

Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
Online meeting via Teams
Tuesday 8 August 2023, 11:00-12:30pm

AGENDA

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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | |
| 2. | Minutes of previous meetings For approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 June 2023 (enclosed) • 31 July 2023 (enclosed) | APRC 23/24 1A |
| 3. | Update on concessions related to industrial action – Verbal update To note | |
| For approval | | |
| 4. | Redeeming failure or missing credit for taught courses with delayed results For approval | APRC 23/24 1B |
| 5. | Any Other Business | |

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

8 August 2023

APRC Minutes

Description of paper

1. The paper provides the minutes of the 30 June meeting and the 31 July meeting (to follow).

Action requested / recommendation

2. For approval.

Resource implications

4. None.

Risk management

5. Not applicable.

Equality & diversity

6. Not applicable.

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

7. APRC minutes are published on the APRC website: [Agendas, papers and minutes](#)

Author

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Academic Policy Officer
01 August 2023

Freedom of Information

Open paper

Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

**Online meeting via Teams
Friday 30 June, 12:00-1:30pm**

Unconfirmed minute

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| <p>Present: Dr Aidan Brown Dr Adam Bunni Professor Jeremy Crang Dr Murray Earle Professor Patrick Hadoke (Vice-Convenor) Clair Halliday Isabel Lavers Professor Antony Maciocia Dr Paul Norris (Convenor) Callum Paterson</p> <p>Rachael Quirk Professor Tim Stratford Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif Stephen Warrington</p> <p>Substitute members present: Lauren Byrne Paula Jezierska Escobar Dr Philip Larkman Dr Neil Lent Dr Kim Picozzi</p> <p>In attendance: Lucy Evans Professor Colm Harmon Olivia Hayes (Minutes)</p> <p>Apologies: Professor Jamie Davies Carl Harper Sarah McAllister Dr Donna Murray</p> <p>Alexandra Laidlaw Kirsty Woomble Dr Deborah Shaw</p> | <p>Elected member of Senate Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services Dean of Students (CAHSS) Elected member of Senate Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) Elected member of Senate Dean of Student Experience (CSE)</p> <p>Vice-President Welfare, Students' Association Extensions and Special Circumstances Service Manager Director of Teaching, Biomedical Teaching Organisation University Learning and Teaching (IAD) Postgraduate Director of Teaching & Senior Tutor – Edinburgh Medical School</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Students Vice-Principal, Students Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services</p> <p>Dean of Taught Education (CMVM) Vice President Education, Students' Association Head of Student Support Operations, Registry Services Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic Development Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS) Dean of Students (CMVM)</p> |
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| 1. | <p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Convener opened the meeting and extended his thanks to the Committee and substitute members for attending the additional meeting of APRC to consider the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.</p> <p>Thanks were extended to the presenters who were in attendance.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Update on concessions related to industrial action – Verbal update</p> <p>To note</p> <p>There were no concessions on industrial action to report to the Committee since the last meeting of APRC.</p> <p>The Convener confirmed that he has taken forward the Committee’s request for information on the impact of the temporary variations across a range of outcomes and characteristics. He has discussed with the Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) and Interim Head of Academic Services. This work would be led by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) to provide APRC with updates as this develops.</p> |
| For discussion | |
| 3. | <p>Exceptional Circumstances Policy – ARPC 22/23 12A</p> <p>Ahead of introduction of this item, the Convener confirmed that the Committee is receiving the Exceptional Circumstances Policy for discussion, ahead of receiving the Policy for approval at a future meeting.</p> <p>Ms Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary, Students and Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students introduced the item. They noted that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the current Special Circumstances policy and processes attached to this. A significant and comprehensive review of the current system has taken place, comprising three strands of work: an APRC task group responsible for reviewing the Special Circumstances policy; an ESC review set up by the Deputy Secretary, Students in response to the significant dissatisfaction surrounding the policy; and a service level review of ESC which reviewed systems and communications. Ms Evans noted her thanks to the colleagues who oversaw and supported these three strands of work. In addition, benchmarking work has been undertaken to establish sector norms.</p> <p>The Exceptional Circumstances Policy presented to the Committee is based on feedback received via the three strands of review, and on sector norms established via benchmarking. The existing policy has evolved in a way which is increasingly unworkable. This is a complex area and is challenging to achieve a policy which is acceptable to all stakeholders and which covers every eventuality. However, the policy presented aims to improve on the current position.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the paper. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a very challenging area and there is widespread dissatisfaction with the current approach to special circumstances. The Committee was broadly supportive of the direction of travel and noted that the Exceptional Circumstances Policy presents an improvement on the current position. A new policy is welcomed by Schools who have struggled to support the previous policy. The Committee requested that clarification on specific concerns and areas raised be provided when the policy is returned for approval. • Student representation on the Committee expressed their frustration at not having an opportunity for co-production of the policy nor an opportunity to receive a draft and feed comments in ahead of this being presented to APRC. There is concern that the new policy is more punitive than the previous Special Circumstances policy. |

- Significant systems changes are required to support the new policy with at least nine system and process changes identified to date. The ESC Service leads are considering what specific modifications can be made for shorter term implementation. The Head of Student Support Operations, Registry Services is undertaking work to establish what changes are required and would update key staff once this detail is available. A concern was raised that the approval of a new policy ahead of systems being adequately equipped will exacerbate existing challenges.
- Further consideration to the proposal to allow three (3) self-certified exceptional circumstances was requested. Self-certified applications are permitted in the specific circumstances outlined in the policy and will be treated as equal to an application supported by evidence.
There is concern regarding the equity of this approach having a disproportionate impact on students with a higher volume of assessments and it was suggested that the policy consider framing self-certificated applications in terms of events that affect numerous assessments.
- A clarification was sought on the proposal to permit extensions of three (3) calendar days and in particular how this would interact with deadlines falling on a weekend. A task group member highlighted that following extensive discussion the group reached a compromise of four (4) calendar days and expressed a desire to see this reflected in the policy. The deadlines set for coursework will vary depending on the course and format of assessment. The three (3) day extension allowed in the policy will not be sufficient for specific student cohorts; for example, those working as medical professionals which will force those students to seek longer extensions via the policy.
A concern was raised regarding the use of longer extensions as approved by expedited School Exceptional Circumstances Committees and ensuring a consistent student experience.
It was suggested that consideration be given to retaining a seven (7) day extension for part-time and online learners.
In response to a question, Ms Evans confirmed that the policy will define the duration of a coursework extension, a decision taken in response to the significant concerns regarding consistency of the student experience where extensions of varying length are available.
- There is concern regarding the evidence requirements in the policy, it was felt that some groups of students may find it harder than others to provide the required evidence. Specific points raised include the requirement for parents to provide evidence of their child where they do not share a surname; the feasibility of requesting an independent verification of caring responsibilities; a need for a defined employee policy for students to reference when seeking to provide evidence of a bereavement; the cost incurred by students when obtaining medical evidence; the requirement for certified translation services and potential costs incurred in having documents translated; the absence of reference to family members being able to provide verification in specific circumstances; and the absence of specific reference to evidence provided by mental health professionals.
- There is concern that providing a defined list of extenuating circumstances in the policy does not support students whose circumstances are exceptional but sit outside those listed.
The policy does not explicitly list mental health difficulties as a valid reason, this was raised as a concern by the ESC Service who are required to make a judgement on circumstances and who are not specialist mental health professionals. A present, a very high volume of applications are submitted under the short-term mental health category.
The policy does not recognise work commitments as a valid reason for full-time students and this is a challenging area for the University. The current approach to

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| | <p>students working is not realistic, and Professor Harmon agreed that further discussion around students working and the University's systems evolving to support this are required. These discussions will not be had in time for the policy to be presented for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee expressed concern that Widening Participation, student carers and care-experienced students are not adequately supported by current systems, and these students fall outside the boundaries of support provided by the policy and Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). Ms Evans agreed that support for these student groups requires consideration; however, the Exceptional Circumstances Policy is not the best means to provide this and does not adequately address the gap experienced by these students. Ms Evans agreed that work is required and hopes to be able to provide the Committee with an update on plans in this area when presenting the policy for approval. • Robust, timely and clear communications to staff and students will be required to support the roll out of the policy. There is a need for staff training and briefings targeted at specific staff including student advisors and academics ahead of the new academic year. • The feedback on comparable policies and the student experience at institutions used in benchmarking was raised. Ms Evans confirmed that this area is a challenge across the sector and that no one institution has 'got it right'. In undertaking benchmarking, experience at other institutions and networks have been used to help formulate the policy. • A request that Colleges be given time to consult with Schools to ensure that any specific challenges are raised ahead of the final policy being received for approval. <p>In addition to the comments raised, a number of drafting points were raised by the Committee. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appeals statement included in the policy is incorrect. • A request for clarification of how the policy applies to Postgraduate Research students who undertake taught components is required. • Clarification of the definitions included in the policy was requested • Clarification of how the policy interacts with the support provided by DLSS was requested. In particular, the example of where a student does not declare their circumstances to DLSS where DLSS would normally provide support. Additionally, if a student has provided evidence to DLSS of their circumstances, do they need to provide evidence again if they experience a worsening of their condition or symptoms? • A request for clarification around possible outcomes, including deferral to next diet. • A request for case studies to support the implementation of the policy <p>The Convener thanked the Committee for their comments and suggested that discussions to address the clarifications and concerns raised by student representatives be taken outside the meeting.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Convenor provided an update on upcoming meetings of APRC. He confirmed that the 6 July meeting would be cancelled; it is likely that the 20 July meeting will also be cancelled and the Committee would receive an update on this next week. The Committee will reconvene on 31 July to receive the Exceptional Circumstances policy for approval. The Committee will receive the policy one week ahead of the 31 July meeting. A further meeting of APRC has been scheduled for 8 August.</p> |

Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

**Online meeting via Teams
Monday 31 July 11-12:30pm**

Unconfirmed minute

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| <p>Present: Dr Aidan Brown Dr Adam Bunni Professor Jamie Davies Dr Murray Earle Professor Patrick Hadoke (Vice-Convenor) Clair Halliday Carl Harper Karen Howie</p> <p>Sarah McAllister Dr Donna Murray</p> <p>Dr Paul Norris (Convenor) Callum Paterson</p> <p>Rachael Quirk Professor Tim Stratford Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif Stephen Warrington Kirsty Woomble</p> <p>Substitute members present: Isabel Lavers Katy McPhail Dr Paul Skehel</p> <p>In attendance: Lauren Byrne Lucy Evans Professor Colm Harmon Olivia Hayes (Minutes)</p> <p>Apologies: Professor Jeremy Crang Alexandra Laidlaw Professor Antony Maciocia Dr Deborah Shaw</p> | <p>Elected member of Senate Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services Dean of Taught Education (CMVM) Elected member of Senate Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Vice President Education, Students' Association Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services Head of Student Support Operations, Registry Services Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic Development Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) Elected member of Senate Dean of Student Experience (CSE) Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Deputy Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Senior Tutor, Deanery of Biomedical Sciences</p> <p>Vice-President Welfare, Students' Association Deputy Secretary, Students Vice-Principal, Students Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services</p> <p>Dean of Students (CAHSS) Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) Dean of Students (CMVM)</p> |
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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies |
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| | <p>The Convener opened the meeting and extended his thanks to the Committee and substitute members for attending the additional meeting of APRC to consider the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.</p> <p>Thanks were extended to the presenters who were in attendance.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Minutes of previous meetings For approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 May 2023 (enclosed) - APRC 22/23 13A – CLOSED • 9 June 2023 (enclosed) - APRC 22/23 13B • 23 June 2023 (enclosed) - APRC 22/23 13C – CLOSED <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the 25 May, 9 June and 23 June meetings as presented and no objections were raised. The minutes of the 30 June meeting were not included with the papers for the 31 July meeting.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Update on concessions related to industrial action – Verbal update To note</p> <p>The Committee have received all concessions relating to industrial action since the last meeting of APRC. There are currently seven individual student concessions with the Committee for comment and members were reminded of the 5pm, 31 July deadline for responses.</p> |
| For approval | |
| 4. | <p>Exceptional Circumstances Policy – ARPC 22/23 13A For approval</p> <p>The Convener outlined the process for considering this item for approval during the meeting. The Convener noted that following discussion of the item there would be an opportunity for discussion without paper authors present and ahead of a final decision being taken on the policy.</p> <p>Ahead of introducing this item, Professor Colm Harmon extended his thanks to Paul Norris for his Convenorship of the Committee.</p> <p>Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students and Ms Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary, Students introduced the item. They extended their thanks to the Committee for the discussion at the 30 June meeting and noted there is limited scope for substantial revision to the policy. However they have made some changes in response to some comments made by the Committee.</p> <p>The current system is creating a very challenging learning and teaching environment and there is a widespread view that change is needed. These changes are proposed with good intention. Professor Harmon and Ms Evans have met with the Students' Association and committed to addressing challenges experienced by specific cohorts of students, for example disabled and widening participation students, and which are not appropriately managed via the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.</p> <p>They noted that, while the revised policy will not cover every single student and every eventuality, it is intended to provide support to the majority of students. They committed to continuing work to improve service and address the gaps in support for specific cohorts of students covered under the Equality Act and Ms Evans outlined work that is already underway with colleagues across the University.</p> |

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

- There is agreement among the Committee that the existing policy presents significant challenges which is difficult to manage across the University. The Committee welcomed some of the changes made in response to feedback from the previous meeting.
- Student representation on the Committee expressed concern regarding the policy and noted that, whilst they understand it is not the intention, the revised policy could appear punitive and would negatively affect the student experience. They expressed a concern that students do not see the policy as an avenue to resolve their issues and noted that introducing a new policy which they believe to be not fit for purpose in the broader context of a new Student Support Model, Marking and Assessment Boycott would further exacerbate current student issues.

They noted that an open letter signed by 49 representatives of the student body provides commentary on the concerns and has been shared with the Committee.

Further time and engagement with the paper authors and the Committee on this policy is required to address the concerns raised.

Student representatives on the Committee highlighted the following specific areas as requiring further consideration: days available for an extension; minor illnesses are not included as a valid reason and this may disproportionately affect particular student groups; self-certification is not available for examinations; clarification is required on evidence provided by Student Advisors; the requirement for certified translations and the cost associated with these; the requirement to obtain medical evidence and the cost and administrative challenges in getting an appointment with a GP; concerns regarding the suitability of requesting evidence in relation to a close family illness; the ability for student parents to access a GP and evidence for children suffering from common illnesses; ability for students to access evidence employed in particular industries or unstable gig-economy positions; clarification is required on the evidence that can be provided by family or friends; the Sports Union requested clarification is required on how the revised policy interacts with the Elite Athlete policy.

There is an overarching concern that a number of exceptions will be required to allow students to obtain support under this policy.

- College representatives on the Committee noted that Schools are broadly supportive of the new policy and support the general direction of travel whilst also sharing the concerns raised by the Committee regarding systems, workload and communications.
- There are systems changes required to support the implementation of a new policy for the start of the new academic year. It is likely that an off-system solution will be required, such as SharePoint, to support the implementation of the new policy until the system changes required are developed and user testing is undertaken. A clear timetable and scoping document is required to understand the systems changes and timelines involved in these.
- Additional time is required to give adequate consideration to the challenges raised and for systems to be developed to support the implementation of a new policy. There is a concern regarding the introduction of a new policy and the proximity to the start of the new academic year with assessments likely to already be confirmed for the year ahead.
- There are concerns regarding the increased workload required across a number of University departments to support the implementation of a new policy and any associated changes to information, processes or ways of working to support this. This includes, but is not limited to staff in Teaching Offices, Student Advisors, Cohort Leads, the ESC Service, Appeals and Complaints case workers, and the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). Particular concern was raised regarding the impact on Student Advisors and the Disability Learning and Support Service.
- The communication campaign required to support the implementation of a new policy requires strengthening. Students are currently on vacation leave and focussed on matters relating to the Marking and Assessment Boycott and progression. Many students will be expecting to access support in line with previous years in the new academic year

and significant work is required to engage with the student population and educate them on a new policy and the processes likely to be associated with implementation of this. Should a new policy be approved, outreach work to target specific student groups which have relied on existing policies for support should be undertaken with a degree of leniency during the implementation period.

- The Committee reflected on the risk of maintaining the status quo as an alternative to approving a new policy where systems and processes are not yet ready to support implementation. The Committee considered the widespread and significant concern raised with the existing policy and known associated challenges in contrast with the concerns raised regarding the new policy, the unknown challenges this may present and the preparedness of systems and services to support the implementation of this.
- The Committee acknowledged the risk that if a new policy is not approved and the status quo remains, Schools and Course Organisers may take individual action to address challenges experienced under the existing system, such as limiting or not permitting extensions for particular courses or assessments.
- The Curriculum Transformation project is currently underway and this is expected to affect assessment design. Future changes to policies relating to assessment are likely to be required to respond to any changes arising from Curriculum Transformation and the pedagogical implications of this. It was highlighted the divergence of student experience across programmes with one example given where students in a particular programme having 52 assessments compared with 10 assessments over the course of a year.
- Concerns were raised regarding the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) prepared alongside the new policy. The EqIA does not provide statistics to allow the Committee to adequately assess the impact or accessibility of the new policy and associated processes on specific student groups, including disabled students. Inadequate consideration of the EqIA presents a risk to the University and where students with protected characteristics are not considered. A member shared a series of links to additional information on good practice for supporting disabled students and which are not featured in the policy.
- There were a series of agreements reached within the CE & SC Task Group and which some members noted they would like to see considered for future implementation. These included a revision to the wording of special circumstances outcomes; a sliding scale of late penalties; a justification for why an extension of three days instead of four days; and that self-certification to covering a limited time period, rather than a single day.
- The duration of extension was highlighted as inappropriate for students on a part-time online programme. These students require extensions of seven days to support the format and specific student type.

In addition to the comments raised, a small number of drafting points were raised by the Committee. These included:

- The use of 'case-by-case' in the policy requires further consideration.
- Additional signposting information is required in section 7 of the policy.

The Convener invited the paper authors to respond to the comments raised and they made the following points in response:

- A strong commitment to address the gaps in support for specific student groups has been made and there is work underway with individual colleagues to progress this work.
- The paper authors noted the concerns raised regarding workload, systems and communications and reiterated their commitment to addressing these.
- The policy as proposed has the support of the Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools have also expressed their support for the policy as presented.
- The policy brings the University into closer alignment with the approach taken across the sector but maintains a more generous approach than is offered by many institutions across the UK.

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| | <p>Professor Harmon and Ms Evans left the meeting at the conclusion of the general discussion and the Convener agreed to update them once the Committee reached a decision on this item.</p> <p>In final discussion, the following points were raised::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an acknowledgement that policies at other institutions within the UK are more conservative than the policy currently in place at Edinburgh; however, the systems and processes are likely already in place to support these policies. • The challenges associated with the existing policy are known and are a less daunting alternative to the points raised with regard to the new policy. • There is insufficient time to adequately address the concerns relating to operational and systems readiness, student communications and preparedness and significant administrative workload required to support implementation of a new policy for the start of the new academic year. • There is general support for the policy to return to the Committee to consider for implementation in 2024. • There is strong support to continue any work towards closing the gap for specific student groups including disabled and widening participation students. • The Committee normally reaches decisions by consensus and would not routinely vote on items unless a clear consensus cannot be reached. <p>In summing up the Convener noted that there is support among members of the Committee for the general direction of travel of the policy, and reservations among others regarding the policy as presented. There was support among some members for introduction of the policy in 2023 however those members in favour agreed that a decision by consensus was preferable and therefore a vote would not be necessary unless a clear consensus could not be reached. There is consensus across the Committee that the concerns raised regarding the operational elements relating to systems, workload and communications required to support implementation are significant and therefore the Committee agreed that they are not in a position to approve the policy for implementation in 2023.</p> <p>The Committee did not approve the policy as presented for implementation in September 2023 and no objections to this decision were raised.</p> <p>Action: The Convener agreed to inform the paper authors of the decision taken by the Committee following the conclusion of the meeting.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Student Discipline Committee Membership – APRC 22/23 13B For approval</p> <p>The Convener, Dr Paul Norris invited the Committee to approve this item as presented.</p> <p>The Committee approved the paper and updated membership as presented and no were objections raised.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Thanks to departing members Thanks and best wishes were extended to Sarah McAllister for her service on the Committee. The Student Administration representative on APRC would be finalised in due course.</p> <p>Thanks and best wishes were extended to Dr Paul Norris for his service on the Committee and special thanks were extended for his service as Convener of APRC. Dr Norris reflected on his experience on the Committee and extended his thanks to members for their support during his term as Convener.</p> |

Date of the next meeting

The first meeting of the 2023/24 Academic Year will take place on Tuesday 8 August. Members were invited to contact Olivia Hayes if they have any questions or have not received the invitation.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**8 August 2023****Redeeming failure or missing credit for taught courses with delayed results****Description of paper**

1. Some undergraduate students continuing their studies in 2023/24 are likely to be found to have failed courses from 2022/23, where results have been delayed due to the marking and assessment boycott. There will also be students who have been granted null sits due to Special Circumstances, and therefore may be offered reassessment on a first attempt basis. This paper presents options regarding redemption of failure or missing assessment where this has occurred. The paper proposes that Schools be permitted to exercise discretion over where these options are used, based on what is considered academically appropriate.

Action requested / recommendation

2. APRC is asked to **endorse** the approach to resit assessment proposed in section 10 of the paper. APRC is asked to **approve** the proposed application of an existing variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 13 set out in section 15 of the paper.

Background and context

3. Some students have been permitted to continue their studies in the 23/24 session on a provisional basis where it has not been possible to make a final progression decision for them due to the impact of the marking and assessment boycott. These students have been informed that, where outstanding results become available subsequently, it may be necessary for them to complete further assessment in order to redeem any failure in courses.
4. In many cases, any failed courses or missing credit due to the impact of Special Circumstances may be addressed fully by the existing variations to regulations relating to the award of credit on aggregate. These variations will continue to apply to courses from 2022/23, whenever the results for these become available, so Boards should make use of them as far as possible. The existing variations are as follows:
 - **Honours level:** students are eligible for up to 60 credits on aggregate (where at least 20 credits have been affected by the MAB); where results are returned as fails, they will either be awarded credit on aggregate, or, where this is not possible, the student will no longer be eligible for the Honours degree; the exception to this would be where resits for professional purposes are offered.
 - **Pre-Honours level:** students are eligible for up to 40 credits on aggregate for courses affected by the MAB; this will normally only apply to optional courses, although Boards of Examiners have discretion to award credit on aggregate for core and compulsory courses.
 - **Ordinary and General degrees:** students are eligible for up to 40 credits on aggregate for courses affected by the MAB.

5. However, there will be circumstances where failed or missing courses cannot be addressed by the award of credit on aggregate. In these situations, it will be necessary to use another method to redeem failure. These include:
 - Pre-Honours student has failed core or compulsory courses for which a Board of Examiners is not willing to award credit on aggregate;
 - Pre-Honours student has failed too many courses to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate for failed courses;
 - Honours student has failed a course which is subject to resits for professional purposes;
 - Honours student who had special circumstances upheld and was awarded a null sit for a MAB affected course (where this has not been addressed by credit on aggregate);
 - Ordinary or General degree student has failed too many courses to be awarded credit on aggregate; this includes situations where an Honours student has failed too many courses to be awarded credit on aggregate for the Honours degree and is therefore transferred to an Ordinary or General degree.

Discussion

6. In many cases, it is likely that reassessment- either using the standard method of assessment, or an alternative approach- may be necessary in order to ensure that students have met relevant learning outcomes, especially where professional or accrediting body requirements apply. However, during discussions with Heads of College and Heads of School, some Heads of School expressed a reluctance to ask students to undertake full resit assessment (e.g. in the form of examinations) for failed courses affected by the marking and assessment boycott. On this basis, Academic Services, Colleges, and Schools have considered what alternatives may be available to avoid the need for full reassessment for failed courses, where this is regarded as appropriate by Schools.

Resit assessment

7. As above, it is likely that the default approach to redeeming failure will remain the use of resit assessment in some form. As normal, the regulations allow Boards of Examiners to set resit assessments which use a different method from the original method of assessment. This means that it is possible for Boards to use other methods of assessment to reassess learning outcomes previously assessed via in-person exams. Boards are also entitled to use resubmission of failed work (with students being provided with feedback to support amendment of their work) as a form of reassessment, as opposed to requiring submission of entirely new work.
8. However, it must be noted that students will continue to be required to undertake assessment for their new courses during 23/24. This means that it will be challenging to schedule resit assessments in a way that avoids unreasonable bunching or build-up of assessments for individual students. In some ways, therefore, the use of the formal assessment diets for resit assessment (whether in-person exams, online exams, or other forms of assessment) may be most

appropriate. Alternatively, it may be reasonable to issue other types of assessment as early as possible, but allow an unusually long period for students to complete them, possibly spanning both Semesters.

9. The timing of resit assessment will naturally be contingent on when results become available, i.e. following the return of marks and their ratification by Boards of Examiners. Schools have indicated that they intend to hold Boards of Examiners in October, in the event that results become available following the end of the currently-scheduled marking boycott at the end of September. This would potentially allow the scheduling of resit assessments during the December 2023 diet. However, given the compressed nature of the Semester 1 diet, it may be more appropriate for resits for Semester 2 courses to take place in the Semester 2 diet as normal, with resitting students taking the same assessment as the current cohort of students (provided the course is one that runs every year).
10. In the event that results are not available as early as October, it is likely that reassessment will need to take place during Semester 2 (including the Semester 2 assessment diet). In any case, APRC are asked to endorse a proposal that Schools should be given guidance along the following lines:
 - Boards of Examiners have their usual discretion to determine the appropriate method of assessment to be used for resit assessment; this may be different from the method used for the original assessment;
 - When setting requirements for resit assessment, Boards of Examiners must ensure that students have sufficient time to prepare for and complete the assessment, and must consider how the timing of resit assessment sits alongside students' assessments for courses they are taking in their current year of study (including any other resits they may have).

Credit awarded based on passes in related courses at the next level

11. Bearing in mind the concerns raised by Heads of School about the burden for students of undertaking resit assessment for previous courses alongside their courses during 23/24 (noting that this is common for some students in any given year), Schools asked for consideration of any potential alternatives to full resit assessment.
12. The alternative which has been explored with Schools is that students could be awarded credit for a failed course from the previous year (including courses subject to null sits), once they have been awarded a pass for a related course or courses at the next level of study, for example a course for which the failed course was a pre-requisite. This may or may not involve some amendment to teaching and assessment on the courses running in 23/24 to take account of the learning outcomes from the previous courses. Schools would determine which courses would lead to the award of credit for specific courses from the previous year. Where credit was awarded for a previously-failed course, this would be recorded as a "pass", i.e. with no numerical course result. Alternatively, credit could be awarded for previously-failed courses, where a student has passed a

specified volume of credit at the next level, e.g. their full 120 credits in the following year.

13. Although it is unlikely to be the case that any subsequent course would fully encompass the learning outcomes of the earlier course, the primary function of progression at pre-Honours level and into Honours is to determine a student's fitness to undertake the next level of study. It is fair to suggest, therefore, that if a student has passed a related course at the next level, they have demonstrated their fitness to study at that level.
14. It may be advisable that Boards of Examiners discuss with Boards of Studies where they wish to take this approach to redeeming failure in courses affected by the marking and assessment boycott, especially with regard to determining which courses may bestow passes for which earlier courses.
15. At its 23 March 2023 meeting, APRC approved a variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 13, allowing Boards of Examiners to make changes to components of assessment for courses after the course has started, without the approval of the College, or consultation with students or External Examiners. **APRC is requested to approve the use of this existing variation to the regulation in the following circumstances:**
 - Where a course from the 2022/23 session has results missing due to the marking and assessment boycott and these become available subsequently, Boards of Examiners may choose to award a pass for that course (without a numerical mark) to a student who was found to have failed the course at the first attempt (including any student awarded a null sit for the course), where the student has passed a specified course or courses at the next level of study;
 - Schools must publish to students information about which courses taken in 2023/24 will lead to the award of credit for which courses from the previous year;
 - Boards of Examiners retain the right, as normal, to require students to undertake resit assessment for previous courses, where they deem this appropriate for academic reasons.
16. There will be circumstances where a Board of Examiners elects to take this approach, but a student fails the subsequent course, and cannot therefore be awarded a pass for the previously failed course. For example:
 - Y2 student fails the relevant course which would have provided them with a pass for a related Y1 course; this student would be offered a resit for the failed Y2 course as normal; they may also be offered a resit for the failed Y1 course, at the Board of Examiners discretion;
 - Y3 student fails the relevant course which would have provided them with a pass for a related Y2 course; the student would not normally be offered a resit for the Y3 course, and it may not be seen as appropriate to award credit for the failed Y2 course based on credit awarded on aggregate for

the failed Y3 course; the student may therefore be required to resit for the Y2 course.

Resource implications

17. Setting and marking resit assessment is the default approach to redeeming failure in the University. It requires significant resource commitment from academic and professional services staff, but the proposals in the paper do not increase this.
18. The proposals in section 15 of the paper would require work from Boards of Examiners and potentially Boards of Studies to consider and agree where there are appropriate connections between courses at different levels. Staff in teaching offices would also require to understand and apply any decisions made in the student record, including changing course outcomes to Pass/Fail. While this would be offset by the reduction in overall workload that would have been associated with running full resit assessment for these courses, it must be recognised that this work would potentially be distributed differently from the work associated with resit assessment. It is also worth noting that this work is likely to be required at a point when staff are busy with delivering teaching and assessment for 2023/24 courses.

Risk management

19. As explained in section 13 of the paper, the proposals in section 15 involve minimal risk to academic standards, since they are contingent upon students demonstrating their academic capabilities by passing more demanding courses than the courses they failed previously.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

20. No direct implications.

Equality & diversity

21. No specific implications for equality and diversity.

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

22. Academic Services and Colleges will work with colleagues in Schools to understand their requirements for implementing any approaches they determine to redeeming failure, and provide suitable guidance to support this. This will be published ahead of the start of the 2023/24 academic session.

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