

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 16 March 2017
in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017** Enclosed
2. **Matters Arising**
 - a) **Electronic Business – Assessment Requirements for ExEDE
Joint PhD Candidates (Aarhus)**

For Discussion
3. **Assessment and Progression Tools (APT) Steering Group: Timing of
Exam Board for Semester 1 Courses** CSPC 16/17 4 A
4. **Coursework Extensions Regulations and Special Circumstances
Policy** CSPC 16/17 4 B
5. **Rounding and Borderlines in the Taught Assessment Regulations** CSPC 16/17 4 C
6. **Resits and Academic Failure Task Group: Final Report** CSPC 16/17 4 D
7. **Moderation Policy Review – update and recommendations** CSPC 16/17 4 E
8. **Discontinuation of postgraduate research supervision** CSPC 16/17 4 F
- For information and formal business**
9. **Senate Committee Planning 2017/18** CSPC 16/17 3G
10. **Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching
and student experience matters** CSPC 16/17 3 H
11. **Knowledge Strategy Committee Report** CSPC 16/17 3 I
12. **Any Other Business**

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, 9 March 2017

H/02/27/02
CSPC: 26.01.17

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)
held on Thursday 26 January 2017 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSCE)
Dr Theresa McKinven	Head of PG Section (CAHSS)
Ms Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Helen Cameron	Director, Centre for Medical Education (CMVM)
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)
Mr Patrick Garratt	Vice President Academic Affairs, EUSA
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations

In attendance:

Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Ms Fiona Hale	Senior eLearning Advisor, Information Services Group
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Ms Claire Thomson	Academic Adviser, The Advice Place
Dr Gavin McCabe	Employability Consultant, Edinburgh Award Manager
Dr Simon Riley	Edinburgh Medical School

Apologies for absence:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Mr Alan Brown	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Mr Barry Neilson	Director of Student Systems
Dr Ewen Macpherson	School of Engineering
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web

The meeting was convened by the Vice-Convener Professor Graeme Reid.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 24 November 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

a) Service Excellence Programme

Mr Tom Ward updated the Committee on the latest position with regard to the policy development and implementation strand of the Service Excellence Programme. Some initial work had been undertaken in relation to this strand, but there were no firm plans for the next stage as yet, as consideration needed to be given to current priorities and available resources, but the Committee would be kept informed of progress.

b) Electronic Business – Request for opt-out from Curriculum Framework: Chemistry Integrated Masters Programmes

A paper on this item was approved by the Committee by electronic business on 16 December 2016.

c) Electronic Business – MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching

A paper on this item was approved by the Committee by electronic business on 6 January 2017, and the matter was now being considered by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). Initial feedback pointed to it having been very well received by the GTCS.

d) Support for Study

Dr Adam Bunni reported on a recent enquiry into possible changes to the Support for Study policy, following a recommendation from the Thematic Review of Mental Health Services, and the forthcoming Mental Health Strategy. Consideration had been given to a re-draft of this policy, with the incorporation of a mandatory interruption from studies element. However, agreement on this could not be reached with representatives of the Students' Association. It had therefore been agreed that the status quo would be maintained with the current policy, but that it would continue to be monitored.

e) Extended Common Marking Scheme (ECMS)

Mr John Lowrey updated the Committee on the recent activity of the Extended Common Marking Scheme Working Group. A report from the working group was expected to come to the Committee and it was hoped that this would be ready for the next meeting of the Committee in March 2017. This would enable any revisions to be in place from 2017/18. The elements currently under consideration included:

- a combined Common Mark Scheme (CMS)1 and CMS4 to merge the undergraduate and postgraduate scales (not including BVM&S or MBChB);
- the removal of CMS5 (Edinburgh College of Art Degree Programmes), as it was understood that all of these programmes could be considered for assessment under the current CMS1 and CMS4.

3. Collaborative Learning Design in Practice – Fiona Hale, Information Services

Ms Fiona Hale gave a presentation to the Committee on a new collaborative learning design project. The learning design scoping project (carried out March 2015 to September 2015) had recommended developing reusable and collaborative learning design as a new University service within Information Services (IS). The service was now active and

positioned the learning design framework as a scaffold, the support staff as facilitators, and the academic staff as learning designers. There was an active community of practice and a link to key University drivers. The recommended learning design process prioritised the design of student learning experiences over the development of content. Learning design involved the process of designing learning experiences (planning, structuring, sequencing) through facilitated activities that were pedagogically informed and make better use of technologies in teaching.

The learning design service was able to directly support courses or programmes (online or on campus) that were being developed or reviewed. Staff from across the University had already engaged with the learning design (two day) workshops. Facilitators of the framework were being trained and located within Information Services, Institute for Academic Development (IAD), and locally within Schools. The design workshops were collaborative, and team based. Further information could be found at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/supporting-learning-and-teaching/learning-design>

4. Timetabling Policy and Guidance – Wednesday PM analysis (CSPC 16/17 3 A)

Mr Scott Rosie introduced this paper, which provided an update to the paper presented at the March 2016 Committee meeting. It summarised the extent of compliance with the current timetabling policy regarding Wednesday afternoon teaching, and provided the reasons given by Schools for the scheduling of core teaching during this restricted period.

It was noted that the current policy on this matter was largely respected. Existing circumvention was disproportionately weighted towards postgraduate taught (PGT) activity. Schools had suggested that a variety of constraints largely determined Wednesday afternoon teaching, rather than there being a specific preference for this slot. Additional modelling steps would be taken to reduce the level of scheduling during this period for 2017/18.

The global offline timetable modelling project was scheduled to deliver its outcomes in April 2018. This would provide insight into whether there were opportunities to adhere more strictly to the current policy. The project would also model Students' Association/Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU) preferences to extend the length of the existing restricted period on Wednesday afternoons.

Following discussion, it was agreed to make no changes to the current timetabling policy (most recently revised by the Committee in April 2013) at this time. The position regarding Wednesday afternoon teaching would continue to be monitored by Timetabling Services.

5. Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) (CSPC 16/17 3 B)

Dr Simon Riley and Dr Gavin McCabe presented this paper.

The Committee approved the move from pilot to mainstreaming for SLICCs run centrally, ready to commence for summer 2017, and owned by Moray House School of Education.

The Committee were asked to advise on how the proposed interim quota on student numbers, applied for the first two years of mainstreaming, should be split between Year 1 and Year 2 students, and what ratio should be used. It was noted that it seemed sensible to apply a quota of 200 students for the first two years as proposed. After two years it was expected that it would be possible to more accurately forecast the expected number of students each year. It was suggested that within the College Science and Engineering, there

were a large number of direct entry Year 2 students, therefore it could make sense to allow a greater proportion of Year 2 students to undertake the courses. However, the Committee were content for Dr Simon Riley and Dr Gavin McCabe to determine a suitable ratio between Year 1 and Year 2 to operate as a quota.

6. CAHSS: Psychology (BMedSci Hons) (CSPC 16/17 3 C)

Mr John Lowrey presented this item. The paper requested approval for a temporary change to the Psychology (BMedSciHons) programme, which needed to come to the Committee as it represented an opt-out from the Models for Degree Types policy:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf

This paper was approved by the Committee, but it was stressed that this must only be a temporary adjustment for the next two years. By 2018/19, the expectation was that the longer-term problem would have been addressed through course redesign.

7. CMVM: MBChB Examination Delivery in Alberta (CSPC 16/17 3 D)

Dr Sheila Lodge presented this paper, which requested a concession from the Taught Assessment Regulations, in order to deliver MBChB Year 5 examinations annually at the University of Alberta.

This paper was approved by the Committee, and would affect the delivery of these assessments from June 2017 onwards. The Medical Teaching Organisation Administration would be responsible for securely delivering and returning the examination papers, and would appropriately prepare invigilators. The examinations in Edmonton followed on immediately from their delivery in Edinburgh, and students sitting in Edinburgh would not be permitted to leave the venue until the end of their examination.

8. Collaborative activities – arrangements for certificates and transcripts for dual/multiple awards (CLOSED – E)

The Committee received a closed paper on this item, which was approved by the Committee. This would result in a change to current processes, so that, for taught programmes, the relevant wording regarding the (dual/double) nature of the award should be on the transcript rather than the degree certificate. It was recognised that there were still some unresolved matters in relation to the processes for postgraduate research programmes.

9. Collaborative Provision: Memoranda of Agreement (CLOSED – F)

The Committee received a closed paper on this item. Dr Adam Bunni presented this paper which provided a list of institutions with which Memoranda of Agreement were signed or renewed in 2016. The Committee was invited to note the contents of the report and members were invited to bring to attention any gaps observed in this information by contacting Theresa Sheppard in Academic Services (theresa.sheppard@ed.ac.uk)

10. Resits and Academic Failure Working Group (Verbal Update)

Dr Adam Bunni gave an update on this item. The Working Group members continued to work on clarification of the existing resit regulations (Taught Assessment Regulation 27 in 2016/17). The group wanted to clarify the position regarding non-honours resits, and the relationship between resits and unsatisfactory academic progress. However, following the circulation of a consultation paper to College Learning and Teaching Committees, no obvious

consensus had been reached. A paper was due to come to the next CSPC meeting in March, with some proposals for resit regulations from 2017/18. The aim was to make some subtle clarifications regarding the current position, and to remove some redundant content. No significant changes to the regulations in this area were anticipated.

11. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report (CSPC 16/17 3 G)

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

12. Dates of meetings in 2017/18

It was agreed to trial removing the April meeting of the Committee in 2017/18. The March meeting would be held slightly later in March to compensate for this, and the regulations would be approved at the late March meeting.

The meeting dates for the Committee in 2017/18 were as follows:

21 September 2017
23 November 2017
25 January 2018
22 March 2018
31 May 2018

13. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, 3 February 2017

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression

16 March 2017

Assessment & Progression Tools (APT) Steering Group

Timing of Exam Board for Semester 1 Courses

Executive Summary

At CSPC in November 2015, a recommendation was made 'to move to the position whereby ratified semester 1 course marks are all published after semester 1 Boards of Examiner meetings (rather than being ratified by a Board at the end of semester 2). This recommendation was particularly firmly supported by the Committee. Opt-outs would only be approved if there was a firm pedagogical reason for this.

There is a need to revisit this issue in light of the new Assessment & Progression Tools which are currently being rolled out. At the last APT Steering Group Meeting it was noted that some schools were requesting the ability to publish provisional exam marks when semester 1 exam boards were not held.

The Steering Group agreed that resource should not be diverted to building this functionality and that an overview of the current situation regarding courses that were still not having formal boards in January for semester 1 courses should be sought with a view to tightening up on the current recommendation.

An appendix has been attached providing a breakdown at School and College level for semester 1 courses in 2016/17 and 2015/16 academic year. The courses included in the appendix cover all semester 1 courses. This includes courses that do not complete assessments during semester 1 (for example they have exams at the end of semester 2). For the purposes of the paper and assumption of 10% of UG courses and 20% of PGT courses can be made.

How does this align with the University/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Student Experience; Assessment & Feedback

Action requested

The committee is asked to **discuss**:

1. Whether the existing recommendation from CSPC is being implemented effectively enough for undergraduate courses; is it reasonable to expect circa 20% of semester 1 courses have firm pedagogical reasons for not publishing ratified marks; and if this is the opportunity to reconsider the recommendation and propose that all semester 1 UG courses are required to run exam boards in January and to publish ratified marks to student through EUCLID at that time;

2. The marked difference in the processes for Postgraduate Taught courses compared to Undergraduate courses.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Communication can be provided through the APT Steering Group representatives in addition to any formal communication that would need to be issued through Academic Services. There is a strong overlap in membership between the APT Board and the CSPC membership.

Implementation of Boards would be managed at a School level.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Need to develop an understanding of the resource implications at School level to ensure remaining semester 1 UG courses go through exam boards and outcomes to students communicated. Developed in context of approaching 70% of courses already completing this process completed by the end of February, and 75% by the start of March.

2. Risk assessment

At the moment students who study courses in different Schools, or even within Schools, will receive an inconsistent level of information for semester 1 UG courses – i.e. ratified marks published for some but not all courses.

3. Equality and Diversity

Reduce inconsistencies in the delivery of ratified marks and reduce the number of electronic channels students needs to access to find their course results.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open.

Originators of paper

Professor Susan Rhind – Assistant Principal (Assessment & Feedback)
Chris Giles – Project Manager, Assessment & Progression Tools Project
Barry Neilson – Director of Student Systems and Administration & Service Excellence Lead.

March 2017.

				1st February 2017		3rd March 2017				1st February 2016		3rd March 2016	
Colleges													
HSS	College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science	1413	40%	60%	46%	54%	1408	28%	72%	33%	66%		
	UG	842	63%	37%	73%	27%	858	45%	57%	53%	49%		
	PG	571	6%	94%	6%	94%	550	3%	93%	4%	92%		
MVM	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	206	28%	72%	28%	72%	196	24%	71%	24%	71%		
	UG	56	88%	13%	88%	13%	52	73%	20%	73%	20%		
	PG	150	5%	95%	5%	95%	144	5%	91%	6%	90%		
SCE	College of Science and Engineering	548	64%	36%	66%	34%	535	53%	44%	56%	42%		
	UG	361	78%	22%	79%	21%	361	66%	34%	70%	30%		
	PG	187	37%	63%	41%	59%	174	30%	63%	30%	63%		
Level													
UG	Undergraduate	1259	68%	32%	75%	25%	1271	52%	49%	59%	42%		
PG	Postgraduate	908	12%	88%	13%	87%	868	9%	86%	10%	86%		

				1st February 2017		3rd March 2017				1st February 2016		3rd March 2016	
Schools													
SU744	School of Physics and Astronomy	68	46%	54%	46%	54%	63	43%	50%	43%	50%		
	UG	57	54%	46%	54%	46%	53	46%	47%	46%	47%		
	PG	11	0%	100%	0%	100%	10	27%	64%	27%	64%		
SU747	School of Informatics	64	69%	31%	69%	31%	62	52%	45%	52%	45%		
	UG	41	71%	29%	71%	29%	38	54%	39%	54%	39%		
	PG	23	65%	35%	65%	35%	24	48%	57%	48%	57%		
SU748	School of Engineering	136	80%	20%	85%	15%	128	70%	24%	70%	24%		
	UG	81	90%	10%	90%	10%	79	88%	10%	88%	10%		
	PG	55	65%	35%	76%	24%	49	44%	45%	44%	45%		
SU849	School of Geosciences	107	54%	46%	55%	45%	105	37%	61%	50%	48%		
	UG	68	85%	15%	87%	13%	71	59%	46%	79%	25%		
	PG	39	0%	100%	0%	100%	34	0%	87%	0%	87%		
SU240	School of Chemistry	35	54%	46%	57%	43%	32	46%	46%	46%	46%		
	UG	30	50%	50%	53%	47%	27	40%	50%	40%	50%		
	PG	5	80%	20%	80%	20%	5	80%	20%	80%	20%		
SU253	School of Mathematics	67	45%	55%	45%	55%	74	36%	75%	36%	75%		
	UG	37	81%	19%	81%	19%	46	65%	59%	65%	59%		
	PG	30	0%	100%	0%	100%	28	0%	93%	0%	93%		
SU541	School of Biological Sciences	71	86%	14%	86%	14%	71	79%	21%	79%	21%		
	UG	47	98%	2%	98%	2%	47	89%	11%	89%	11%		
	PG	24	63%	38%	63%	38%	24	58%	42%	58%	42%		

				1st February 2017		3rd March 2017				1st February 2016		3rd March 2016	
Schools													
SU151	School of Divinity	48	60%	40%	63%	38%		54	67%	46%	67%	46%	
	UG	31	94%	6%	97%	3%		33	103%	3%	103%	3%	
	PG	17	0%	100%	0%	100%		21	0%	124%	0%	124%	
SU161	School of Law	75	28%	72%	32%	68%		81	28%	80%	35%	73%	
	UG	27	78%	22%	85%	15%		27	78%	22%	93%	7%	
	PG	48	0%	100%	2%	98%		54	0%	113%	2%	110%	
SU284	School of Economics	37	46%	54%	46%	54%		44	54%	65%	57%	62%	
	UG	31	55%	45%	55%	45%		37	65%	55%	68%	52%	
	PG	6	0%	100%	0%	100%		7	0%	117%	0%	117%	
SU780	Business School	87	31%	69%	37%	63%		81	34%	59%	36%	57%	
	UG	33	82%	18%	97%	3%		32	91%	6%	94%	3%	
	PG	54	0%	100%	0%	100%		49	0%	91%	0%	91%	
SU791	Edinburgh College of Art	253	37%	63%	47%	53%		233	13%	79%	14%	78%	
	UG	150	47%	53%	65%	35%		134	18%	71%	20%	69%	
	PG	103	22%	78%	22%	78%		99	5%	91%	6%	90%	
SU792	School of History, Classics and Archaeology	168	39%	61%	44%	56%		167	27%	73%	29%	71%	
	UG	121	51%	49%	58%	42%		122	34%	67%	36%	64%	
	PG	47	9%	91%	9%	91%		45	9%	87%	9%	87%	
SU793	School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	182	47%	53%	57%	43%		167	36%	56%	45%	47%	
	UG	116	74%	26%	89%	11%		104	54%	35%	68%	22%	
	PG	66	0%	100%	0%	100%		63	3%	92%	3%	92%	
SU795	School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures	293	41%	59%	46%	54%		308	31%	74%	33%	72%	
	UG	194	60%	40%	68%	32%		229	47%	71%	49%	69%	
	PG	99	3%	97%	3%	97%		79	1%	79%	2%	78%	
SU796	School of Health in Social Science	39	36%	64%	36%	64%		36	36%	56%	38%	54%	
	UG	13	77%	23%	77%	23%		14	77%	31%	77%	31%	
	PG	26	15%	85%	15%	85%		22	15%	69%	19%	65%	
SU809	School of Social and Political Science	134	43%	57%	48%	52%		131	28%	69%	33%	65%	
	UG	75	76%	24%	85%	15%		69	48%	44%	56%	36%	
	PG	59	0%	100%	0%	100%		62	3%	102%	3%	102%	
SU819	Moray House School of Education	97	38%	62%	38%	62%		106	7%	102%	41%	68%	
	UG	51	71%	29%	71%	29%		57	12%	100%	76%	35%	
	PG	46	2%	98%	2%	98%		49	2%	104%	2%	104%	

				1st February 2017		3rd March 2017				1st February 2016		3rd March 2016	
Schools													
SU336	Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	23	4%	96%	4%	96%	22	13%	83%	13%	83%		
	UG	5	20%	80%	20%	80%	4	60%	20%	60%	20%		
	PG	18	0%	100%	0%	100%	18	0%	100%	0%	100%		
SU640	Edinburgh Medical School	4	50%	50%	50%	50%	6	75%	75%	75%	75%		
	UG	2	100%	0%	100%	0%	4	100%	100%	100%	100%		
	PG	2	0%	100%	0%	100%	2	50%	50%	50%	50%		
SU722	Deanery of Biomedical Sciences	64	63%	38%	63%	38%	63	48%	50%	48%	50%		
	UG	43	93%	7%	93%	7%	38	70%	19%	70%	19%		
	PG	21	0%	100%	0%	100%	25	5%	114%	5%	114%		
SU723	Deanery of Clinical Sciences	82	7%	93%	7%	93%	81	7%	91%	9%	90%		
	UG	6	100%	0%	100%	0%	6	100%	0%	100%	0%		
	PG	76	0%	100%	0%	100%	75	0%	99%	1%	97%		
SU724	Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences	32	25%	75%	25%	75%	23	19%	53%	19%	53%		
	UG	0					0						
	PG	32	25%	75%	25%	75%	23	19%	53%	19%	53%		

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Coursework Extensions regulations and Special Circumstances Policy

Executive Summary

For the 2016/17 academic session, CSPC approved the introduction of a revised regulation regarding late submission of coursework, which set out a standard approach for students to apply for extensions to coursework deadlines. This paper outlines initial feedback received from Schools and the Students' Association regarding implementation of the regulation and requests consideration of potential changes to the regulation for 2017/18.

The paper also provides an update on issues relevant to the Special Circumstances Policy, and requests consideration of an urgent issue relating to this Policy.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The proposals support the Committee's priority of "good housekeeping".

Action requested

CSPC is requested to discuss the options proposed in sections 4 and 6 of the paper and agree a preferred solution in each case. Academic Services would then conduct a brief consultation process prior to submitting formal proposals to the Committee in April 2017 for approval.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Any changes to regulation for 2017/18 will be communicated to Schools and Colleges via email in June, and in person via College briefings. Any change to the Special Circumstances Policy will be communicated to Schools and Colleges as a matter of urgency before Semester 2 Boards of Examiners take place.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Some of the options presented in section 4 of the paper have resource implications in terms of staff time. Should Special Circumstances Committees be expected to be held more frequently than at present, this would have significant implications for staff attending, recording, and reporting on the actions agreed at their meetings. The issue of whether academic or support staff may make decisions regarding coursework extension requests has implications for relative workloads in this area.

2. Risk assessment

Changes to the current regulation regarding coursework extensions may lead to a return to divergent practices with regard to coursework extensions, without clear

justification. This could lead to some students feeling that they have not been treated equitably.

Failure to address the urgent issue regarding Special Circumstances may lead to Schools being unable to cope with demand during Semester 2 Boards, and potential non-compliance with the policy in this area.

3. Equality and Diversity

The University's approach to offering coursework extensions may have implications for students' wellbeing. Where students are required to wait to learn the outcome of a request for an extension, this can cause anxiety, and may have a more significant impact upon some students with mental health conditions.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Coursework; extensions; special circumstances

Originator of the paper

Adam Bunni, Tom Ward; Academic Services, 8th March 2017

Coursework Extensions regulations and Special Circumstances Policy

1. Background

For the 2016/17 academic session, CSPC approved the introduction of a revised Special Circumstances Policy, along with revised regulation regarding late submission of coursework (Taught Assessment Regulation 28, Appendix 1), which set out a standard approach for students to apply for extensions to coursework deadlines. This was the result of a significant volume of work conducted by the Special Circumstances Task Group, which included extensive consultation with Schools and Colleges, and benchmarking within the sector. The revised approach to regulation regarding coursework extensions sought to address persistent concerns raised by the Students' Association regarding inconsistent treatment of requests for coursework extensions across Schools and Colleges. Prior to the introduction of the regulation, approaches within Schools ranged from no extensions being offered to students (with all requests being dealt with retrospectively via Special Circumstances), to extensions of several weeks (even into a subsequent semester) being routinely offered by Course Organisers. In addition, the absence of consistent policy regarding what constitutes 'good reason' for granting coursework extensions would have led to inconsistent decision-making.

Section A of this paper provides early feedback from staff and students within Schools and Colleges regarding their experience of the new regulation during the 2016/17 session so far. **CSPC is requested to consider the options proposed in section 4 and agree upon the desired approach.**

Section B of the paper provides an update on work related to the Special Circumstances Policy, and requests CSPC's consideration of an urgent issue relating to the application of the policy.

A. Coursework extensions

2. Current regulation on coursework extensions

Under the new regulation (Appendix 1), Course Organisers or Programme Directors are entitled to offer extensions of up to seven days where a student can provide evidence of unexpected short-term circumstances beyond their control, which are having an effect on their ability to submit on time. Where a student requires an extension beyond seven days, they are expected to submit the work when they are able to do so, and make a request via the special circumstances process to have any late penalties waived.

The decision to offer extensions of up to seven days under the new regulation was based on the fact that this was roughly the median length of extension offered by those Schools with pre-existing local policies regarding extensions. Benchmarking within the sector indicates that there is significant variation in practice regarding coursework extensions, for example regarding whether there is an institutional policy or whether individual faculties or departments have flexibility. Where institutions do stipulate the maximum length of time for coursework extensions (before handling cases via Special Circumstances or equivalent) it is typically between seven and fourteen days, both within Russell Group institutions and the sector more generally. While a significant number of Russell Group institutions in England do not have institutional policy on coursework extensions, the relatively closed structure of programmes, compared to those offered by Scottish institutions, mean that students are less

likely to be exposed to any variation in practice which is likely to exist between academic units. The flexible nature of the Edinburgh curriculum has the opposite effect, with many students taking courses in multiple Schools; this reduces tolerance for variation in policy between Schools on issues such as coursework extensions.

3. Feedback on implementation

Feedback from the Students' Association in particular would seem to indicate that the consistency of practice targeted by the new regulation has largely been achieved, with students no longer raising concerns regarding inconsistent treatment in numbers. Feedback from Schools would suggest that concerns that the new regulation would lead to an increase in the volume of Special Circumstances requests have largely not been realised. In any case, any possible increase in Special Circumstances resulting from the introduction of the regulation was likely to affect only the small number of Schools which previously offered significant numbers of extensions of longer than seven days; those Schools with pre-existing policies regarding extensions should experience little change in the volume of Special Circumstances requests; those Schools which did not previously offer extensions may experience a reduction in the number of Special Circumstances requests related to extensions (but a consequential increase in requests for coursework extensions).

The bulk of the feedback received from Schools and the Students' Association centred around concerns related to the seven-day limit on extensions, and how this impacts upon different categories of students. The key issues raised are outlined below.

a) Extensions of longer than seven days- welfare issues

The Students' Association and several Schools have raised concerns that the requirement for students to request extensions of longer than seven days via Special Circumstances caused students distress and anxiety, as they were required to wait until the relevant Special Circumstances Committee met (in some cases in a matter of months) to find out whether or not their work would be accepted without penalty. It was suggested that this would impact more severely upon students with mental health issues. This problem could be exacerbated for students requesting extensions for Semester 1 courses which do not hold Boards of Examiners until the end of Semester 2. It should be noted that this was not a problem created by the new regulation; before the current session, students in the majority of Schools which offered extensions for a defined number of days, or did not offer extensions at all, will have experienced precisely the same "cliff-edge" effect. In addition, by requiring all Schools to consider requests for coursework extension, the new regulation will have reduced the requirement for students to wait until a Special Circumstances Committee and Board of Examiners have met in order to know whether penalties for an extension of seven days or less will be waived.

Some Schools suggested that the discretion to offer longer (e.g. 2-3 week) extensions would alleviate this problem; the Students' Association and some Schools suggested that it may be beneficial to convene more frequent, or ad hoc, meetings of Special Circumstances Committees in order to give students more clarity about longer extensions.

b) Part-time students/work commitments/ODL

Some Schools (especially within CMVM) felt that the seven-day limit was not reasonable for part-time students (especially on Online Distance-Learning programmes), who, in many cases, also have full-time employment. These Schools suggest that part-time students' ability to complete work within seven days is more restricted than that of full-time students. It

was suggested that 14 days would be a more appropriate length of extension for part-time students.

These responses also regarded the fact that the regulation states that “commitments to paid or voluntary work” would not be regarded as good reasons for extensions was unfair to students who may, for example, be required to work additional shifts at short notice, or cover for absent colleagues.

Some staff involved in the delivery of ODL programmes had concerns that the regulation undermined the flexibility offered by these programmes. It was suggested that the regulation does not deal appropriately with the types of circumstances which they considered to be unique to ODL programmes, for example students having to move unexpectedly to rural areas where they will have no access to the internet.

In developing the current regulation regarding coursework extensions, the Special Circumstances task group had considered the potential to exempt students on ODL programmes from a maximum period for extensions (and instead to allow individual Programme Directors to use their discretion), based on the arguments raised above. Although the group understood the rationale, it decided that allowing an exemption for a particular category of students would undermine the aim of consistency of treatment. While there may be some particular issues regarding late submission of coursework for part-time ODL students, these issues are also likely to apply to part-time students elsewhere in the University. It would therefore be inconsistent to apply such an exemption to only ODL students. If part-time students on all courses and programmes were treated differently to full-time students in this regard, this would lead to inconsistent treatment of students in the same cohorts. In addition, many full-time students have equal challenges in fitting their study around other (e.g. caring or work) commitments.

While ODL students may sometimes encounter issues regarding internet access, these issues can also apply to other categories of students who are based in other countries for part of their programme of studies, for example during a study abroad period, field trip or placement.

c) Extensions of longer than seven days- “the student should submit the coursework when able to do so”

Some Schools raised concerns that the phrase in the regulation which suggested that students requiring longer extensions submit their work “when able to do so” (28.9) was leading students on PGT programmes to delay submission of Semester 1 coursework into Semester 2, leading to an unacceptable build-up of coursework in Semester 2.

There were also concerns that students were submitting coursework after feedback had been given to the cohort regarding performance in that coursework, placing these students at an advantage over their peers.

The regulation allows Schools to place reasonable restrictions upon the ability to submit coursework late:

“28.2 Schools may choose not to permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment where the specific assessment and feedback arrangements make it impractical or unfair to other students to do so.”

d) Dissertations- eligibility for extensions

Some Schools raised concerns that the regulation does not explicitly state whether the extensions regulation should apply to dissertations. Schools who raised this issue largely expressed a view that it was inappropriate for this regulation to apply to dissertations, either because extensions should not be offered for dissertations at all, or because extensions of more than seven days should be permitted for dissertations.

e) Extensions and reasonable adjustments

One School requested clarification regarding students who had Learning Profiles which recommended that they be offered extensions at short notice; this School asked whether these extensions fell within, or were in addition to extensions offered under regulation 28.

Where a Learning Profile includes provision for extensions at short notice, the text used refers to a student's failure to meet submission deadlines "as a direct consequence of their disability or health condition". TAR 28.8 makes explicit that chronic or long-term health conditions are not covered by the coursework extensions regulation, since they should be addressed by reasonable adjustments; a student who receives an extension as part of a reasonable adjustment may therefore also apply for a further extension under regulation 28 where they have a qualifying reason to do so.

f) Role of academic/professional staff in decision-making

The regulation states that the decision regarding whether or not to offer an extension is made by the "Course Organiser, Programme Director, or equivalent", i.e. an academic member of staff. In some Schools, the Student Support Team are currently making decisions regarding extension requests. These Schools have suggested that this is the only way to ensure consistency in decision-making, and accurate recording regarding where extensions have been offered.

4. Options for action

CSPC is requested to discuss and decide whether it wishes to propose any significant change to the regulation relating to late submission of coursework for the 2017/18 session. Should CSPC decide to propose a change to the regulation, Academic Services would conduct a brief consultation with Colleges and Schools, prior to approval of any new regulations at the April meeting of CSPC. The main options available are outlined below; some of these are not mutually exclusive, since the University could continue to operate a tiered system for authorising extensions requests, but change the process for authorisation.

a) Allow 14-day extensions under the existing regulation

CSPC could allow Schools to offer extensions of 14 days (to full-time and part-time students), with only extensions of longer than 14 days requiring consideration under Special Circumstances. As is the case under the current regulation, Schools would not be required to permit extensions of 14 days where this would be impractical or unfair to a cohort.

This may address a large proportion of the concerns regarding the requirement for those students needing longer extensions to wait for a Special Circumstances decision. It would however continue to lead to a 'cliff-edge' for some (albeit a smaller number of) students.

b) Allow extensions up to the end of the semester in which the course is taught

CSPC could allow Schools to offer extensions of any length up to the end of the semester in which the course is taught; where students were unable to submit coursework by the end of the course, this would be dealt with under Special Circumstances. Since some PGT courses involve deadlines beyond the end of the semester in which the course is taught, it may be

necessary to define the limit as “(a reasonable time) before the relevant Board of Examiners meeting”. Under the provisions of the regulation, Schools would not be required to permit extensions beyond a certain length where this would be impractical or unfair to a cohort.

This would address almost all of the welfare concerns regarding students waiting for Special Circumstances decisions. However, it does create the potential for greater inconsistency in practice, where some Schools may offer longer extensions than others in relation to similar circumstances.

c) Hold Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs) more frequently during the semester

CSPC could decide to retain the existing regulation, but set an expectation that Schools should hold SCCs more frequently during the semester to reduce the time students spend waiting for decisions.

Benchmarking within the sector indicates that, although it is common within the Russell Group for handling of extension requests to be devolved to academic units, those institutions which did have a central policy on extensions commonly made decisions regarding extensions of any length on a rolling basis, rather than waiting until the relevant Board of Examiners or sub-committee would normally meet.

Schools may struggle with the logistics of holding, and adequately recording, more frequent SCCs. In any case, under the Special Circumstances Policy, it is Boards of Examiners, rather than SCCs who decide on action to be taken in relation to students' circumstances; SCCs determine whether Boards should consider taking action in a particular case, and may recommend a specific action (or range of actions) to the Board. Schools would therefore not be in a position to guarantee that a Board would follow a particular recommendation from a SCC – meaning that the welfare issues associated with making students wait for certainty would remain.

CSPC could, however, decide that SCCs have the authority to make decisions regarding coursework extensions (or disregarding late penalties) without the need to refer to the Board of Examiners, and that SCCs should meet regularly (including electronically) to make these decisions. This may, however, add complexity to the existing policy in this area.

d) Decisions regarding longer extensions may be made by a different authority

CSPC could decide to retain a tiered approach to coursework extensions, but determine that decisions regarding extensions of longer than seven (or 14) days may be made by a different individual, for example the relevant Director of Teaching. This would reduce the number of people involved in making a decision on longer extensions, but may lead to greater consistency in decision-making, since there may be a large number of SCCs in a School, but only one Director of Teaching (or one per subject area).

e) No change

CSPC may wish to keep the existing regulation as it is.

Whichever option CSPC chooses, the Committee is nonetheless requested to clarify certain aspects of the existing regulation:

- i. Does the regulation regarding late submission of coursework apply to dissertations (both undergraduate, and postgraduate taught)?

- ii. Is it permissible that Student Support Teams/School Teaching Offices make decisions regarding whether coursework extensions should be offered?

B. Special Circumstances Policy

Some of the feedback received regarding coursework extensions, especially from the Students' Association, raises issues related to the Special Circumstances Policy, the revised version of which was introduced for 2016/17. Senate Quality Assurance Committee has also requested that CSPC consider whether the nature of ODL provision has any implications for the University's policies relating to Special Circumstances and coursework extensions. We are not, at this stage, seeking to evaluate the implementation of the new Special Circumstances policy, since in some areas (especially at postgraduate taught level), SCCs and Boards of Examiners have not yet been held under the policy. Additionally, the Student Administration and Support sub-programme of the Service Excellence Programme is due to initiate a project to develop uniform business processes for the handling of Special Circumstances requests, and a EUCLID-based system to support these. Formal evaluation of the Special Circumstances Policy will take place during the 2017-18 academic session. However, several Schools have raised an urgent concern with one aspect of the policy, which is discussed in section 5; **CSPC is requested to consider and agree upon a response to this issue.**

5. Special Circumstances- access to marks

Under the Special Circumstances Policy, SCCs are asked to make a decision regarding whether the relevant Board of Examiners should consider taking action in relation to a student's case, and may recommend appropriate action(s) to the Board. The Board of Examiners is responsible for deciding upon which action to take in each case.

The Special Circumstances Policy states at 7.5 that:

"7.5 SCCs will not consider information relating to students' marks when making a decision on Special Circumstances."

The reasons behind this provision included:

- i. decisions regarding whether or not Special Circumstances exist should be based solely on the evidence provided regarding the impact of the circumstances themselves;
- ii. marks could be regarded as irrelevant to the SCC's task;
- iii. SCCs would also have varying quantities of mark information available to them, depending upon which courses students were taking, which could lead to inconsistent decision-making.

Several Schools have raised urgent concerns after conducting Semester 1 SCCs and Boards of Examiners regarding the impact that the absence of mark information had on the efficient handling of Special Circumstances cases. Schools have indicated that the requirement to hold SCCs without access to marks is leading to the process taking an unreasonably long time to carry out (one subject area cited a total of 35 hours spent considering SC submissions in January). A particular source of frustration is the time spent considering requests where the marks subsequently indicate that no remedial action is appropriate. Several Schools have suggested that the consideration of detailed recommendations at the full Board of Examiners meeting would both lengthen the Board

meeting to an unreasonable extent, and encourage Boards to seek to unpick the original decisions of the SCC regarding an individual student's circumstances.

Some Schools have also taken steps to mitigate the impact of this provision which negate the benefits of this approach: for example, holding a SCC to determine whether or not to uphold requests, before a smaller body (or individual) makes recommendations to the Board of Examiners with sight of relevant provisional marks.

Schools expect to receive a much greater volume of SC requests in Semester 2; some are, therefore, suggesting that they will find it extremely challenging to manage the requirements of the Policy for Semester 2 SCCs and Boards of Examiners.

Information regarding marks is essential to determining which action is appropriate when responding to Special Circumstances; for example, when deciding whether to disregard a failed or missing component and provide a course mark based on other components, or when to offer a null sit. Under the changes to the Special Circumstances Policy introduced in 2016/17, SCCs no longer make decisions which are binding on the Board of Examiners, with Boards of Examiners making the final decision on any actions with access to marks; this arguably negates any benefit provided by SCCs making decisions without considering marks. The Assessment and Progression Tools encourage Schools to enter provisional marks into EUCLID timeously; this means that there should be a significant volume of mark information potentially available to SCCs when they meet.

6. Options for action

CSPC is requested to consider making a change to the Special Circumstances Policy with immediate effect, in order to address the problem identified by Schools. Although the University generally seeks to avoid making changes to policy during an academic session, the change proposed would result in no disadvantage to students, since it constitutes an adjustment to business processes, rather than a shift in policy. Boards of Examiners currently make the final decision on Special Circumstances cases, and have full access to marks; changing the policy would only affect the point at which marks entered the process.

CSPC is requested to consider revising the Special Circumstances Policy to state the following:

- That SCCs may not take marks into account when considering whether or not Special Circumstances exist in a particular case (i.e. whether or not the Board should consider taking action), but that SCCs may take marks into consideration when determining which action(s) to recommend.
- SCCs may only take marks into consideration when this is in a student's best interest.

Should CSPC agree to a change in the policy, Academic Services would issue guidance to Schools ahead of the Semester 2 SCCs and Boards of Examiners.

Appendix 2- Feedback from Students' Association; Colleges

Regulation 28 Late submission of coursework

Students need to submit assessed coursework by the published deadline. Where the student provides a good reason for late submission, Schools will consider accepting late submission of up to seven calendar days without exacting a penalty.

Application of the regulation

- 28.1 If assessed coursework is submitted late without an agreed extension to the deadline for an accepted good reason, it will be recorded as late and a penalty will be exacted. For coursework that is a substantial component of the course and where the submission deadline is more than two weeks after the issue of the work to be assessed, that penalty is a reduction of the mark by 5% of the maximum obtainable mark per calendar day (e.g. a mark of 65% on the common marking scale would be reduced to 60% up to 24 hours later). This applies for up to seven calendar days (or to the time when feedback is given, if this is sooner), after which a mark of zero will be given. The original unreduced mark will be recorded by the School and the student informed of it.
- 28.2 Schools may choose not to permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment where the specific assessment and feedback arrangements make it impractical or unfair to other students to do so. If Schools do not permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment, they must publicise this to students on the relevant course.
- 28.3 Where Schools accept late submissions of coursework, they will consider cases for accepting late submissions up to a maximum of seven calendar days without exacting a penalty. Students are responsible for submitting their cases and supporting evidence in advance of the published deadline for the coursework, using the standard Coursework Extensions Request form (or a local School online form, where available).
- 28.4 The Course Organiser, Programme Director, or equivalent, decides whether the student has provided good reason and sufficient supporting evidence to justify an extension, and, if so, determines the length of extension to grant up to a maximum of seven calendar days.
- 28.5 The requirement for evidence should be proportionate to the weighting of the component of assessment and the length of extension sought, and should also take into account the student's ability to obtain documentary evidence. Self-certification will provide sufficient evidence in some circumstances. The School is responsible for ensuring a record is kept of the decision and the information which substantiates the reason for late acceptance.
- 28.6 Good reasons for coursework extensions are unexpected short-term circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student, beyond that student's control, and which could reasonably be expected to have had an adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time. Good reasons may include:
- Recent short-term physical illness or injury;
 - Recent short-term mental ill-health;

Appendix 2- Feedback from Students' Association; Colleges

- A long-term or chronic physical health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- A long-term or chronic mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- The recent bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship;
- The recent breakdown in a long-term relationship, such as a marriage;
- Emergencies involving dependents;
- Job or internship interview at short notice that requires significant time, e.g. due to travel;
- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact;
- Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions.

28.7 In addition to these unexpected circumstances, Schools will also consider requests for coursework extensions in relation to:

- A student's disability where the student's Learning Profile includes relevant provisions;
- Representation in performance sport at an international or national championship level, in line with the University's Performance Sport Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf

28.8 The following are examples of circumstances which would not be considered good reasons for coursework extensions:

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health or similar ill-health) which has not worsened recently or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment;
- A minor short-term illness or injury (e.g. a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time;
- Occasional low mood, stress or anxiety;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;
- Holidays;
- Financial issues;
- Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health);
- Poor time-management;
- Proximity to other assessments;
- Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission;
- Failure, loss or theft of data, a computer or other equipment;
- Commitments to paid or voluntary employment.

Appendix 2- Feedback from Students' Association; Colleges

28.9 Where a student has good reason for requiring a coursework extension of more than seven calendar days, the student should submit the coursework when able to do so and apply via the Special Circumstances process for the Board of Examiners to

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Rounding and borderlines in the Taught Assessment Regulations

Executive Summary

The paper highlights current issues with the existing regulations regarding the use of rounding in finalising assessment marks, and the operation of borderlines for course marks.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The proposals support the Committee's priority of "good housekeeping".

Action requested

CSPC is asked to **discuss** the issues raised in the paper and confirm its intentions for the regulations.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Any changes to regulation will be communicated to Schools and Colleges via email in June, and in person via College briefings.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Should CSPC choose options not currently supported by the Assessment and Progression Tools system, there will be implications for staff time in Student Systems to develop support for these.

2. Risk assessment

The lack of clarity in the existing regulations presents a risk of inconsistent practice.

3. Equality and Diversity

The proposals present no equality and diversity implications.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Rounding, marks, borderlines

Originator of the paper

Adam Bunni, Tom Ward Academic Services, 1st March 2017

Rounding and borderlines in the Taught Assessment Regulations

Background

In the past few months, several Schools have raised concerns with Academic Services and Student Systems regarding interpretation of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to rounding of marks and the application of borderlines. This paper summarises the areas where there is currently a lack of clarity, or apparent contradiction. **CSPC is requested to discuss and respond to the questions highlighted in this paper in order to confirm its intention for the relevant regulations.** The responses will be used to provide greater clarity in the 2017/18 regulations. The relevant regulations are provided in an Appendix to this document.

Outstanding issues

A. Component marks

TAR 37.3 could be interpreted as implying that component marks are rounded for release,¹ and that, therefore, rounded component marks are aggregated in order to produce a final course mark.

However, while TAR 63.1 refers to course, rather than component marks, it seems to imply that rounding may not take place before course marks are finalised: “When marks for courses are finalised (and not before then)...they must be rounded to an integer”.

Student Systems have also confirmed that the Assessment and Progression Tools system does not round component marks for release, based on an understanding that this was not required. Rounding twice in the process of finalising course marks would potentially reduce the overall accuracy of the final course mark as a representation of performance within components of assessment.

1. Should component marks, where released or used for aggregation in producing final course marks, be unrounded?

Some of the text of the regulations (especially TAR 63) will require to be updated to reflect the approach to mark entry under the Assessment and Progression Tools. The regulation currently implies that only final course results are entered into the EUCLID student record, whereas provisional marks for individual components of assessment may now also be released via EUCLID. Updated text will be included in the draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2017/18 which will be brought to the April meeting of CSPC.

B. Borderline marks

TAR 44 states that “Boards of Examiners must consider students whose marks are borderline for passing a course”. All marks for components of assessment should have been subject to moderation or checking as appropriate, which may include consideration of component marks which fell on a borderline (see the separate agenda item regarding the review of policy on moderation). The consideration of borderline marks under TAR 44 appears to be referring to a process which is separate to the moderation process. However,

¹ Most essay-based components are likely to produce a component mark which is an integer in any case.

Boards are not entitled to change course marks unless performance in the relevant assessments warrants this.

The regulation goes on to define borderline marks as “marks from two percentage points below the class or grade boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for an undergraduate 2.1 classification or 38.00% to 39.99% for a pass.”

By making reference to marks given to two decimal places (i.e. 38.00 to 39.99%), the regulation implies that consideration should be given to course marks which are borderline for a pass **before** being rounded and finalised. The Assessment and Progression Tools system does not currently provide unrounded course marks to Boards of Examiners.

TAR 44.3, in providing examples of borderlines for progression purposes, makes reference to occasions “where a student has a final mark of 38% or 39% for a course in first year that they need to pass to progress to second year”. This reference to final, rounded marks contrasts with the rest of regulation 44. It is assumed, however, that this is due to an expectation that borderline course marks may be considered twice: i) when the course mark is finalised by the Course Board; ii) (if the mark is confirmed as borderline, and the mark affects progression) when the Progression Board considers eligibility for progression.

Progression Boards may allow students to progress by condoning a marginal fail mark in a course. Where students are allowed to progress with a fail mark, they must either be awarded the credit for the course by aggregation, or will be required to gain the credits subsequently via resits or additional courses. Boards may only award Credit on Aggregate to Honours and Postgraduate Taught students.

- 2. Should consideration of borderline course marks only be for progression purposes, or where special circumstances exist, rather than when determining final course marks?**
- 3. If Boards should consider borderlines when determining final course marks, what are CSPC’s expectations regarding this consideration?**
- 4. (If Boards should consider borderlines when determining final course marks) should consideration of course marks which are borderline for passing the course be based on rounded or unrounded course marks?**

Appendix: Extracts from Taught Assessment Regulations 2016/17

Regulation 37 Final marks

Boards of Examiners confirm marks as final in the minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting. A Board of Examiners must not revise marks agreed as final by a previous Board of Examiners.

Application of the regulation

- 37.1 For undergraduates and postgraduate students, the Board of Examiners agree marks as final in the year in which they are obtained.
- 37.2 The Board of Examiners for final year students is responsible for determining the award of degree. The Board of Examiners, in determining final classifications and awards, may exercise discretion by taking into account special circumstances. See taught assessment regulation 43.
- 37.3 The Board of Examiners approves a single mark for each component of assessment for which marks are to be released; the released marks are the final marks used by the Board of Examiners when determining the overall result for the course. Rounding of marks is only done when the marks are finalised.
- 37.4 Students are informed of the status of the marks released and are reminded that the Board of Examiners, in determining the final marks or award, may have exercised discretion by taking into account additional relevant information.
- 37.5 The assessment results published on the student record system are the official results of the University.

Regulation 63 Board of Examiners: return of marks

Course marks, degree classification and awards agreed by the Board of Examiners and confirmed by the External Examiner(s) must be recorded on the student record system as the final official results of the University.

Application of the regulation

- 63.1 More than one person should be involved in checking the calculation of the marks and ensuring the accuracy of their transfer. When marks for courses are finalised (and not before then), before they are uploaded on to the student record system and released to students, they must be rounded to an integer, i.e. with no decimal places. Any mark which is xx.50 or above is rounded up and any mark which is xx.49 or below is rounded down, e.g. 59.50% is rounded to 60%, 59.49% is

Appendix: Extracts from Taught Assessment Regulations 2016/17

rounded to 59%. Individual course marks must be rounded before they are uploaded on to the student record system and the rounded marks must be used in calculating the overall mean mark. The overall mean mark is to be used in honours classification, progression, and award decisions. The overall mean mark is not rounded.

63.2 Results must be confirmed by the Convener and by at least one External Examiner.

63.3 Schools have responsibility for ensuring that results are uploaded accurately to the student record system.

63.4 Examination results for the summer (May) assessment should be uploaded on to the student record system as soon as possible in agreement with dates issued by Student Systems to give enough time for the preparation and printing of the graduation programme. Examination result upload deadlines will be published each year by Student Systems along with guidance on how to upload course results and final award of degree outcomes.

www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Support/awards.htm

63.5 In the case of autumn (August) undergraduate examinations, results should be submitted as soon as possible and not later than 10 days before the start of the next semester.

Regulation 44 Borderlines

Boards of Examiners must consider students whose marks are borderline for passing a course, and for progression, award or classification purposes. Undergraduate Progression Boards and postgraduate Boards of Examiners making progression decisions must consider students whose marks are borderline for progression purposes. Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the class or grade boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for an undergraduate 2.1 classification or 38.00% to 39.99% for a pass. Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards must use the University borderline definition and must not set and use a different definition.

Application of the regulation

44.1 Boards of Examiners must publish in advance the factors that will be taken into account for borderline decisions, which can include:

(a) cases in which a student has performed better in courses at a higher level;

Appendix: Extracts from Taught Assessment Regulations 2016/17

(b) cases where the amount of credited assessed work to be used for classification or award decisions is less than the norm (e.g., where credits have been awarded for progression purposes only in recognition of special circumstances);
and

(c) individual student profiles of performance.

44.2 Boards of Examiners cannot selectively use any additional assessment to reach assessment decisions for specific students. See taught assessment regulation 19.

44.3 Examples of borderlines for progression decisions include:

(a) where a student has a final mark of 38% or 39% for a course in first year that they need to pass to progress to second year;

(b) where a student is within two percentage points of a requirement for progression into honours or postgraduate dissertation, for example where the Degree Programme Table specifies the attainment of 50% as an average across a number of courses, the progression borderline is 48.00% to 49.99%;
and

(c) for the award of credit on aggregate, where a student has an average of 38.00% to 39.99% over their 120 credits.

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The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Resits and Academic Failure Task Group: Final Report

Executive Summary

At its April 2016 meeting, CSPC approved the formation of a short-life task group to develop revised regulations surrounding resit entitlement and academic failure for undergraduate students. This paper outlines the work of the Resits and Academic Failure Task Group, and includes proposals for revisions to the Taught Assessment Regulations and Undergraduate Degree Regulations.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The proposals support the Committee's priority of "good housekeeping".

Action requested

*CSPC is requested to **approve** the proposed changes to regulation in Appendix 1.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Any changes to regulation will be communicated to Schools and Colleges via email in June, and in person via College briefings.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
N/A
- 2. Risk assessment**
The proposals clarify the existing policy position, and should not therefore present a risk.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
The proposals present no new equality and diversity implications.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Open

Key words

Resits, progression

Originator of the paper

Professor Alan Murray, Convener, Resits and Academic Failure Task Group; Adam Bunni, Academic Services, 14th February 2017

Resits and Academic Failure Task Group Report

At its April 2016 meeting, CSPC approved the formation of a short-life task group to develop revised regulations surrounding resit entitlement and academic failure for undergraduate students. The Task Group (Remit and Membership, Appendix 2) met twice (2nd September 2016, 9th December 2016), and conducted business electronically subsequent to the final meeting. Discussion focused on the provision of resits for non-Honours undergraduate students, and did not consider changes relating to Honours or postgraduate taught students.

This paper outlines the work of the Resits and Academic Failure Task Group, and includes proposals for revisions to the Taught Assessment Regulations and Undergraduate Degree Regulations. CSPC is requested to **approve** the proposed changes to regulation in Appendix 1.

1. Current approach to resits at the University of Edinburgh

Undergraduate students are currently entitled to up to four attempts for assessments on courses at SCQF levels 7 and 8, and for courses at levels 9 to 11 if the student is not studying towards an Honours degree. However, this entitlement may be reduced as a result of the following:

- Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements;
- Failure to make satisfactory academic progress may mean that a student is excluded from study before having had four attempts at one or more courses;
- Progression requirements: some programmes require passes in core courses in Year 2 (and some cases Year 1) at the first attempt; while the student may be able to take further attempts at assessments, they cannot proceed with the same programme of study and may be required to transfer onto an Ordinary or General degree.

Honours and postgraduate taught students are entitled to one attempt for assessments on courses at SCQF levels 9 or higher. In some cases, students are entitled to more than one attempt at Honours or PGT level if there are PSRB requirements.

In considering the current approach, the Task Group raised the following issues:

- Confusion among students regarding the academic requirements to continue their studies (especially where they have not met requirements to progress to the next year of programme);
- Inconsistency in treatment of students regarding whether four attempts should be offered as an “entitlement”;
- Some students “gaming” the system by skipping some exams/resits in order to split their diets;
- A lack of clarity within the regulations regarding what constitutes “unsatisfactory academic progress”.

2. Benchmarking

The Group was presented with benchmarking information regarding entitlement to resits within the sector (Russell Group and Scotland), finding that the current UoE arrangements are broadly comparable to those elsewhere in Scotland, but that it was common to include a discretionary element to any entitlement to resits.

Data provided by Student Systems indicated that the numbers of students availing themselves of third and fourth attempts for non-Honours courses was significant.

3. Options considered

The Group initially considered two options for a revised approach to regulation around resits and academic failure for non-Honours students:

1. Offering two attempts as an entitlement, with a discretionary allowance of up to a further two attempts offered by the College or School;
2. Offering four attempts as an absolute entitlement.

The Group favoured the former approach, consulting with Colleges regarding a set of proposed regulations based on sub-Honours (or non-Honours) undergraduate students having an entitlement to two assessment attempts, with a further two attempts being offered at the discretion of the College (delegated to the School).

4. Consultation

The proposals were discussed at each College's Learning and Teaching Committee. Colleagues were supportive of efforts to promote consistency of approach across Schools and Colleges, but no clear consensus emerged regarding the proposals. Some colleagues raised significant concerns regarding the use of a discretionary allowance of resit attempts, or favoured the clarity provided by an absolute entitlement to four attempts; others shared concerns that an absolute entitlement may prevent early conversations with students regarding failure, and result in students with no realistic prospect of making academic progress taking additional years of study. Across the Colleges, however, colleagues presented a relatively consistent picture regarding the application of the current regulations, with students generally being offered up to four assessment attempts for sub-Honours courses.

In discussing the response to the consultation, the Group agreed that there was not sufficient consensus to justify making significant changes to the policy underpinning the regulations. The Group were reassured that the approach across Colleges appeared to be broadly consistent, irrespective of issues with the current regulations. The Group agreed to attempt to clarify the existing regulations based around the status quo.

5. Proposals

The proposed changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations and Undergraduate Degree Regulations in Appendix 1 maintain the existing policy position regarding resits, as outlined in section 1 of this paper. In addition to making a number of minor clarifications, they also include the following changes:

- Reorganisation of existing content of Resit assessment regulation to promote key principles of resit assessment.
- Content added explaining that some Honours programmes require passes in specified courses at the first attempt in order to progress to Honours ('elevated hurdles').
- Explicit statement added that "unsatisfactory academic progress" means "failure to meet relevant criteria for progression". The regulations refer to the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies for details regarding the process of managing unsatisfactory academic progress.
- Reorganised and removed redundant content regarding Fitness to Practise.
- Content added clarifying that, where students progress with a credit deficit, they must ultimately obtain the missing credits.

- Content added relating to repeat years, in which students who are unable to progress may return to study on a full-time, part-time, or assessment-only basis, in order to address a credit deficit and seek to progress in the subsequent year.

CSPC is requested to approve the proposed changes to regulation.

6. Implementation and Communication

If CSPC approves the proposed changes to regulation, these will be highlighted in the communication sent to Schools and Colleges by Academic Services regarding new and updated policies in June. Academic Services also take part in College briefings for academic and professional staff, where any questions regarding the changes can be addressed.

14th February 2017

Professor Alan Murray, Assistant Principal Academic Support

Adam Bunni, Academic Services

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to regulation

Taught Assessment Regulations, 2017/18

Regulation 27 Resit assessment

Undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 7 and 8. Non-honours undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11. Honours and taught postgraduate students are entitled to one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless ~~P~~professional, ~~S~~tatutory or ~~R~~egulatory ~~B~~body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Application of the regulation

~~27.1~~ Boards of Examiners must publish the requirements for resits for those programmes that they are responsible for. Boards must take the same approach to resits for all students on a particular course, except where a student's previous attempt is a null sit.

Commented [BA1]: Currently 27.9.

~~27.2~~ Boards of Examiners must set requirements at resit that are as demanding as those made of students at the first attempt.

Commented [BA2]: Currently 27.10.

~~27.3~~ Boards of Examiners will inform students who are required to undertake resit assessment of the format of their resit assessment. Resit methods need not be the same as those used to assess the learning outcomes at the first attempt, but all relevant learning outcomes must be assessed. Resit arrangements must give students a genuine opportunity to pass the course. Boards of Examiners choose between two options to achieve this:

Commented [BA3]: Currently 27.11. First sentence rewritten to provide greater clarity. Content regarding options edited to remove redundant content.

(a) Carry forward any component of assessment (coursework or examination) that has been passed already and require the student to retake the failed element.

(b) Set an assessment covering all learning outcomes for the course, and weight this as 100% of the course result.

Commented [BA4]: Edited to reflect the fact that the assessment need not be an examination.

~~27.4~~ Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed.

Commented [BA5]: Currently 27.5. Removed text "in order to obtain a better mark". Students are not allowed to resit a course or component that they have passed for any reason.

~~27.5~~⁴ The four assessment attempts are the initial assessment and a maximum of three further assessment opportunities, of full assessment, examination or coursework only basis, at the next available opportunities. There may be PSRB requirements which mean that fewer than four assessment attempts are permitted.

~~27.6~~² The first sitting and subsequent attempts must take place over no more than two academic sessions, unless the relevant College grants an exemption.

~~27.7~~³ Non-attendance or non-submission is considered an assessment attempt.

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to regulation

~~27.8~~ Some Honours programmes require students to pass specified courses at the first attempt in the first or second year in order to progress to Junior Honours. Any such requirements will be specified in the Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook for the relevant programme.

Commented [BA6]: New content.

~~27.94~~ Where an assessment attempt has been affected by special circumstances, a Board of Examiners may declare this attempt a null sit. A null sit is where an assessment attempt is set aside by the Board of Examiners, usually due to special circumstances. Null sits do not count toward the maximum number of permitted attempts. (See taught assessment regulation 63.)

Commented [BA7]: Revised content for clarity.

~~27.5~~ Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed in order to obtain a better mark.

Commented [BA8]: New 27.4.

27.106 Re-assessment attempts are not generally permitted for courses at level SQCF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students since the award of Honours and taught postgraduate degrees permit the award of credit on aggregate (see Taught Assessment Regulations 52, 54, 56, 57). Where resits are permitted for professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements, any award, classification or progression decision must use the result obtained on the first attempt.

Commented [BA9]: Reference added for clarity.

27.117 The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee decides whether a programme may offer resits which are required for professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements for courses at SCQF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students. This decision is based on a case proposed by the relevant College. The number of resits for these requirements may be limited to fewer than the maximum permitted.

Commented [BA10]: Removed as this is covered above.

27.128 Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area "EEA" nationals) may have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. UK government legislation in this area supersedes academic regulations. For example, maximum time limits on how long the length of time that a non-EEA national can study in the UK are in place which may reduce a non-EEA student's scope for taking resits in the same way as EEA/UK students. The International Office provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations and may be contacted to verify the implication of a resit opportunity for a non-EEA student: Email: isas@ed.ac.uk

27.132 If repetition of the in-course assessed work is not possible in the vacation, the student, with the permission of the relevant Head of School, may be allowed to repeat the any coursework alone in the following year. Students who do not receive such permission may be permitted by the relevant Head of School to repeat the course, including examination, in the following year.

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to regulation

~~27.143~~ The full range of marks offered by the relevant Common Marking Scheme is available at resit assessment. Resit marks are not capped, but see 27.6 above.

Commented [BA11]: Revised for clarity.

27.154 Where a degree programme's Honours classification is based on the final year only, ~~e.g. some programmes within ECA, then~~ students are permitted a maximum of four assessment attempts for ~~their courses in non-honours years~~ courses in non-final years.

Commented [BA12]: Removed some redundant content.

27.165 In the case of collaborative degrees, where not otherwise stipulated in the collaborative agreement, any permitted ~~second-resit~~ attempt must normally be within two years of the first attempt.

Regulation 67 Unsatisfactory academic progress

The University may exclude students who do not ~~make satisfactory academic progress or do not engage with their studies~~ meet the criteria for progression on their programme.

Commented [BA13]: Revised to make clearer that "satisfactory academic progress" means meeting progression criteria. Non-engagement is not a matter for the Assessment Regulations.

Application of the regulation

67.1 ~~Degree Regulations~~, Degree Programme Tables, programme handbooks and/or course handbooks **must** contain details of the progress which students are expected to achieve within given periods. ~~They must also include, and~~ warnings that students are liable to be considered for exclusion if these expectations are not fulfilled met.

Commented [BA14]: Added reference to Degree Regulations.

~~67.2~~ Students who on the published progression criteria are regarded as potentially unsatisfactory are notified of this and are normally interviewed before any recommendation for exclusion is made to the College.

Commented [BA15]: Removed, as this is covered by the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies, referenced below.

~~67.32~~ The College is the final judge of the academic basis for exclusion on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress and non-attendance as specified in the degree regulations. The student has the right to appeal to the Appeal Committee on specific grounds. Where a student fails to meet the published progression criteria, the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies will be used. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

Commented [BA16]: Content removed where this is covered by the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies.

~~67.4~~ A student declared to have made unsatisfactory academic progress by the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine in the MBChB, BVM&S or other professional programmes is normally excluded from attendance at classes and examinations in these programmes.

Commented [BA17]: Removed due to repetition.

~~67.5~~ A student declared to have made unsatisfactory academic progress within the University may be required to withdraw from classes but is entitled to apply to the relevant College for permission to re-enter for examination only in order to attempt to recover satisfactory progress status.

Commented [BA18]: Removed as covered by Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies, and Degree Regulations.

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to regulation

~~67.73~~ Some degree programmes leading to professional qualification include Fitness to Practise considerations. Any issues of unsatisfactory progress in relation to fitness to practise are dealt with according to the University's **relevant College's published** Fitness to Practise procedures. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/fitness_to_practise.pdf

67.64 A student declared to have made unsatisfactory progress under professional Fitness to Practise requirements is normally excluded from all further attendance at classes and examinations leading to the professional qualification, but is entitled to apply to the College for permission to re-enter for assessment in a suitable alternative programme **which does not lead**ing to a professional qualification.

~~67.7~~ Some degree programmes leading to professional qualification include Fitness to Practise considerations. Any issues of unsatisfactory progress in relation to fitness to practise are dealt with according to the University's Fitness to Practise procedures. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/fitness_to_practise.pdf

Commented [BA19]: New 67.3.

Undergraduate Degree Regulations, 2017/18

36. Students must attain the credits and other requirements for each stage of study, as outlined in the relevant Degree Programme Table. In addition, students must meet any other requirements set out in their programme and/or course handbook. ~~In order to progress, a full-time student must attain the following minimum number of credits (pro-rata for a part-time student):~~

Commented [BA20]: Content moved down to reflect chronology.

37. Any student who has not attained the **full volume of required** credit points for their year of **study programme by the end of the relevant session** (e.g. 120 credits for full-time students) may be required to take resit exams, supplementary or alternative assessments, or additional courses to make good the deficit ~~where permitted~~.

38. In order to progress **to the next year of programme**, a full-time student must attain the following minimum number of credits ~~(pro-rata for a part-time student):~~

Commented [BA21]: Text added for clarity.

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

Where a programme requires students to attain more than the minimum number of credits in order to progress, this will be specified in the relevant Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook.

Commented [BA22]: Text added for clarity.

~~37. Any student who has not attained the required credit points for their year of study (e.g. 120 credits for full-time students) may be required to take resit exams,~~

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to regulation

~~supplementary or alternative assessments, or additional courses to make good the deficit where permitted.~~

39. Where students are allowed to progress with a credit deficit, they will be required to obtain the missing credits in order to qualify for the relevant award.

Commented [BA23]: New content.

~~4038.~~ Students who do not attain sufficient credits to progress within the specified period may be excluded for unsatisfactory academic progress. The College will follow the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies:

Commented [BA24]: Text added for clarity.

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

41. The College may offer students who are unable to progress due to a credit deficit the opportunity to return to study the following year in order to seek to address this deficit. Such a return to study without progression may be offered on a full-time, part-time, or assessment-only basis.

Commented [BA25]: New content.

13th February 2017

Appendix 2: Remit and membership of Task Group

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

Short-life Task Group: Resits and Academic Failure

Remit

To review and propose revisions to the University's regulations and related policies (e.g. Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies) surrounding the issues of resit entitlement and failure to make academic progress. The revised regulations should provide clarity as to how far any entitlement to resits extends, and in what circumstances this entitlement may be reduced.

Membership

- Professor Alan Murray, Assistant Principal, Academic Support (Convener)
- Mr Alan Brown, Senior Lecturer, Business School (CHSS academic member)
- Ms Heather Tracey, Undergraduate Manager, School of Law (CHSS administration member)
- Dr Claire Phillips, Senior Lecturer, RDSVS (CMVM academic member)
- Ms Nicola Crowley, CMVM Undergraduate Manager (CMVM administration member)
- Dr Antony Maciocia, Dean of Students, Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics (CSE academic member)
- Ms Sarah McAllister, Head of Student Services, School of Geosciences (CSE administration member)
- Mr Patrick Garrett, EUSA Vice-President Academic Affairs (EUSA member)
- Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Moderation Policy Review – update and recommendations

Executive Summary

This paper updates the Committee on progress regarding the review of policy on moderation, and invites the Committee to consider a range of options. If the Committee supports these options, Academic Services will present more specific proposals to a future meeting.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's strategic objective of leadership in learning

Action requested

The Committee is invited to:

- Discuss the findings of the review; and
- Decide whether to support a range of options;
- Consider whether further consultation with Schools is required before more specific proposals for any of these options are presented to the Committees.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

If the Committee supports any changes to regulations / policies, Academic Services will communicate these as part of its annual update on regulations and policies. Depending on the agreed way forward, Academic Services may consider additional communications activities.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The operation of moderation processes has significant resource implications for Schools. Assuming that Schools are currently undertaking reasonable moderation processes, the range of options available to the Committee would not lead to any significant changes in these resource implications. Indeed, the proposal to 'myth bust' (e.g. regarding the requirement for double-marking) may encourage Schools to make more efficient use of resources.

2. Risk assessment

The paper is designed to assist the University to manage the risks associated with its moderation practices.

3. Equality and Diversity

While effective moderation processes can assist the University to ensure that all students are fairly treated, the specific options in the paper are unlikely to have any equality and diversity implications. Academic Services will however conduct a formal Equality Impact Assessment regarding any proposed changes to regulations and policies.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, March 2017

In consultation with: Assistant Principal Prof Susan Rhind, Dr Neil Lent (Institute for Academic Development), Service Excellence Programme, Fraser Muir (Chief Information Officer, CAHSS), Chris Giles (Student Systems).

Moderation Policy Review – update and recommendations

1 Background

At its 17 March 2016 meeting, the Committee agreed to launch a review of the University's Moderation Policy, with a view to:

- Simplifying University-level documentation; and
- Exploring the potential for Institute for Academic Development (IAD) information and resources on moderation.

2 Current University policy and guidance documentation regarding moderation of taught assessment

The following are the current University documents regarding moderation:

- Taught Assessment Regulations (regulation 31) (mandatory)
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf
- Principles of Internal Moderation of Taught Assessment (has the status of guidance)
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/moderation_guidance.pdf
- University Glossary of Terms (entry on 'moderation') (has the status of non-mandatory guidance)
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2016-17.pdf
- Method of scaling of marks approved by the University's Academic Policy Group on 21 May 2008 as part of the EUCLID project (status unclear – was mandatory at the time, but unclear if still stands) (See Annex A)

Web analytics suggests that Schools and Colleges are making some use of the 'Principles' document, with c. 300 unique internal users accessing it between September 2016 and January 2017, and with clear peaks during the September and January board of examiner diets. This is the 25th most popular Academic Services policy / regulation / form, out of c140, accounting for 1% of all hits on the Academic Services website. This suggests that there is some demand from staff for policy or guidance on moderation, whether or not the current documentation is helpful.

3 Quality Assurance Agency requirements

The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning) sets out expectations regarding moderation. The relevant section of the Code is attached as Annex B.

In general, the University's current documentation on moderation is aligned to the Quality Code. However, in several specific respects, the University documentation does not address the Code's expectations:

- Moderation of forms of assessment that do not involve the production of physical evidence. Assessments of this kind include various types of performance or presentation (for example, in the creative and performing arts);
- Definitions of first and second marking;
- How agreement will be reached on the final marks to be awarded.

4 Results of consultation with Colleges

During Semester One, 2016-17 Academic Services sought views from Colleges regarding:

- The approaches to moderation currently taken by Schools; and
- What additional advice or support on moderation the University should provide, and in what format.

Academic Services also invited Colleges to comment on some proposals for simplifying existing University-level documentation. Academic Services received responses from:

- The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Postgraduate Committee and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee;
- The Dean of Undergraduate Studies in CAHSS; and
- Three Schools in the College of Science and Engineering, one School in CAHSS, and one School in CMVM.

While the level of engagement with this consultation has been relatively modest, feedback suggests that:

- Colleagues support the idea of simplifying documentation regarding moderation;
- There is also support for highlighting the University's policy on moderation in order to 'myth bust' regarding University requirements and discourage

Schools to undertake excessive and unnecessary moderation processes in order to satisfy individual External Examiners;

- There are mixed views regarding how to conceptualise and differentiate different aspects of moderation. For example:
 - One College suggested differentiating between Calibration / standardisation (markers gaining a shared understanding of marking criteria); moderation (reactive, involving changing marks); monitoring (review of process);
 - Another College suggested differentiating standard setting (scaling) from other aspects of moderation.
- There are mixed views regarding whether further guidance / advice (e.g. from IAD) would be welcomed. Where colleagues welcomed the idea of further guidance / advice, they highlighted the following:
 - How to operate moderation for the full range of assessment types? (The current University '*Principles of Internal Moderation of Taught Assessment*' is focussed predominantly on traditional humanities / social science assessment models)
 - How Schools should approach sample-based moderation while ensuring that students whose work is not sampled are not disadvantaged;
 - How Schools should reconcile disparate marks from double marking;
 - What level of difference between markers Schools should tolerate;
 - How to approach standard-setting for small cohort sizes.
- The current entry in the Glossary for the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Studies should be amended to take account of the outcome of the review.

5 Views of External Examiners

A review of UG and PGT External Examiners' reports (using the External Examiner Reporting System) indicates that:

- The vast majority of External Examiners are content that appropriate moderation processes are operating, that the staff are operating these processes diligently, and that the relevant School has provided an adequate audit trail to demonstrate the operation of these arrangements (for example, moderation forms providing a record of who conducted the marking and moderation). In some cases, External Examiners consider the arrangements to be exemplary.
- Where External Examiners raise issues regarding moderation, the most common issue is the absence of an adequate audit trail regarding how moderation had been conducted. For example, the absence of moderation

forms or equivalent, or insufficient information in them regarding aspects of the process.

- A small number of External Examiners raised issues regarding the operation of double marking, either because they wanted to see double marking rather than sample moderation (in circumstances in which the University does not require double marking), because they wanted to see double blind marking rather than double marking, or because there was insufficient clarity regarding the process for arriving at a final agreed mark where the two markers disagree. In addition, several External Examiners noted that if double marking is conducted by lots of different markers there also needs to be a moderation process to ensure consistency across the course. One External Examiner suggested that double marking is excessive and the School should move to sample-based moderation.

6 School level practices

Two Schools provided their School-level guidelines regarding moderation, and another two Schools provided an overview of how their moderation processes operate. While this is a small sample, it nonetheless suggests a fair degree of variability regarding how different Schools interpret the University's requirements for moderation, for example regarding:

- What form of moderation is required for low stakes assessments;
- The proportion of assessments to be reviewed when moderating.

Feedback from the EUCLID Assessment and Progression Tools Project (APT), and the Service Excellence Programme, also suggest that there is a wide degree of variation in moderation practices across the University.

7 Sector Benchmarking

Prior to presenting the paper to the Committee in March 2016 proposing the review, Academic Services conducted a desk-based review of moderation information provided by other institutions.

This benchmarking shows a range of broad approaches operate in the sector, including:

- Approaches that set out a broad institutional policy framework and provide Schools flexibility; and
- More prescriptive central frameworks that specify, for example, minimum standards regarding the proportion of assessments to be reviewed when moderating and the process for resolving differences between markers and moderators.

From the sample of institutions benchmarked, it appears that the majority of (but not all) institutions have more prescriptive policies / regulations than Edinburgh.

For further information on the benchmarking see Paper CSPC 15/16 4 M:

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20160317agendaandpapers.pdf

8 Double marking

A March 2015 query on the Academic Registrars Council: Assessment Practitioners Group indicated that the University's approach to double marking (to require it for all components of assessment of 40 credits or more, but not for other types of assessment) is in line with typical sector practice, although some institutions do apply a more stringent policy, either of requiring double marking for a wider range of assessments, or specifying double blind marking. Academic Services' 2016 benchmarking confirms this position.

While this review has provided relatively little evidence that double-marking is happening when the Regulations do not require it, anecdotal evidence (e.g. from the Assessment and Progression Tools project, APT) does suggest that this is the case in some areas of the University. While some internal and external examiners do value the additional rigour that double-marking provides, it can be a disproportionate use of staff time.

9 Systems supporting the moderation process

APT has developed functionality within EUCLID to support assessment processes. In addition to providing functionality to support standard-setting (see below), it also supports recording of the outcomes of marking and moderation processes. For example, it can record first and subsequent markers' name and the marks they have assigned, calculate and record the reconciliation of marks, and add notes regarding changes to provisional marks. This functionality is relatively flexible and will allow it to record the outcomes of a range of different approaches to moderation, for example double marking or sample-based marking, different approaches to reconciling the marks of the first and subsequent markers (e.g. options to accept an average of the two marks or assign an amended mark).

The University's Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), and their tools for online submission, marking and feedback (eg Turnitin GradeMark, Learn and PebblePad Atlas) can provide limited support for a range of approaches to moderation, although in some cases it is necessary for Schools to deploy time-consuming workarounds, for example using them in conjunction with local spreadsheets or other systems. It is particularly difficult for these tools to support double-blind marking. If there were greater standardisation regarding how

Schools approach moderation (e.g. a single approach to double-blind marking) there would be more scope to develop solutions to support them within the VLEs.

10 Standard-setting and scaling

Standard setting is the process whereby decisions are made about boundaries or 'cut-points' between groups of candidates. Most commonly this decision focusses on those who pass and those who fail but the process can also be applied to other boundaries e.g. those who gain distinction and those who do not.

Standards can be described as relative (norm referenced), absolute (criterion referenced) or as a compromise between the two. The practice of standard setting is typically used when each element of the assessment is marked on the basis of objective criteria (for example for Multiple-Choice Questions) and does not allow the marker to assess directly a student's achievement in relation to the relevant Common Mark Scheme. From the limited information provided by Schools and Colleges, along with feedback from the APT project, it appears that a variety of methodologies are operating for conducting standard-setting including the Angoff, Ebel and Hoftee Methods in MVM, and two-point 'linear scaling' in CSE (Mathematics and Engineering). In this latter context, it is being used as a post hoc mechanism to standard set based on overall cohort performance and is supported by tools in the APT project.

While the University agreed a formal policy on standard-setting in 2008 (see Annex A), this policy has not been widely communicated in recent years and it is likely that not all Schools are aware of it. While there is a large amount of research regarding the merits of different approaches to standard-setting, there is no 'gold standard' in the sector. As such, it may be appropriate to allow Schools the flexibility to choose methodologies that are appropriate for them, provided they are defensible and the rationale is clearly communicated to students in advance.

There is some qualitative data from analysis of free-text responses to the National Student Survey that suggests that some students in some Schools may not understand the rationale for the operation of standard-setting arrangements.

11 Tutors and Demonstrators who contribute to the assessment process

The Senate Researcher Experience Committee is in the process of reviewing the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators. At present, it is seeking views on a new Policy to replace the Code. The current draft Policy includes some provisions regarding the importance of providing appropriate levels of support and supervision for tutors and demonstrators who undertake assessment duties (see Annex C). For further information on the review, see:

12 General conclusions

External Examiners appear generally content with the moderation arrangements in operation, and Schools and Colleges appear to have had a relatively low appetite for engagement with this review. The University's current approach is to set out a very small set of basic requirements for moderation and to allow Schools considerable flexibility regarding how to operate moderation. This framework is higher-level and more permissive than the majority of institutions covered by the benchmarking. While it is clear that there are diverse moderation practices in operation in Schools, this review has not provided any evidence that this is leading to the adoption of inappropriate practices.

While there is evidence of potential systems / process benefits in achieving greater standardisation, further work would be required to assess whether those potential benefits are sufficiently compelling to justify the major cultural and business change that would be associated with introducing significantly more prescriptive policy in this area, and whether there is a sufficiently strong case for investment in system development. The Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme is planning to evaluate these issues in 2017-18.

Overall, while there are no grounds to consider major changes to the University's current approach to policy regarding moderation at this stage, there are grounds to clarify some key aspects of existing policy and to provide enhanced guidance to encourage Schools to move towards more standardised practices.

13 Options for discussion

The Committee is invited to consider the following options for enhancing current arrangements. If the Committee supports these options, Academic Services will present more specific proposals to a future meeting for the Committee's approval.

13.1 *Simplify existing University documentation*

There appears to be broad support for simplifying the existing University documentation by deleting the current Principles of Internal Moderation of Taught Assessment and incorporating relevant provisions into the Taught Assessment Regulations. The review has however identified no grounds for adding significant additional University policy or regulation regarding moderation. **The Committee is invited to confirm** whether it supports this broad approach of maintaining broadly the current level of regulation, while simplifying the documentation in which it is presented, and addressing the specific policy issues in 13.2 and 13.4.

If so, specific proposals for changes to the regulations will be presented to the Committee's meeting on 6 April 2016. The consequence of incorporating elements of the Principles into the Taught Assessment Regulations will be that these provisions will become mandatory (rather than non-mandatory guidance, as is the case at present).

13.2 Clarify policy on moderating across related courses

The Committee is invited to discuss whether the Taught Assessment Regulations should make it explicit that Boards of Examiners should have arrangements for moderating across related courses (for example, Honours options in a subject area) as well as within courses, in order to address one of the policy issues that led to this review.

13.3 Clarify policy regarding tutors and demonstrators involved in assessment

The Committee is invited to confirm whether it is content with the section of the draft Policy regarding the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators (see Annex C).

13.4 Clarify University policy and guidance on standard-setting

The Committee is invited to agree to add to the Taught Assessment Regulations the following statement of the principles that Schools should follow when utilising standard-setting:

- Standard setting can be relative (taking into account the performance of candidates), absolute (defining minimal levels of competence) or a compromise between these two approaches;
- Any standard setting process must aim to ensure that students' results reflect the learning outcomes they have achieved and that the assessment is fair.
- When operating standard-setting, Schools must be transparent about the method they are applying and clearly explain this to students at the start of the course.

The Committee is also invited to agree to delete the 2008 Policy (Annex A) and allow Schools the flexibility to adopt approaches to standard setting which are suitable to their assessments and professional requirements, on the understanding that Student Systems have no current plans to develop EUCLID to provide functionality to support methods other than the version of two-point linear approach currently supported by the system. As such, if Schools wish to operate alternate methodologies, they would need to utilise local systems.

13.5 Develop new Institute for Academic Development (IAD) information and resources on moderation

The current Principles of Internal Moderation of Taught Assessment includes an Annex setting out some possible approaches to moderation. Currently, this is the only resource that the University provides regarding moderation, beyond the formal regulations and policies. This resource would no longer exist if the Committee supports the plan to delete the Principles document and incorporate relevant sections into the Taught Assessment Regulations. Although this review suggests that there are mixed views regarding the general idea of IAD developing new information and resources on moderation, it did highlight a range of issues on which Schools may benefit from advice and guidance (rather than policy and regulation), as well as several aspects of the Quality Code not currently addressed in University documentation

The Committee is invited to confirm whether it would like the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to develop new information and resources on moderation, for example by incorporating moderation into IAD workshops and web materials on assessments, to replace the material in the Principles document. If so, **it is invited to agree to an approach based on** defining a standard method for each approach to moderation. This would allow Schools the flexibility to select approaches to moderation that suit them, but would provide them with clear guidance (but not mandatory regulation or policy) on how to implement whichever approach they choose, for example, how to:

- Double-mark;
- Reach agreement on the final marks to be awarded when there is disagreement between the maker and moderator;
- Moderate forms of assessment that do not involve the production of physical evidence, such as performance or presentation;
- Select an appropriate sample size when undertaking sample-based moderation (e.g. whether to review all fails and 'borderline' candidates);
- Moderate across related courses.

13.6 Myth bust

There appears to be broad support for highlighting the University's policies and regulations on moderation (eg via a Frequently Asked Questions approach) in order to 'myth bust' regarding University requirements and discourage Schools to undertake excessive and unnecessary moderation processes. Possible issues to highlight include:

- That the University's regulations regarding moderation are relatively permissive, leaving Schools the flexibility to design approaches to moderation that are appropriate to their assessments;

- That the University only requires double-marking for single items of 40 credits or more, and that, in order to make efficient use of staff time and to allow for prompt feedback to students, Schools are discouraged from double-marking in other situations.

The Committee is invited to confirm if it supports the idea of 'myth-busting' activities, then the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback) and Academic Services would coordinate them, after any changes to regulations have been agreed and published.

Annex A

The University of Edinburgh Academic Policy Committee

21 May 2008

Report of the Assessment Working Group Proposal paper

Introduction

- 1.1 This paper presents the Assessment Working Group's proposals for a unified mechanism for the University's assessment activities and asks Academic Policy Committee to recommend that the EUCLID Project should progress on that basis.
- 1.2 This document outlines proposals for harmonising our assessment practices in the following four areas:
- marking schemes;
 - scaling;
 - criteria for passing courses; and
 - criteria for progression to honours.
- 1.3 A process for authorising exceptions to the standard procedures is also proposed.
- Academic Policy Committee is asked to agree:
- 1.1.1 The principles that the University should adhere to in formulating assessment practices, namely that they are:
- 1.1.2
- simple, so as to minimise the probability of error and maximise efficiency;
 - transparent, so that everybody concerned can easily understand them;
 - consistent, so that students in different programmes are, as far as possible, treated the same; and
 - seen as a fair reflection of academic merit by students and by other stakeholders
- 1.1.3 The mechanisms to achieve harmonisation of assessment practices across the University namely:
- 1.4 that the University adopt a unified approach to marking, where all marks returned to students and submitted Boards of Examiners are presented as marks out of 100 (as described in section 4.1);
- that the University adopt a single method for scaling of marks, when scaling is necessary (section 4.2);

- that, where students are required to pass individual parts of the assessment, as well as the course overall, the University adopt a pass mark of 40%, (section 4.3);
- that exceptions to these processes be authorised using the arrangements described in section 4.4;
- that the University aim to harmonise arrangements for progression to honours across all undergraduate programmes of study; and to that end that APC establish a working group to advise on the way to achieve this (section 4.5);

The EUCLID Vision

As part of its cross-cutting supporting goal of delivering quality services, the University has a strategic target to 'agree a plan for radical business process simplification and re-engineering in the student record area', by 2007/08.

EUCLID's primary objective has been to develop a streamlined, modern approach to interacting with enquirers, applicants and students which reflects our international standing and the calibre of our teaching and research. This involves:

- using online technology to communicate with speed and facilitate global access;
- reducing paperwork so that the focus is on core University activities - teaching, research and supporting students and the University;
- developing integrated, efficient processes to be used across the University;
- sharing a single student system that provides accurate student information to everyone who needs it.

Go-live for assessment is scheduled for summer 2009.

The Assessment Working Group

1.1.4 The Assessment Working Group was set up in January 2008 to prepare the University's assessment practices for implementation within EUCLID. The Group, whose membership is attached at 5 Annex A, met four times over the period February-April 2008. The Group agreed the principles that should guide the design of the University's assessment processes, namely that the assessment process should be:

1.1.5

- simple, so as to minimise the probability of error and maximise efficiency;
- transparent, so that everybody concerned can easily understand them;
- consistent, so that students in different programmes are, as far as possible, treated the same; and
- seen as a fair reflection of academic merit by students and by other stakeholders

The group also recognised that the University’s process for assessment would need to be capable of variation in cases of:

- academic necessity, i.e. where variation is required to attain the necessary learning outcomes; and
- external requirements (for example by professional bodies that accredit the university’s programmes, or in certain inter-institutional programmes).

The remainder of this report is a set of proposals for the *standard process*. It would be possible to apply for an exception to any element of this process.

The Proposals

...

4.2 Scaling of marks

The group proposes that scaling within EUCLID should be viewed as “standard setting”, for use on rare occasions where marks for an element of the assessment are adjusted for the whole student cohort.

It is proposed that the University adopt two-point linear scaling, in which marks are anchored at 0 and 100, and where the marks corresponding to a pass and to excellence are chosen (if scaling is to be applied). For example, it might be judged that a raw mark of 35% corresponds to a pass for a particular element of the assessment, in which case the scaling would scale 35% to 40%, with other marks scaled accordingly. This is explained in more detail in Annex B. This is the simplest scheme that allows the setting of standards of passing and excellence, and avoids the possibility of scaled marks outwith the range 0 to 100.

Other scaling mechanisms should no longer be used.

...

1.2 Outline of the two-point linear scaling method of standard setting

1.2.6 (taken from the evaluation scripts from the EUCLID procurement evaluation exercise)

1.3 Definitions

1.3.7 'score' = what the student actually got for the answer

1.3.8 'mark' = what the score represents on the Common Marking Scheme.

1.4 Procedure

1.4.9 A panel of experts decides:

- The score that corresponds to just-pass; call it P.
- The score that corresponds to just-excellent; call it E.

1.4.10 Then the score of P corresponds to a mark of 40%; and E corresponds to 70%.

1.4.11 To convert student scores (s) into marks (m):

1.4.12 We in effect plot a graph of marks on the y-axis against scores on the x-axis. The graph is made up of three straight-line sections. These are:

- From (0,0) to (P,40) gradient = g1
- From (P,40) to (E,70) gradient = g2
- From (E,70) to (100,100) gradient = g3
-

If the student's score (s) is less than the pass score (P):

$$g1 = (40-0)/(P-0) = 40/P$$

$$m = s \times g1$$

If s lies between the pass (P) and excellent (E) scores:

$$g2 = (70-40)/(E-P) = 30/(E-P)$$

$$m = 40 + (s-P) \times g2$$

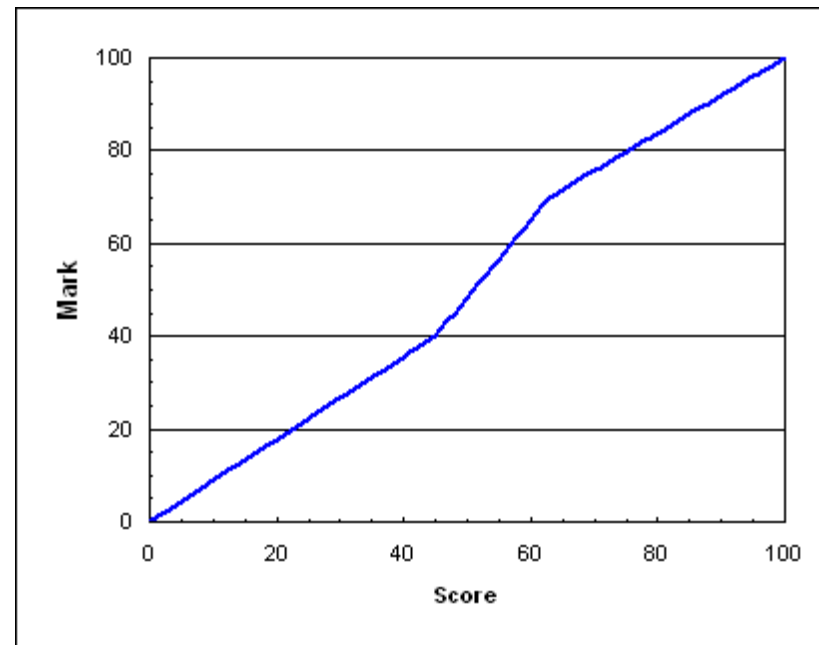
If s lies above the excellent score (E):

$$g3 = (100-70)/(100-E) = 30/(100-E)$$

$$m = 70 + (s-E) \times g3$$

1.5 6.1 Two-point linear scaling method - example of standard setting where P= 45 and E = 63

Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark
0	0						
1	1	26	23	51	50	76	81
2	2	27	24	52	52	77	81
3	3	28	25	53	53	78	82
4	4	29	26	54	55	79	83
5	4	30	27	55	57	80	84
6	5	31	28	56	58	81	85
7	6	32	28	57	60	82	85
8	7	33	29	58	62	83	86
9	8	34	30	59	63	84	87
10	9	35	31	60	65	85	88
11	10	36	32	61	67	86	89
12	11	37	33	62	68	87	89
13	12	38	34	63	70	88	90
14	12	39	35	64	71	89	91
15	13	40	36	65	72	90	92
16	14	41	36	66	72	91	93
17	15	42	37	67	73	92	94
18	16	43	38	68	74	93	94

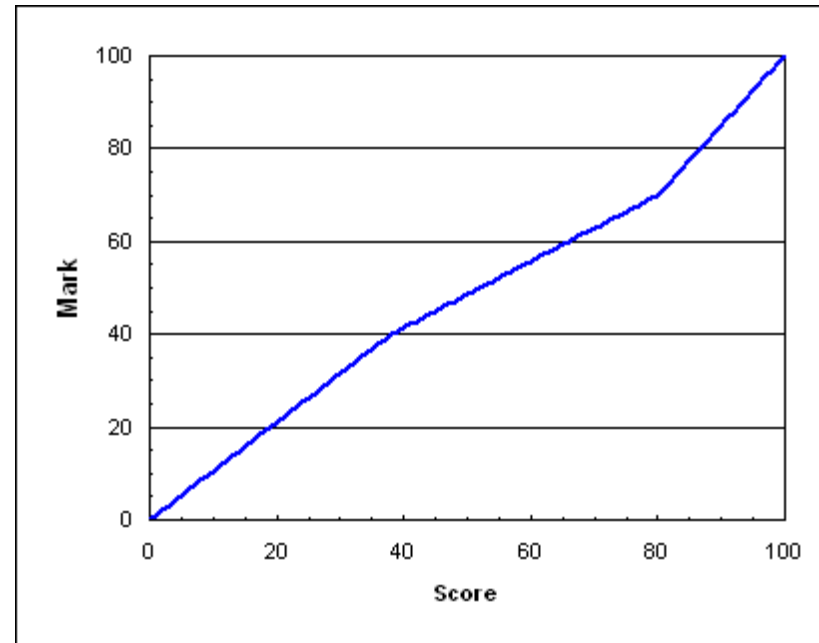


19	17	44	39	69	75	94	95
20	18	45	40	70	76	95	96
21	19	46	42	71	76	96	97
22	20	47	43	72	77	97	98
23	20	48	45	73	78	98	98
24	21	49	47	74	79	99	99
25	22	50	48	75	80	100	100

	Pass	Excellent	Max
Mark:	40	70	100
Score:	45	63	100

1.6 6.2 Two-point linear scaling method - example of standard setting where P= 38 and E = 80

Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark
0	0						
1	1	26	27	51	49	76	67
2	2	27	28	52	50	77	68
3	3	28	29	53	51	78	69
4	4	29	31	54	51	79	69
5	5	30	32	55	52	80	70
6	6	31	33	56	53	81	72
7	7	32	34	57	54	82	73
8	8	33	35	58	54	83	75
9	9	34	36	59	55	84	76
10	11	35	37	60	56	85	78
11	12	36	38	61	56	86	79
12	13	37	39	62	57	87	81
13	14	38	40	63	58	88	82
14	15	39	41	64	59	89	84
15	16	40	41	65	59	90	85
16	17	41	42	66	60	91	87



17	18	42	43	67	61	92	88
18	19	43	44	68	61	93	90
19	20	44	44	69	62	94	91
20	21	45	45	70	63	95	93
21	22	46	46	71	64	96	94
22	23	47	46	72	64	97	96
23	24	48	47	73	65	98	97
24	25	49	48	74	66	99	99
25	26	50	49	75	66	100	100

	Pass	Excellent	Max
Mark:	40	70	100
Score:	38	80	100

Annex B: Extract from Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

Indicator 13

Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process.

Staff involved in marking and moderating student work are guided by clear processes which address the degree-awarding body's requirements. In particular arrangements for, and the degree-awarding body's definitions of, first and second marking are clearly set out and applied, and include guidance on how agreement will be reached on the final marks to be awarded.

...Internal moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and an approach which enables comparability across academic subjects (in particular recognising that students may be studying more than one subject).

Moderation focuses on the marks awarded to the full set of assessed work for a task, module or programme, in the context of the academic standards for the award. It is therefore separate from the question of how differences in marks between two or more markers are resolved, and is not about making changes to an individual student's marks. Staff are clear how moderation will be conducted, for example, through sampling assessed work, reviewing all the marks awarded, and providing opportunities for discussion between moderators to develop shared understandings. They are also clear about what action might be taken where significant differences in marks awarded are identified.

Clear guidance sets out the degree-awarding body's requirements in relation to moderating assessment that does not involve the production of physical evidence. Assessments of this kind include various types of performance or presentation (for example, in the creative and performing arts).

For programmes involving a delivery organisation, the degree-awarding body makes clear its requirements for internal moderation (including the extent and timing of any involvement of degree-awarding body staff working with the delivery organisation), any quantitative information which will

Annex C: Extract from draft Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators

Involvement in assessment and feedback

- 3.5 The Head of School is responsible for appointing markers who contribute to the assessment process. Where the Head of School appoints tutors or demonstrators to undertake assessment and feedback duties, the Course Organiser has responsibility for allocating their duties and for ensuring that the type of work and the manner in which it is undertaken is in accordance with the [University's Taught Assessment Regulations](#).
- 3.6 Where tutors and demonstrators are allocated assessment and feedback duties, the Course Organiser is responsible for supporting and overseeing their work. This will include briefing tutors and demonstrators in advance on how to conduct all relevant aspects of the assessment and feedback process.
- 3.7 The Course Organiser has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate moderation processes are in place and for informing tutors and demonstrators of these arrangements. Typically, Course Organisers will operate more robust moderation processes when marking is undertaken by tutors and demonstrators.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Discontinuation of postgraduate research supervision

Executive Summary

The University's regulations are unclear on what happens in the event that the student-supervisor relationship appears to have broken down. Therefore, a mechanism is required for the rare situations when it is no longer possible for the University to provide supervision for supervised postgraduate research students. The paper proposes additions to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2017/18, and to the Procedure for Exclusion and Withdrawal from Studies. Content is based on the University's Terms and Conditions of Admission. The broad approach was endorsed by Researcher Experience Committee at its November 2016 meeting.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's strategic objective of leadership in learning and leadership in research.

Action requested

CSPC is invited to consider the proposed addition to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Approved changes to regulations will be communicated by Academic Services annual update on regulations and policies.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

No resource implications.

2. Risk assessment

The paper contains a risk assessment.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper contains discussion of relevant equality and diversity issues. Academic Services will update the relevant Equality Impact Assessments if CSPC supports the proposals.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

Adam Bunni, Susan Hunter, Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Services, February 2017

Discontinuation of postgraduate research supervision

1. Background

Where a supervisor becomes unavailable, the University will, wherever possible, seek to allocate an appropriate alternative. On very rare occasions, the University finds itself in a position where it is no longer possible to provide adequate supervision to an individual postgraduate research student. Existing University policy and regulations are unclear on how to approach this situation. To address this, Academic Services propose to include regulations regarding changes to supervision in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2017/18, and add procedural elements to the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies.

The intent to amend the regulations to clarify this issue was endorsed by the Researcher Experience Committee (REC). At its November meeting, REC gave particular consideration to situations where the supervisory relationship has broken down, recognising that it is important that support is available for both student and supervisor. REC also acknowledged that there may be a gap in supervisor training and support when the supervisory relationship breaks down. The Committee endorsed an approach which involved pursuing any reasonable options for continuation, including mediation where possible. The Committee, however, accepted that there may be circumstances where it is no longer possible to provide appropriate supervision, and agreed that students could not be permitted to continue on programme without appropriate supervision.

Academic Services have, therefore, sought to draft regulatory changes which clarify the Colleges' responsibilities with regard to changes of supervision, and provide a mechanism for a student's exit from the University where supervision is discontinued. The proposed regulations make clear that Colleges and Schools will make all reasonable efforts to provide adequate supervision, with exclusion from studies considered only as a last resort.

CSPC is requested to **approve** the proposed changes to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations, and the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies in section 4 of this paper.

2. Risk Assessment

The absence currently of a mechanism to curtail the programme of a student for whom no supervision can be provided presents a risk of students remaining at the University without adequate supervision. Continuing to study without adequate support from a supervisor would not be in a research student's interest, since it would leave them at far greater risk of failing to attain the required standard for their degree. This would also lead to the University failing in its stated obligations to provide supervision and support to a student. Were this to occur, the student may have recourse to an academic appeal, complaint, or the pursuit of legal action. In these circumstances, the University would not be in a position to demonstrate that it had met its obligations towards the student as regards supervision. Under the proposed regulatory changes, a student for whom no supervision can be provided may be excluded from the University. Although this may occur only very rarely, it does have the potential to cause distress to the affected student.

3. Equality and Diversity

Anecdotal evidence suggests that mental ill health, or other disability which may impact upon a student's interpersonal behaviour, may be a factor in some cases involving a breakdown of the student/supervisor relationship. Support for students with mental health issues is offered to students by the Student Disability and Student Counselling services. The University is committed to pursuing mediation where possible in cases of breakdown in supervisory relationship, or providing alternative supervision where this is appropriate. However, the University is required to balance its obligation to support disabled students, with its obligations towards the University community as a whole. As explained above, where supervision cannot be provided in spite of all reasonable efforts, it is not in the interests of a student to continue to study without the support of a supervisor.

4. Proposed regulatory changes

a) Draft content for inclusion in Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2017/18

36. Changes to Supervision

The College is responsible for decisions on changes to supervisory arrangements and for notifying students of any changes to their supervisory arrangements at the earliest opportunity. The College reserves the right to:

- make variations to supervisory arrangements;
- alter the approach to methods of delivery of supervision;
- discontinue supervision, due to events outside the College's reasonable control or if the College considers that such action is reasonably necessary, such as in order to appropriately manage its resources, comply with changes in law or comply with the instructions of the University's regulators or a professional body.

Where the College discontinues supervision, this will be handled in line with the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies. In such cases, the College will take reasonable steps to support the student to negotiate a transfer to another institution.

b) Draft content for inclusion in Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

Exclusion due to discontinuation of supervision (for supervised Postgraduate Research Students)

xx. The Postgraduate Degree Regulations provide examples of circumstances in which the College may determine that it is no longer able to provide appropriate supervision.

xx. Where the College is considering discontinuing supervision, the Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will normally invite the affected student for interview.

xx. The interview may be carried out electronically (for example by video, web-camera). The outcome of that interview will be one of the following:

- a) The student cannot continue with their studies under current arrangements, but is permitted to continue their studies under other options permitted by University regulations;

- b) The College may take reasonable steps to support the student to negotiate a transfer to another institution;
- c) The student may voluntarily withdraw permanently from studies;
- d) The student may be excluded from the University. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an exit qualification will be considered.

xx. Students should recognise that the full range of options does not apply in every case, as it may depend on the year and nature of the programme and the status of the student. Exclusion from studies will only be invoked after other available options have been considered and may only be authorised by the Head of College (or delegated authorising officer).

xx. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.

Adam Bunni, Susan Hunter, Stuart Fitzpatrick
Academic Services
February 2017

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

**Senate Committee Planning
2017-18**

Executive Summary

In Spring 2016, the Committee noted that a new two-stage approach to planning the work of the Senate Committees would apply for planning for 2017-18. In line with this new approach, in autumn 2016 the Committee had an opportunity to identify any major developments that may require resourcing via the planning round. The Committee is now being invited to have a broader discussion of priorities for the coming session.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Objective of Leadership in Learning, and with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to identify any high priority projects that it would like to take forward in 2017-18.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

On 20 April 2017, the Senate Committees' Away Day will discuss the four Senate Committees' ideas for 2017-18. Academic Services will then submit the plans to Senate on 31 May 2017, and will then communicate them more widely using the Senate Committees' Newsletter. College representatives on the Committee are encouraged to discuss the plans with their Schools.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Yes. The paper will assist the University to use its resources strategically. Any priorities identified by the Committee must be possible to implement within existing resources, since it is too late in the planning round for 2017-18 to make a case for new projects.

2. Risk assessment

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

3. Equality and Diversity

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake an equality and diversity assessment.

4. Freedom of information

For inclusion in open business

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 1 March 2017

Senate Committee Planning 2017-18

This paper invites the Committee to identify priorities for the coming session.

Background - 2016-17 plans

At its meeting on 1 June 2016, Senate endorsed the Committees' plans for 2016-17, see Paper B at:

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/agendas-papers

Approach to 2017-18 planning cycle

The 2015-16 Light-touch Governance Review of Senate and its Committees indicated that, while the Senate Committee members were broadly satisfied with the approach to planning, that Review also identified a potential disconnect between the timing of prioritisation of Senate Committee activity and the timing of the University's annual planning processes. In the light of this, the Learning and Teaching Policy Group proposed that, from 2-16-17, the Senate Committees' planning would involve two distinct stages:

- In the latter part of Semester One, the Committees would be invited to identify any major developments that may require resourcing via the planning round; and
- In Semester Two, the Committees could undertake a broader discussion of priorities for the coming session.

The Senate Committees were content with this approach. The first stage planning was undertaken during Semester One, with the Committees identifying some strategic priorities to take account of during the planning round. For example, the Committees highlighted:

- The importance of investment in the teaching estate, particularly the availability of suitable teaching spaces and facilities within them;
- The planned PhD Enlightenment Scholarships;
- The Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme (eg anticipated work on the PGR lifecycle); and
- Potential for additional development of the External Examiner Reporting system (although the requirements cannot be specified until the evaluation planned for Semester Two, 2016-17).

For discussion - identifying priorities for 2017-18

In line with stage two of this process, ***the Committee is invite to identify*** priorities for the coming session.

In order to take forward their projects, the Senate Committees rely on the capacity of Schools, Colleges and EUSA to engage, and on professional support from Academic Services, Student Systems, Information Services Group, the Institute for Academic Development and the Careers Service / Employability Consultancy. These resources from relevant support services will enable all the Senate Committees to undertake a reasonable

volume of projects activities. Any priorities identified by the Committee must be possible to implement within existing resources, since it is too late to take account of them during the planning round for 2017-18. In planning for 2017-18, it is necessary to retain sufficient headroom to address high priority issues that emerge (for example as a result of external developments) during the session.

Some Senate Committee task groups / projects already underway will continue into 2017-18. These activities (set out in Annex A) are the starting point for planning for 2017-18. ***The Committee is invited to identify any additional projects that may be required for 2017-18 and their rationale.***

Reference points

When considering potential projects, the Committee should give priority to those which align with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf

Academic Services is working with relevant Vice- and Assistant- Principals to develop an implementation plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy. This will incorporate the Senate Committees' plans for 2017-18 along with other relevant activities to support the Strategy.

In their 2017 Annual Quality Reports (on 2015-16) the Colleges have highlighted some general themes for annual planning, which the Committee should take account of when identifying priorities for the coming session. See Annex B.

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 1 March 2017

Annex A – Senate Committee projects and related activities already underway which are likely to continue into 2017-18

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

- Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group
- Lecture Recording Policy Task Group
- Digital Education Task Group
- Research-Led Teaching and Learning Task Group*
- University-Wide Courses Task Group*
- Learning Analytics Policy Task Group*

* While these groups had planned to complete their work in 2016-17, they may need to continue into 2017-18.

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

- Assessment and Progression Tools project

Researcher Experience Committee

- Excellence in Doctoral Training and Career Development programme - Governance arrangements – three strands of work
- Review of Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

- Personal Tutor Oversight Group
- Overseeing institutional activities in response to 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)
- Implementation and monitoring of streamlining of the quality assurance framework (with a particular focus on periodic review processes)

Other relevant projects

- Implementation of University Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Senate task group considering how to implement the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 in relation to Senate's operation

- Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence Programme – likely to raise various strands of activity for Senate Committees, for example regarding academic policy and regulations
- Continued implementation activity regarding the Course Enhancement Questionnaire
- Implementation of University Recruitment Strategy – Portfolio Development, Innovation and Review. While the Recruitment Strategy implementation work is being overseen by the University’s Student Recruitment Strategy Group, it is likely to raise issues of relevance to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
- Engagement with further development of Teaching Excellence Framework

Annex B – main themes for forward planning identified in College Annual Quality Reports

- Learning and teaching spaces – address challenges regarding the availability of high-quality teaching space and social spaces for students, and the impact of noise from redevelopment projects. (Referred to Space Strategy Group, and the Timetabling and Modelling team)
- Student systems and data issues - support for further development of Student Data Dashboard to include PG data; support for further development of EUCLID functionality for PGR students; some suggestions for optimising the use of survey data. (Referred to Director of Student Systems)
- External Examiner Reporting System – address some issues regarding the system (Referring to Director of Student Systems)
- Personal Tutor system - Opportunities remain to achieve enhancement of the Personal Tutor system, e.g. opportunities for greater clarity and guidance in regard to support available to Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams and for more opportunities to share practice. (Referred to Assistant Principal Academic Support)

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Executive Summary

The Learning and Teaching Policy Group has developed some key principles and standard practices that Senate and the Senate Committees could adopt when consulting with Schools, Colleges and stakeholders regarding changes strategy, policy or procedure on learning, teaching and student experience matters. Central Management Group approved these principles and standard practices at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

In general, Senate and the Senate Committees are already following the arrangements set out in this paper. Formal articulation of principles and standard practices will however lead to more consistent approaches, and will ensure that all stakeholders are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Committee members are invited to note in particular that:

- Where individuals have been appointed to Committees or task groups to represent Colleges or Schools, it is important that they are able to represent the views of their constituencies and to have authority to make decisions on their behalf; and
- Committee members convening task groups should refer to these principles and standard practices when constituting task groups and designing their consultation arrangements.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with University Strategic Objectives of Leadership in Learning and Research.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to note the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will communicate them to the Senate Committees. It will also communicate them to key College contacts and highlight them to key School stakeholders in Schools via the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The operation of consultation processes has resource implications for project teams and for stakeholders engaging with the processes. It is important, when planning projects, to allocate an appropriate level of resources to consultation activities. The paper highlights the importance of making a balanced judgement regarding the appropriate approach to the appropriate level of resources to commit to consultation activities.

2. Risk assessment

The arrangements for effective consultation set out in the paper will assist the University to manage a range of risks associated with stakeholder buy-in and change management.

3. Equality and Diversity

Effective consultation will assist the University to understand the equality and diversity implications of particular projects.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Consultation

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services
1 March 2017

Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Background and context

1. Recent experiences, for example regarding the development of the Evasys Course Enhancement Questionnaire and the consultation on the University's new Learning and Teaching Strategy, have highlighted that mechanisms in the University for consulting with and seeking buy-in from key stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters do not always work as effectively as they could. There are therefore benefits in reflecting systematically on the approaches to take to consultation in different circumstances.

Key principles

- Senate and the Senate Committees should make their decisions on the basis of a proper understanding of the views of relevant stakeholders, while recognising that, given the diversity of the University's academic community, effective consultation processes will not always lead to consensus.
- The nature of consultation activities should be proportionate to the scale of change that is being proposed and the likelihood of it proving contentious.
- Given the scale and diversity of the University, consultation arrangements will always rely predominantly on individuals with leadership or representational roles in Colleges and Schools representing the views of their constituencies and having authority to make decisions on their behalf on task groups and committees.
- All task groups on issues with direct implications for the student experience should include Student Association representatives.
- When consulting on issues which have an impact on staff, Senate Committees and task groups should recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate.
- Once a consultation process has concluded and a decision made, it is important to provide feedback to those stakeholders who have engaged with the consultation processes.

Approaches to consultation

2. The attached Annex sets out a table with a range of possible approaches that Senate or a Senate Committee could take to consultation on a particular issue. In general, the more significant or contentious the proposal development, the more of the elements further down the table the consultation processes would need to involve. The Annex is indicative, and a degree of judgement will be required regarding the approaches to consultation required for each development. It is unlikely that any consultation process, however significant and contentious the development, would require all the approaches set out in the Annex.

Practical issues regarding the operation of consultation processes

3. Consultation processes – and particularly those lower down the table in the Annex – can be very onerous, both for the staff leading and supporting them, and for the stakeholders engaging with them. For some issues, it is not clear how contentious the proposals may be (and therefore how deep the consultation is required to be) until after the event. This uncertainty could lead colleagues to over-engineer consultation processes in order to avoid the risk of being accused of inadequate consultation. Were this to happen, the number of different developments that the Senate Committees could take forward would be unnecessarily constrained. As such, it is important to make a balanced judgement regarding the level of consultation.

4. The Senior College Academic Administrators, in consultation with their Deans, will take responsibility for selecting their Colleges' representatives on task groups.

Issues with a staffing dimension


5. Given the University's increased interest in issues such as developing robust evidence on the quality of teaching, and recognising student education as a key element in our staff recruitment, promotion and annual review processes, it is likely that some of the issues that Senate and its Committees address in the coming years will involve close interaction between academic and employment policy. When determining appropriate approaches to consultation on these issues, it will be important to establish at the outset whether advice and guidance is required from People Committee and what input and sign-off is required from Central Management Group and/or other relevant Court Committees with responsibility for employment policy matters.


6. When consulting on issues with a staffing dimension, in addition to general stakeholder consultation it is also important to recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate before decisions are taken by the University which have an impact on staff.

7. When developing stakeholder consultation plans, University HR Services should be consulted on the appropriate way to ensure early sharing of information and meaningful consultation, and where appropriate, negotiation take place with the recognised trade unions.

Annex – possible approaches for consultation on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Nature of proposed change	Example	Typical approaches to consultation	Comments
<p>Modest change / unlikely to be contentious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>More significant but unlikely to be particularly contentious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Modest change to existing academic policy or regulation</p>	<p>Discussion and decision at relevant Senate Committee</p>	<p>Relies on representatives of stakeholders having sufficient knowledge of the views of their constituencies to be able to represent them effectively.</p>
		<p>Establish task group with representatives of relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Allows for a broader range of relevant perspectives, including those of stakeholders who are not represented on the relevant Senate Committee.</p>
	<p>Development of a new policy that appears unlikely to require significant changes to Schools' practices, or development of policy required to address external regulatory requirements</p>	<p>Consult relevant networks of staff (eg Senior Tutors network, Directors of Learning and Teaching network)</p>	<p>Will provide broad impression of Schools' views on the issue, but will not highlight the extent of variation of views between different and may not take account of the views of some Schools (eg since not all colleagues attend network meetings).</p>
		<p>Invite Colleges, Student Association and other stakeholders (eg support services) to consult with their constituencies and provide written submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group more robust evidence regarding stakeholders' views. However, College-level submissions may not always allow them to understand fully the variation of views between different Schools.</p>
		<p>Invite relevant office-holders in Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written School submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group with an understanding of the views of individual Schools, and provides assurance that all Schools are aware of and have discussed the proposed change. The relevant office-holders in the Schools would typically be academic leaders such as Director of Quality</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Relatively significant with the potential to be contentious</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Development of a new policy that is likely to require extensive changes to many Schools' practices, or which may raise significant issues of principle.</p>		or Director of Learning and Teaching, but may in some circumstances be Directors of Professional Services.
		Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Colleges' relevant Committees, and relevant Student Association meetings, to present and seek views on the issue	Provides valuable opportunity to raise awareness, gauge views, and dispel any myths about the proposed development.
		Invite Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written submissions	Heads of Colleges and Schools will provide particularly valuable perspectives on proposed developments that are particularly contentious or that raise significant issues regarding management and resources.
		Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Schools' relevant Committees to present and seek views on the issue	Provides valuable opportunity to reach large number of staff to raise awareness of and dispel any myths about the proposed development, and to gauge views.
		Focus groups of staff and / or students	Allows the Committee / task group to hear directly from staff and students who are not in management or representational roles, eg particular categories of staff or students with a particularly relevant perspective on the issue (eg disabled students when developing policy regarding accessibility).
		Sample-based surveys of samples of relevant categories of staff and / or students	Similar benefits to focus groups, but with the potential to produce more robust evidence.

 Very major institutional change	Proposals for significant changes to the University's academic year, or curriculum structures		
		Create project webpages with information about the proposals and how stakeholders can express their views on them	Makes the consultation process more transparent. Likely to be more relevant where the proposals are of potential interest to a large number of stakeholders and involve complex documentation.
		Open meetings for staff and / or students	Provides a high profile opportunity for all staff and / or students to express their views on the issue, giving a high degree of transparency to the consultation process. Typical approaches would be to hold one meeting per College.
		Surveys of all staff and students	Very transparent approach that will allow all staff and students to express their views.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

16 March 2017

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update from the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting held on 20 January 2017. This information will also be reported to other Senate committees.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with the strategic goal of leadership in learning.

Action requested

For information

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

CSPC colleagues to communicate information onwards as appropriate.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

There are none.

2. Risk assessment

There are no associated risks.

3. Equality and Diversity

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

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open.

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, March 2017

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE REPORT

20 January 2017

1 Information Services Strategic Programmes

- **Learning, Teaching and Student Experience**

An update on delivering the projects associated with the 'Learning, Teaching and Student Experience' strategic funding and initial spend for the first year's programme was presented. The significant scale of the proposed lecture recording roll-out programme over the next three years; the Virtual Learning Environment consolidation programme and recurrent costs for improvement and maintenance of high quality Audio Visual digital teaching spaces was noted. Members commented on wider opportunities for innovation enabled by the new technology, keeping staff and students informed of progress with the lecture capture roll-out, advantages gained from the University's presence on all three major Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platforms and funding for upgrades and maintenance of digital teaching spaces. The proposed approach was endorsed.

- **Library: National and International Leadership**

Proposals for projects utilising the £0.8M funding stream for the 'Library, National and International Leadership' and £0.5M capital funds were reviewed. It was noted that proposals are grouped under three sub-themes: Library Space (Main Library Occupancy Review; Moray House Library); Digitisation (digital preservation; content); and, Engagement (Centre for Research Collections; fundraising; St Cecilia's Hall; open access publishing; course collections). The initial proposal to invest £0.267M of the £0.5M capital fund was endorsed, with proposals for the remaining sum to be submitted to a future meeting.

2 Core Systems Strategy

An initial information brief to raise awareness of the evolving University Core Systems Strategy including a high level suggested governance path and decision timeline was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The intention to establish centralised core business systems replacing a multitude of different systems currently in place;
- Using peer reviews and site visits to universities with a variety of new core systems in place to help inform the best approach for Edinburgh;
- The role of Knowledge Strategy Committee in scrutinising the alignment of the project with the University's Strategic Plan;
- Including likely costs within the next iteration of the current capital envelope forecast – should there be costs that can be capitalised;
- Linkages with other planned projects and prioritisation of these;
- Considering at an early stage whether staff retraining and redeployment will be required once the new core systems are in place.

3 Learning Analytics Update

A progress update from the task group established to develop a Learning Analytics Policy was received. Members welcomed the consultation exercise, the intention to develop a Principles document and a separate Policy and the measured approach taken given the emerging field of learning analytics.