRC had also raised a query regarding the extent to which School Academic Misconduct Officers had been consulted in relation to the proposed changes to the procedures.

The Colleges confirmed that School Academic Misconduct Officers have been consulted in relation to the proposed changes and that the changes would be welcomed.

5. APRC had raised an additional point in relation to establishing a position in relation to providing students with an outcome after a resit diet.

It is envisaged that this issue will be addressed in further proposed changes to the procedures ahead of the 2023/24 session.

6. APRC had suggested minor amendments to the proposed changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures. The draft document (Appendix 2) has been amended accordingly and the amendments have been highlighted both within the summary table below and within the draft procedures.

Section(s)	Proposed Amendment(s)
3.2	It is proposed that a SAMO may, at their discretion, request either an electronic/in person meeting or a written statement from students before deciding how to proceed with the case. It is envisaged that this will allow the SAMO the opportunity to gather further information about the alleged misconduct.
3.3	<p>It is proposed that the remit of the School Academic Misconduct Officers is expanded to allow them to deal with a case, provided that it meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through a genuine lack of understanding by the student; and - It is a first offence; and - The SAMO believes that the case is minor in nature and can be appropriately dealt with by issuing a warning or applying a mark penalty of no more than 10 marks in accordance with the relevant Common Marking Scheme, except in cases where the component is worth 5% or less of the course mark. In these cases, the SAMO may apply a penalty of up to reducing the mark for the component to zero. <p>Currently, it is not within the SAMO's remit to apply a mark penalty. It is envisaged that this will alleviate the number of minor cases being referred to CAMOs for investigation and also allow students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.</p>
3.4	<p>The following amendment is proposed:</p> <p><i>"Cases which satisfy the criteria cited in section 3.3, the SAMO or another relevant member of academic staff will address the issue with the student in assessment feedback, by e-mail, or in a meeting within 15 working days of receiving an allegation of misconduct. The student should be issued with a warning and/or penalty, and advised to seek support from the Institute of Academic Development or other study</i></p>

	<p><i>skills/misconduct resources. A record of the breach must be maintained by the SAMO and the student should be warned about the consequences of any further misconduct allegations.”</i></p> <p>It is envisaged that this will allow the students concerned to be directed to appropriate sources of support to help ensure that they have an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.</p> <p><i>This has been amended in light of feedback from APRC which highlighted that a turnaround time for SAMO’s handling cases should be included within the procedures.</i></p>
3.5	<p>The following amendment is proposed to ensure consistency in practice and clarify any ambiguity in relation to marks applied where cases of misconduct are proven:</p> <p><i>“A face value mark that is appropriate for the work as submitted should have been determined by this point. A fair estimate mark that suitably reflects the minor misconduct or poor scholarship should then be established”.</i></p> <p>This is to ensure that there is a record of the face value mark and the mark which is suitably reflective of the student’s ability.</p>
3.7	<p>It is proposed that the SAMO must refer cases to the CAMO within 15 working days of face value marks having been released. Cases of suspected academic misconduct which are found outside of this period must also be referred for CAMO consideration within 15 working days of when the allegation arises.</p> <p>This amendment has been proposed due to reports of significant delays in referring cases to the CAMO in some cases resulting in severe delays in informing students of the outcome of the investigation. It is envisaged that this will minimise delays in referral.</p> <p>Following feedback from APRC, the wording of this section has been altered and is presented as follows:</p> <p><i>“The SAMO must refer cases to the CAMO within 15 working days of provisional marks for a cohort having being released. Any allegations which arise outside of this period must also be referred to the CAMO within 15 working days of being detected.”</i></p>
3.9	<p>The following amendment is proposed as a result of varying practice in relation to the ratification and publication of marks and it is envisaged that it will ensure consistency in practice across the University:</p> <p><i>“When a case has been referred to the SAMO or the CAMO, marks must not be ratified by Board of Examiners or published until the investigation has been concluded.”</i></p>
4.2 & 4.5	<p>References to the role of ‘Personal Tutor’ have been replaced with ‘Personal Tutor / Student Adviser’ to reflect the upcoming changes within the Student Support System.</p>
5.4(g)	<p>It is proposed that the following amendment is made to the list of penalties which are available to the CAMO:</p> <p><i>“In addition to any actions taken under sections a-f above, the CAMO may also do the following: (g) Issue a formal warning and/or ask the student to attend a mandatory meeting with the SAMO to discuss good academic practice.”</i></p>

	It is envisaged that this amendment will help students improve their practice and limit repeat offences.
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7. APRC had also raised a query in relation to the workload implications the proposed amendments would have upon School Academic Misconduct Officers. This change would not result in an increase in the number of cases SAMOs handle, because under the current process, all cases are considered by SAMOs before being passed to CAMOs. The change would be in the application of a mark penalty in some cases and reporting this outcome to the student, rather than preparing documentation and passing the case to the CAMO: this change is not likely to create a significant increase in workload.

Roshni Hume, Academic Services

October 2022



Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

Purpose of Procedure

This document sets out the University's procedures for dealing with suspected cases of academic misconduct by students or graduates of the University. These procedures apply to all types of academic misconduct including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit and personation.

The University takes very seriously any suspected incidences of academic misconduct and aims to ensure that all suspected cases are investigated efficiently and dealt with appropriately.

Scope: Mandatory Procedure

All staff and students

Contact Officer Roshni Hume Academic Policy Officer Roshni.Hume@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 30.05.19	Starts: 01.08.2019	Equality impact assessment:	Amendments: 11.12.15 02.06.16 16.06.17 05.07.18 30.05.19 24.09.20 TBC	Next Review: 2023/24

Approving authority	Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
Consultation undertaken	College Academic Misconduct Officers, College administrative staff dealing with academic misconduct, EUSA.
Section responsible for procedure maintenance & review	Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Academic Misconduct Report Form Code of Student Conduct Code of Student Conduct Guidance
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code – Assessment
Procedures superseded by this procedure	Previous versions of the Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk .
Keywords	Academic misconduct, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit, personation



Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

1. Definition of academic misconduct

- 1.1 Academic misconduct is defined by the University as the use of unfair means in any University assessment. This includes assisting a student to make use of unfair means, and doing anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment. Examples of misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, self-plagiarism (that is, submitting the same work for credit twice at the same or different institutions), collusion, falsification, cheating (including contract cheating, where a student pays for work to be written or edited by somebody else), deceit, and personation (that is, impersonating another student or allowing another person to impersonate a student in an assessment).
- 1.2 These procedures explain how the University investigates allegations of academic misconduct in relation to any work submitted for assessment. The University may also investigate cases where a student is alleged to have committed an act of academic misconduct in a piece of work which has not been submitted for assessment at the University (e.g. a conference paper or publication) under the Code of Student Conduct, where this may represent a breach of the Code:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/codeofstudentconduct.pdf
- 1.3 Staff investigating allegations of academic misconduct will make a decision based on the balance of probabilities. This means that they will be satisfied that an academic misconduct offence has been committed if they consider that, on the evidence available, it is more likely than not that an offence has been committed.
- 1.4 A School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) and a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) may nominate a deputy to hold meetings with students in cases where there is a conflict of interest or where subject specific expertise is required e.g. where there is reasonable doubt that a student's work may not be their own and further enquiry into the student's work is required in order to establish whether there is a potential case of academic misconduct.

A. Suspected academic misconduct in assessed work submitted for taught courses

2. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct in taught courses

- 2.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a student may have committed an academic misconduct offence in an assessed piece of work submitted for a taught course must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form. They will submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO), informing the relevant Course Organiser. The work under investigation will be assessed and awarded a face value mark prior to referral to the SAMO. The face value mark is the mark that the work is believed to merit based solely on the content as presented, assuming no academic misconduct has taken place.
- 2.2 The Academic Misconduct Report Form is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

3. Investigation by the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) – suspected academic misconduct in taught courses



Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

3.1 The SAMO is responsible for deciding whether there is a case to answer. The SAMO will discuss the case with the relevant Course Organiser and/or marker and can consult with the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) if necessary. If the SAMO decides that there are grounds for investigation, they will determine whether they are able to deal with the case or whether it needs to be referred to a CAMO.

3.2 ~~A SAMO (or nominee) may, at their discretion, invite a student to a preliminary meeting before deciding how to proceed with the case. The student may be accompanied at that meeting by a member of the University community, e.g. their Personal Tutor / Student Adviser or an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place. The SAMO or CAMO may not draw any inference if the student chooses not to attend the meeting. If the student is unable to attend in person, the SAMO will consult with the student and select one of the following options:~~

- ~~To conduct the meeting electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.); or~~
- ~~To offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.~~

~~A SAMO will be able to deal with the case if it meets all of the following criteria:~~

- ~~It is a first offence (the relevant College can advise where it is a potential repeat offence);~~
- ~~and~~
- ~~The SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through a genuine lack of understanding by the student; and~~
- ~~The SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty.~~

~~In cases where the SAMO is unsure about whether the criteria above apply, the SAMO should consult the CAMO, who will determine whether the SAMO can deal with the case.~~

3.3 The case will not require referral to the CAMO provided that it meets all of the following criteria:

- The SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through a genuine lack of understanding by the student; **and**
- It is a first offence (the relevant College can advise where it is a potential repeat offence); **and**
- The SAMO believes that the case is minor in nature and can be appropriately dealt with by issuing a warning or applying a mark penalty of no more than 10 marks in accordance with the relevant Common Marking Scheme.

~~In cases where the SAMO is unsure about whether the criteria above apply, the SAMO should consult the CAMO, who will determine whether the SAMO can deal with the case.~~

~~The SAMO cannot apply a mark penalty or make any alteration to marks for cases outlined above in 3.2.~~

3.4 ~~For cases which satisfy the criteria in 3.3, the SAMO or another relevant member of academic staff will address the issue with the student in assessment feedback, by email, or in a meeting within 15 working days of receiving an allegation of misconduct. The student should be issued with a warning and/or penalty, and advised to seek support from the Institute of Academic Development or other study skills/misconduct resources. A record of the breach must be maintained by the SAMO and the student should be warned about the consequences of any further misconduct allegations.~~

Commented [RH1]: It has been proposed that this wording is amended slightly to read 'The SAMO has discretion to request either an electronic/in person meeting or a written statement from students' (i.e. if they decide to hold a meeting, there is no specific requirement that it be in person by default).

Commented [RH2]: It has been proposed that this is amended to state that 'the SAMO is able to apply a penalty of no more than 10 marks, except in cases where the component is worth 5% or less of the course mark. In these cases, the SAMO may apply a penalty of up to reducing the mark for the component to zero.' It is envisaged that this would prevent large numbers of referrals to CAMO of very low-stake assignments.



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For cases identified by the SAMO as poor scholarship rather than academic misconduct, the SAMO or another relevant member of academic staff will address the issue with the student in assessment feedback, by email, or in a meeting. If appropriate, the SAMO will return the assessment to the marker to determine a mark that fairly reflects the student's own contribution.

- 3.5 A face value mark that is appropriate for the work as submitted and assuming no misconduct has occurred should be determined by this point. A fair estimate mark that is suitably reflective of the student's level of scholarship should also be established.

~~A SAMO (or nominee) may, at their discretion, invite a student to a preliminary meeting before deciding how to proceed with the case. The student may be accompanied to that meeting by a member of the University community, e.g. their Personal Tutor or an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place. The SAMO or CAMO may not draw any inference if the student chooses not to attend the meeting. If the student is unable to attend in person, the SAMO will consult with the student and select one of the following options:~~

- ~~• To conduct the meeting electronically (e.g. by video, web camera, etc.); or~~
- ~~• To offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.~~

Commented [RH3]: In response to comments received, it has been proposed that section 3.5 is reworded as follows: 'A face value mark that is appropriate for the work submitted should have been determined by this point. A fair estimate mark that suitably reflects the minor misconduct or poor scholarship should then be established.'

- 3.6 The SAMO will refer all cases which fail to meet the criteria set out at 3.32 above to the CAMO. Allegations of serious misconduct, including examination misconduct and contract cheating, will always be referred to the CAMO.

- 3.7 The SAMO must refer cases to the CAMO within 15 working days of face value marks having been released. Any allegations which arise outside of this period must also be referred to the CAMO within 15 working days of being detected.

Commented [RH4]: It is proposed that the wording is amended to state that 'The SAMO must refer cases to the CAMO within 15 working days of the provisional marks for a cohort are released.' This is to prevent a delay where a face value mark for an individual student under investigation for academic misconduct is not confirmed for some time.

- 3.8 When referring a case to the CAMO, the SAMO must complete the relevant section of the Academic Misconduct Report Form and submit this with any relevant documentation to the College Academic Misconduct Administrator.

- 3.9 When a case has been referred to the SAMO or the CAMO, marks must not be ratified by Boards of Examiners or published until the investigation has been concluded.

Commented [RH5]: Is this okay?

4. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - suspected academic misconduct in taught courses

- 4.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied. As part of this investigation, the CAMO should ascertain whether or not this is the student's first academic misconduct offence.

- 4.2 If the CAMO considers there is a case to answer, they will write to the student suspected of academic misconduct describing the alleged offence and inviting the student to respond to the evidence reported by the School. The CAMO will copy the initial correspondence to the student's Personal Tutor / [Student Adviser](#) and encourage the student to speak with their Personal Tutor / [Student Adviser](#).

- 4.3 Where the student acknowledges the offence and there is sufficient information for the CAMO to make a decision, the CAMO may decide that there is no need for a formal academic misconduct interview. In such cases the CAMO will write to the student and the SAMO, to



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inform them of the outcome and any penalty decision. The SAMO will advise the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners of the decision and any penalty to be enacted (see Section 6). If the CAMO's recommendations relate to specific staff members, the SAMO will forward each recommendation to the relevant staff member. Where appropriate, the SAMO, or another member of academic staff, will also offer to meet with the student concerned in order to provide advice on academic best practice

- 4.4 In all other cases, the CAMO will invite the student to attend an interview. The interview will be conducted by a panel chaired by the CAMO (or nominee), and including at least one representative SAMO from that College (not from the same School as the student). The CAMO will be assisted by a note-taker who will take a record of the meeting.
- 4.5 Where the CAMO conducts an interview with the student, this should be held in person wherever possible. The student may be accompanied by a member of the University community, e.g. an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or their Personal Tutor / [Student Adviser](#). If the student is unable to attend in person, the CAMO will consult with the student and select one of the following options:
 - To conduct the interview electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.); **or**
 - To offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.
- 4.6 In exceptional cases, the panel may invite an academic staff member with relevant specialist knowledge to attend the interview as an expert witness. In such cases, the expert will provide specialist knowledge to assist the panel in making a decision. However, the expert will not form part of the panel, and will not be involved in any decision making.
- 4.7 The purpose of the interview will be to enable the panel to obtain further relevant information about the alleged academic misconduct offence and to allow the student the opportunity to put forward their response to the allegation. The panel will take this information into account when deciding on any penalty to be applied.
- 4.8 Following the interview, the CAMO will send a confidential report of the meeting to the student. The student will be given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the report. The CAMO will then approve a final version of the report.
- 4.9 The CAMO, in consultation with the rest of the panel, will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 5.1 below). The CAMO will inform the student of the decision as soon as possible following the outcome of the meeting.
- 4.10 The CAMO will send a report of the meeting, the outcome, and any recommendations arising from the case, to the reporting SAMO.
- 4.11 The SAMO will forward the outcome of the case, including any penalty to be enacted, to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners (see section 6). If the CAMO's recommendations relate to specific staff members, the SAMO will forward each recommendation to the relevant staff member.
- 4.12 If an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld in relation to a student registered on a programme with Fitness to Practise requirements, further action may be taken under the relevant College Fitness to Practise Procedure. This will not involve reinvestigating the allegation of academic misconduct.



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5. **Penalty decisions available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - academic misconduct in taught courses**
- 5.1 In deciding whether or not it is appropriate to apply a penalty, and which penalty to apply, the CAMO will take into account the severity, perceived intent and benefit to the student of the academic misconduct, as well as any previous academic misconduct offences.
- 5.2 Any penalty will apply **only** to the specific work under investigation, which in itself may represent only a part of the overall course assessment. The College will retain a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript. In cases where one or more students have colluded on a piece of work, penalty decisions for each student will be made on an individual basis.
- 5.3 Where the student claims that the affected assessment was impacted by special circumstances, the CAMO will advise the student to request consideration of these by the appropriate Special Circumstances Committee. The CAMO will not take account of special circumstances in reaching a penalty decision.
- 5.4 The following options are available to the CAMO:
- (a) To decide that there is no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
 - (b) In the case of a first offence which is a result of poor scholarly practice rather than any deliberate attempt to deceive, the CAMO may decide that a mark penalty will not be appropriate;
 - (c) A penalty deducting 10, 20 or 30 marks from the face value mark will be applied. The penalty applied should be proportionate to the offence. The face value mark must be expressed as a percentage using the relevant [Common Marking Scheme](#) (e.g., 15/20 must be presented as 75% so that, for example, a 30 mark penalty would reduce the mark to 45%);
 - (d) The mark is to be reduced to zero;
 - (e) In cases where students have colluded in producing a piece of work, the face value mark may be split (not necessarily equally) between the students involved. For instance, a face value mark of 70 may be split equally between two students, so that each student receives a mark of 35;
 - (f) In serious cases or where the student has a record of having committed a number of previous academic misconduct offences, the CAMO may decide to refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline

In addition to any actions taken under sections a-f above, the CAMO may also do the following:

- (g) **Issue a formal warning and/or ask the student to attend a mandatory meeting with the SAMO to discuss good academic practice.**



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~~The CAMO may choose to issue a formal warning in addition to one or more of the above.~~

6. Application of penalties by the Board of Examiners - taught courses

- 6.1 The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty determined by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO). It cannot apply any additional penalty for the offence. If the student has submitted Special Circumstances relating to the affected assessment the Board will take into account the decision of the Special Circumstances Committee when reaching its decision, in accordance with the Special Circumstances Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances/

B. Suspected academic misconduct in work submitted for postgraduate research programmes (other than taught components, which are investigated in line with A)

7. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct in postgraduate research programmes

- 7.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a student undertaking a postgraduate research programme may have committed an academic misconduct offence (in the thesis or other work submitted for assessment and/or progression) must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form in conjunction with the relevant SAMO. They must submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the CAMO.
- 7.2 The Academic Misconduct Report Form is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

8. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) – suspected academic misconduct in postgraduate research programmes

- 8.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied.
- 8.2 If the CAMO considers that there is a case to answer, the CAMO will arrange for an academic misconduct panel comprising the CAMO and one other relevant academic member of staff (for example a relevant College Dean or a Graduate School Director or School Academic Misconduct Officer from a different School in the same College) to interview the student, following the same procedure as outlined in 4.5-4.8.
- 8.3 The CAMO, in consultation with the rest of the panel, will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 9.1 below). The CAMO will inform the student of the decision as soon as possible following the outcome of the meeting. The CAMO will provide the student's principal supervisor with an outline of the decision.
- 8.4 Except in cases referred for further consideration under the Code of Student Conduct, once the CAMO has approved the report of the meeting and decided on the penalty (if any) to be applied, the CAMO will submit a written report to the SAMO for forwarding to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. This will include details of any penalty which the Board must apply in light of the decision (see section 9 below).



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9. Penalty decisions available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) – academic misconduct in postgraduate research programmes

- 9.1 In deciding whether or not it is appropriate to apply a penalty, and which penalty to apply, the CAMO will take into account the severity, perceived intent and benefit to the student of the academic misconduct, as well as any previous academic misconduct offences.
- 9.2 Where the student claims that the affected assessment was impacted by special circumstances, the CAMO will advise the student to request consideration of these by the appropriate Special Circumstances Committee. The CAMO will not take account of special circumstances in reaching a penalty decision.
- 9.3 The following options are available to the CAMO:
- (a) Decide that there is no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
 - (b) Allow the student to edit and resubmit the work having corrected the affected section(s)*;
 - (c) Instruct the examiners to reassess the work with the affected sections removed (without offering the student the chance to edit)*;
 - (d) Deem the thesis (or dissertation, or other assessment or components of assessment) to have failed and instruct the Board of Examiners accordingly;
 - (e) In serious cases or where the student has a record of having committed a number of previous academic misconduct offences, the CAMO may decide to refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline

*Options (b) and (c) may involve the thesis no longer being fit for a specific award.

- 9.4 Where the work affected has been submitted for annual review the CAMO will submit a report, including a recommendation, to the student's annual review panel.
- 9.5 The relevant College will keep a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript.

10. Application of penalties by the Board of Examiners – postgraduate programmes

- 10.1 The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty determined by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO). It cannot apply any additional penalty for the offence. If the student has submitted Special Circumstances relating to the affected assessment the Board will take into account the decision of the Special Circumstances Committee when reaching its decision, in accordance with the Special Circumstances Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances/

11. Students funded by UK Research Councils



Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

- 11.1 Where there is evidence that a student who is receiving funding from one of the UK Research Councils may have committed an act of academic misconduct in their research, the University is required to report this to the relevant Research Council. Staff reporting suspected academic misconduct to the relevant CAMO should indicate on the Academic Misconduct Report form where a student is funded by a UK Research Council. Should the CAMO decide that there is a case to answer, they will notify the School, who will inform the relevant Research Council of the allegations against the student, and provide updates on the outcome of the case.
- 11.2 Policies and guidance relating to research integrity for students funded through UK research councils are published by UK Research and Innovation (formerly known as Research Councils UK), and can be found online at:
www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/research-integrity/

C. Suspected academic misconduct by graduates of the University

12. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct – graduates

- 12.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a graduate of the University may have committed an academic misconduct offence that could impact upon the award, or classification of award, including the award of postgraduate Merit or Distinction, must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form in conjunction with the relevant SAMO. They should submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the CAMO.

13. Investigation by College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - graduates

- 13.1 If the CAMO considers there is a case to answer, the CAMO will write to the graduate notifying them of the allegations and inviting them to attend an interview. The interview procedures for graduates are identical to the investigation and interview procedures for enrolled students (sections 4.2 to 5.4 for taught courses, and 8.2 to 9.6 for research programmes).
- 13.2 Following investigation the following options are open to the CAMO:
- (a) If there is no case to answer, or if it is concluded that academic misconduct is proven but was taken into account at the time of the original award, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. No further action will be taken;
 - (b) If the allegation is found to be proven, but is unlikely to have impacted on the award or classification of award (including the award of postgraduate Merit or Distinction) made to the graduate, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. No further action will be taken;
 - (c) If the allegation is found to be proven, and is likely to have impacted on the award or class of award made to the graduate, the CAMO will refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the



Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/codeofstudentconduct.pdf

D. Review of a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) decision

14. Request for a review by the Board of Examiners

- 14.1 If the Board of Examiners believes that there is a justifiable reason to challenge the CAMO's decision about the penalty to be applied, the Convener may request that the decision be referred for review by the CAMOs of the University's other two Colleges jointly. The relevant Convener will submit a request in writing to the relevant contact in Academic Services, outlining the reasons for challenging the decision. The Convener will write to the student to inform them that their case has been referred for review, explaining that the final course result has therefore not yet been agreed.
- 14.2 Academic Services will arrange for the case to be reviewed by the CAMOs of the other two Colleges. The original investigating CAMO will be required to submit a copy of all of the case documentation which was considered by the CAMO along with copies of the report and decision letter. Each CAMO will be sent the documentation and will be asked to come to a decision separately before meeting to discuss the case; this meeting may be held by correspondence. The CAMOs may decide to invite the student to a further academic misconduct interview, following the same procedure as outlined in section 4.5. The CAMOs may be assisted by a note-taker who will take a record of the meeting.
- 14.3 Once the meeting and any further academic misconduct interview has been held, the two reviewing CAMOs will make a joint decision about whether or not to uphold the original investigating CAMO's decision, to rescind a penalty or to apply an alternative penalty. In determining an alternative penalty, the reviewing CAMOs may only choose from those penalties listed in 5.4 (for work submitted as part of a taught course), 9.3 (for students undertaking postgraduate research programmes) and 13.2 (for graduates).
- 14.4 Academic Services will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the student in writing of the joint CAMO decision. The original investigating CAMO will be informed of the outcome of the review. The Board will be required to adhere to that decision and cannot request a further review. The Convener of the Board of Examiners will write to the student to inform them of the final course result agreed by the Board.

15. Student right of appeal

- 15.1 CAMO decisions resulting in mark penalties are ratified by Boards of Examiners. Students have a right to appeal decisions made by Boards of Examiners, including decisions affected by the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation. Students wishing to submit an academic appeal should refer to the University's Student Appeal Regulations and related guidance at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals

24-September-2020

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

18 – 29 November 2022

Industrial action: External Examiners

Description of paper

1. Following the recent national ballot, UCU have announced that three days of strike action will take place on the following dates at our University and across the higher education sector:
 - Thursday 24 November 2022
 - Friday 25 November 2022
 - Wednesday 30 November 2022
2. UCU has also announced that action short of a strike will start from Wednesday 23 November 2022, until an agreement is reached or the end of the ballot mandate on 20 April 2023. This will include 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.
3. As a University we are required to seek to minimise the disruption to our students' studies while maintaining academic standards. In that context, this paper invites the Committee to delegate to the Convener and Vice Convener to consider any requirements for temporary concessions regarding policies and regulations around External Examiners. This is consistent with the approach the Committee took during the industrial action in 2021-22.

Action requested / recommendation

4. The paper invites the Committee to delegate to the Convener and Vice Convener for the remainder of 2022-23 the authority to consider temporary concessions regarding External Examiners. Any concessions would run no longer than the end of session 2022-23.

Background and context

5. While the industrial action does not relate directly to External Examining, it appears likely that it will have an impact on some Schools' ability to secure External Examiner input. For example, one School has already informed Academic Services that, in the context of the industrial action, they are unable to appoint an External Examiner for one of their programmes.
6. The University needs to be in a position to consider appropriate steps to enable assessment and Board of Examiner activities to operate, while maintaining academic standards. This may include considering temporary concessions to policies and regulations, for example to put in place additional internal scrutiny where an External Examiner is not available for a particular course.

7. At its meeting on 31 March 2022, the Committee agreed that the Convener could approve concessions relating to the absence of External Examiners during the industrial action. During the remainder of 2021-22, the Convener (and Vice Convener, for concessions relating to School in the Convener's College) used this authority to approve six External Examiner concessions relating to industrial action – see report to Senate's 12 October 2022 meeting (paper 2P): www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/12_october_2022_-_agenda_and_papers_-_open.pdf

Discussion

8. In order that the University is able to consider potential concessions in an orderly way in a context in which it may be necessary to make decisions rapidly, we propose that in 2022-23 the Committee takes the same approach as in 2021-22, by delegating to the Convener and Vice Convener for the remainder of 2022-23 the authority to consider temporary concessions regarding External Examiners, for the policies and regulations that the Committee has responsibility for. The Convener (who is based in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) would consider concessions relating to Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and would ask the Vice Convener to consider concessions relating to CAHSS. Any concessions would run no longer than the end of session 2022-23.
9. At present, APRC has responsibility for the Taught Assessment Regulations and associated policies that include provisions for external examining for taught provision, along with all policies and regulations that relate to External Examiners for research student programmes. However, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) has formal responsibility for one particular policy relating to External Examiners - the External Examiner for Taught Programmes Policy. In order that the University is able to consider potential concessions in a rapid and orderly way, the Convener of SQAC is seeking SQAC's approval to enable APRC to consider all industrial action-related concessions relating to taught External Examiners during 2022-23, by delegating from SQAC to APRC the power to consider concessions in relation to the External Examiner for Taught Programmes Policy. Were SQAC to support this proposal then, were any proposed concessions to raise substantive quality assurance issues, the Convener / Vice Convener of APRC would consult with the Convener of the SQAC.

Resource implications

10. Delegating its powers on these matters on a time-limited basis to the Convener and Vice Convener will enable the Committee to manage decision-making more efficiently and rapidly (in a context in which some concessions may require urgent action), and will have no other resource implications.

Risk management

11. The proposed arrangements will assist the University 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

12. Not applicable

Equality & diversity

13. Not applicable

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

14. Academic Services will communicate to Colleges and Schools the arrangements for considering concessions relating to External Examiners

Author

Tom Ward

Director of Academic Services

18 November 2022

Freedom of Information *Open*

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**18 – 29 November 2022****Update from the Coursework Extension and Special Circumstances Task Group & November 2022 ESC Review Update****Description of paper**

1. The paper provides APRC with an update on the work of the Coursework Extension and Special Circumstances Task Group which has taken place in the period September – November. This is the second update from the group. The first update was received at the September meeting of APRC, which was the first since the group was formed in August 2022.
2. Appendix 1 of this paper provides APRC with the November 2022 ESC Review Update.

Action requested / recommendation

3. The update on the task group's work is provided to APRC for information.
4. The ESC Review Update is provided to APRC for information.

Background and context

5. At its May 2022 meeting, APRC approved a task group to review the coursework extension and special circumstances policies with a view to bringing policy changes to the March 2023 meeting for implementation in the 2023-23 academic year. The approved remit, deliverables and membership of the task group are provided in Appendix 2 for information.
6. APRC received its first update from the task group at the September 2022 meeting. APRC requested a more extensive update be provided at its November 2022 meeting.
7. The task group was formulated in August 2022, and two meetings have been held to date, the third meeting is scheduled for 23 November. The task group's work is front-loaded in Semester 1, with the group expected to have a clear direction of travel by January 2023. The group are aware of the significant dissatisfaction around the existing policies and there is a strong appetite for improvement among members. The group agree that the existing policies and associated workload are unsustainable across the University community and there is a strong drive for positive change in this area.
8. The task group are expected to present policy changes for approval by the end of 2022/23. The task group are aware of the relevant meetings of APRC for annual policy approvals and the group has representation from Student Systems and Student Administration to ensure any proposed changes can be considered by systems in real-time and ahead of the formulation of the finalised policy, to be considered for approval by APRC.

Discussion

9. There is high expectation among the wider University community on the forthcoming policy revisions, with a hope that the task group will deliver a policy which achieves a balanced and relational approach that equally promotes student and staff wellbeing.

10. Discussions to date have highlighted that achieving this is likely to require additional time, and wider institutional change, which goes beyond the remit and scope of the task group, may be necessary. A revised policy alone will not be sufficient to address the issues and concerns raised by both students and staff.
11. The second meeting of the task group was held in October. Ahead of the October meeting members were invited to develop 'blue-sky-thinking' ideas for a policy. Through this, members identified key elements for a revised policy, which formed the basis for discussion at the second meeting.
12. The group were encouraged to discuss ideas put forward by members, and in particular, to consider areas where compromise could be reached to enable the development of a policy which improves upon the current position.
13. Following these discussions, a draft policy has been formulated and early stage proposals are being shared with APRC for information. The early stage proposals are provided as an indication to APRC of the revisions which may be included in a final policy for APRC's consideration.
14. The following proposals are included in the draft policy that has been shared with the task group; they constitute a departure from the current practice or policies. It is reiterated that these proposals are still to be considered by the task group in the format of a draft policy, and **do not** constitute a summary of recommendations to be included in a final policy.
15. In relation to overall policies, the following points are being considered by the task group:
 - A single policy be developed which incorporates regulations on both coursework extensions and special circumstances.
 - The policy should allow for distinction between different cohorts of student. The format for achieving this is under discussion, however one proposal is that this take the format of separate sections for undergraduate and postgraduate students, with postgraduate part-time students identified as requiring additional flexibility to be reflected in policy.
 - A list of acceptable reasons is to be removed from the coursework extension and special circumstances policies, with the use of broad categories and case studies to provide students and staff with illustrative examples of the types of circumstances that constitute a valid reason for a coursework extension or special circumstances.
16. In relation to coursework extensions, the following points are being considered by the task group:
 - The default duration for coursework extensions is under discussion, the current direction of travel is towards a reduction in the time available, with a three day coursework extension currently being considered. This would address concerns about the impact that longer coursework extensions in particular have on the tight deadlines within Schools/Deaneries for marking/moderation/processing of marks and the resulting pressure on staff to complete this work in time for key dates (Exam Boards and publication of marks, for example). It would also address concerns that longer coursework extensions may have a negative impact on the time available to the student for completing their next assignments, necessitating repeat coursework extensions.
 - Repeat coursework extension requests may be a sign of more serious problems and can thus be used to identify students who require additional support. One model under consideration is that students would be able to

receive one coursework extension per semester in a light-touch process (effectively a notification to the University that they require additional time); this would address students concerns that they have otherwise no control over their workload. Repeat instances of coursework extension requests would require elevated requirements to be met, which include School involvement. For example, a student discussing their circumstances with a member of staff such as a Student Adviser before an application is progressed. The elevated requirement is intended to ensure that students receive timely, targeted support which is appropriate to their circumstances, reducing the need for repeat coursework extensions.

- The group are mindful of students with a Schedule of Adjustment and the additional support that an adjustment provides. It is suggested that the policy should acknowledge the different level of flexibility afforded to students with a Learning Adjustment. The additional time available under the Extra Time Adjustment is out with the scope of the task group. It is **not** intended that any reduction in the default coursework extension would be reflected in a reduced Extra Time Adjustment.

17. In relation to special circumstances, the following points are being considered by the task group:

- The group are mindful of students who have long-term or chronic health conditions, and it is suggested that in line with the current policy the new version should emphasise the support mechanisms which are in place to assist with management of these. This too is intended to ensure that students receive targeted support which is appropriate to their circumstances. Special circumstances would continue to be available to students impacted by sudden, unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, including a worsening of a long-term or chronic health condition.
- Special circumstances outcomes could be simplified, reducing the options available to Boards of Examiners. The policy should provide greater clarity to students on the meaning of the outcomes which may be applied, and the impact an outcome may have on their studies. Where a specific special circumstances outcome is not available this should be reflected in policy. For example, certain special circumstances outcomes may not be available in professionally accredited courses or programmes.
- There are calls for the severity of special circumstances to be determined when considering validity. This would enable Schools to provide targeted support to students. It might also support Boards of Examiners in determining the most appropriate outcome (but the practicalities of how this can be done in a transparent and equitable way would need to be discussed further). One model under discussion is that valid special circumstances would be categorised as major or minor.

18. Consideration has also been given to the relationship of proposed changes with policies which sit outside the remit of the group. The group may identify regulations for APRC to also consider and which fall outside the remit of the group though are linked to policy changes. To date, the group has identified the late penalties stipulated in Regulation 28.1 of the Taught Assessment Regulations as being interlinked with a possible reduction in the default duration of coursework extensions.

19. The policy will be accompanied by guidance for staff and students, as set out in the deliverables for the task group. The guidance will be developed once the final policy is agreed.

Resource implications

20. The potential resource implications of the task group were considered by APRC when approving the group. At present, resource implications are limited to the work of the members on the task group and members were made aware of the expected resource requirements via the terms of reference.

21. The group have received a strong steer from APRC that this is a crucial area of review, and members have been asked to prioritise this area of work.

22. The existing policies on coursework extensions and special circumstances require a high level of resource and the impact of policies on staff workload is a key driver in undertaking this review. Resource is a key focus of the work of the task group. The review of policies is being undertaken with the intention of presenting changes to policy that will reduce the resource required to support these.

23. The group are taking account of student and staff workload implications for staff throughout discussions.

Risk management

24. There are potential risks relating to resourcing and staff workload if this work is not undertaken.

25. There are potential risks relating to the student experience and support provided to students if this work is not undertaken.

26. The task group are aware of the risks associated with the review of these policies and are carefully considering the staff and student experience throughout their work.

Equality & diversity

27. Equality and diversity implications are being considered by the task group at each stage of their work. The work of the task group to date does not carry impacts for student in any particular characteristic groups.

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

28. The paper does not propose a change to policy at this stage and is for information only.

Author

Professor Sabine Rolle
Convener of CE & SC Task Group

Olivia Hayes
Academic Policy Officer
November 2022

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1:**ESC Review Update – November 2022**

As part of the ESC Review, which focuses on policy, practice and service recommendations, Lisa Dawson (Academic Registrar), Sarah McAllister (Head of Student Support Operations) and Rebecca Shade (Policy and Projects Officer) have scheduled individual school visit to talk through the recommendations and hear what is working well/not so well in relation to the ESC Service. We have now visited 11 schools with further meetings to come in December 2022 and early January 2023.

We are hearing very similar themes through the visits, including:

- The vital importance of enhanced reporting, particularly, for repeat users of coursework extensions and special circumstances to facilitate conversations.
- Reducing/controlling the number of coursework extensions applications a student can apply for in a semester or academic year. After a particular point, entering school discussion into the learning and support needs.
- Reducing the period of application to a two week window rather than the entire semester for coursework extensions.
- Reducing the coursework extension period from 7 to eg. 3 is something schools would like to see in policy but the reduction must be across the board to support a true change.
- Moving back to the truly exceptional for coursework extensions and special circumstances with discussions around evidence and self-reporting.
- Reducing our large number of broad reasons currently in the policy as part of returning to supporting the truly exceptional.
- Being strong on evidence but no having evidence as a driving factor given issues with obtaining relevant evidence.
- For some, the service providing a red/amber indicator on the severity of special circumstances linked to the available options of outcomes. There doesn't seem to be a desire for more information at Special Circumstances and Board of Examiner Committees but help to determine where action is most needed without inflating all. This would be a subjective decision but based on approved exceptional circumstances to determine a level of severity.
- Outwith ESC, a call for direct policy in relation to maximise the number of repeat years a student can undertake separate to the number of attempts at course level. This is to support the difficult conversations around trying to help every student all the time even through multiple attempts a year of programme.

- There has been discussion of the importance of linking to the new Student Support Model and the vital importance of student communication in relation to any policy changes at all levels of the institution.
- Issues remain with a single deadline for special circumstances and retrospective special circumstances, particularly, with joint degree and ratification of course and degree outcomes.
- Considering the needs of those with learning profiles as part of development of any policy and system change rather than at secondary stages.
- The introduction of escalation and flagging in 22/23 has been helpful for the majority of schools

We are also picking up on schools reflecting on their levels of assessment and linking strategic projects like the new Student Support Model and Curriculum Transformation into their discussions.

It will be important to if we do go down the direction of reducing coursework extensions for example, that we clearly define support for regular users who may like students who act as carers or who are parents. So considering particular of profiles of student who repeatedly use the service for valid reasons.

There has been positive comments about the team which is good to hear and will be a welcome boost as we go into the assessment peak which will last until mid-February.

Sarah McAllister

Appendix 2:

Task Group to review Coursework Extension and Special Circumstances Policies

Background:

The University policies on coursework extensions and special circumstances were last reviewed prior to the launch of the ESC service. The centralisation of the service has provided an opportunity to reflect on the type and volume of coursework extension and special circumstances applications received, the challenges that the existing policies present, and provides opportunities to target and develop support for students in areas they find difficult.

a. Remit:

To review the University-wide policies on coursework extensions and special circumstances for taught courses. The group will not consider extensions and special circumstances policies related to research programmes.

The task group will look to amend the existing policies to ensure they provide supportive and appropriate outcomes for students, while making an efficient and proportionate use of staff time. It is intended that the task group will take a collaborative approach to the review, working closely with colleagues in ESC to ensure that recommended policy changes can be implemented by the service. The precise remit of the group may be amended in response to the outcomes of the ESC review. The task group aims to:

- Consider the existing distinction between the coursework extensions and special circumstances processes, and determine whether this remains desirable, needs clarification, or if there is scope for integration;
- Consider and potentially refine the acceptable grounds for requesting a coursework extension or applying for special circumstances;
- Consider the approach to requiring evidence to support an application for coursework extensions or special circumstances;
- Provide clarity around the application, consideration and approval process, in relation to coursework extensions and special circumstances;
- Clarify the process for determining appropriate outcomes in the special circumstances process, including whether this should take account of the perceived severity of circumstances.
- Review the current special circumstances outcomes and consider whether there is scope to refine or clarify actions.

The task group will align its work with the outcomes delivered by the ESC Review and the Assessment and Feedback working group.

The group will not provide recommendations relating to student support required to support policy changes, though any insights gained into student behaviours or gaps in the provision of support will be shared with the relevant services.

b. Membership:

Convener & Chair. To be nominated at the first meeting.

3 x Representative each from CMVM and CSE. 4 x Representative from CAHSS¹. College representatives will comprise of one College representative, one School academic representative such as a Director of Teaching or Convener of a Board of Examiners, and one School professional services representative such as a teaching administration or student support staff member.

Colleges are asked to consider breadth of student type and experience in nominating their representatives.

1 x Representative for Postgraduate Research as determined by the Doctoral College

1 x Representatives from Academic Services (also acting as secretary to the group)

2 x Representatives from Student Administration, including a representative from ESC and Student Systems

2 x Representatives from Support Services, for instance, colleagues from SDS or IAD

3 x Student Representatives ,including one representative from The Advice Place and two representatives from the Students' Association, comprising of one elected member and one permanent staff member.

c. Methodology:

4 task group meetings and consideration of e-business via a dedicated Microsoft Teams site.

d. Deliverables

- Proposed revisions to University policy and regulations relating to coursework extensions
- Proposed revisions University policy and regulations relating to special circumstances
- New guidance for students and staff regarding coursework extensions to be formulated following any revisions to policy and regulation as appropriate.
- New guidance for students and staff regarding special circumstances to be formulated following any revisions to policy and regulation as appropriate.

¹ CAHSS have four College representatives on the group to reflect the higher student numbers within this College.

The task group is to reflect on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion from an early stage in formulating any recommended revisions to the coursework extension and special circumstances policies.

e. Timelines:

The task group will meet approximately four times over the course of the 2022-23 academic year.

The first meeting will take place in early August, following the release of the ESC Review outcomes. A schedule for further meetings will be agreed at the first meeting of the task group. The task group's work is expected to be front-loaded in Semester 1, with the group expected to have a clear direction of travel by January 2023 and in time for any systems changes to be made for the following year.

A final report is to be prepared for the March 2023 meeting of APRC for implementation in the 2023-24 Academic Year.