

The University of Edinburgh

Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting held by electronic business between 19 March 2020 and 2 April 2020 and in an online meeting on 26 March 2020

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research (CMVM)
Stephanie Vallancey	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gemma Riddell	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Rayya Ghul	Institute for Academic Development
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
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Present online on 26 March 2020

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Stephanie Vallancey	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gemma Riddell	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Rayya Ghul	Institute for Academic Development
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor

Academic Policy Officer, Academic
Services

Faten Adam

Student Support Operations Manager

Joan Kemp

Academic Administrative Officer (CAHSS)

Dr Sabine Rolle

Dean for Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)

1. Standalone Courses (APRC 19/20 5A)

This item had been discussed at Education Committee and they had agreed to set up a group to look at this. APRC was content with this approach.

2. Service Excellence Programme (APRC 19/20 5B)

The paper proposed changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21 on late submission of coursework (regulation 28). The changes reflected the incoming Extensions and Special Circumstances service that was expected to launch in July 2020: the team would review and process all extension requests, making a decision on whether to approve them or not. The Committee approved the changes, subject to a request to strengthen the wording around Schools being able to indicate where components of assessment had a maximum permitted extension of less than seven calendar days. Any further amendments would need to be brought to the APRC meeting on 28 May 2020 when the Taught Assessment Regulations for 2020/21 would be finalised.

Discussion was held on the 'preferred outcomes' element of plans for the special circumstances policy. The Service Excellence Programme team had recommended that this was removed from the service launch because concerns had been raised over the expectations that this would raise amongst students, students' understanding of the implications around some of the options, and the ability of staff to manage this appropriately. The Committee expressed some concern about the plan to remove the 'preferred outcomes' element as members believed there could be process efficiency gains and it could give students a clearer understanding of the options. Sarah McAllister agreed to discuss this further with the relevant Service Excellence Project Board. The relevant policy was expected to come to the APRC meeting on 28 May 2020 to be finalised.

3. CAHSS: MSc Mathematical Economics and Econometrics (APRC 19/20 5C)

This paper was approved by APRC.

4. CAHSS: Master of Landscape Architecture (APRC 19/20 5D)

This paper was approved by APRC.

5. CMVM: Master of Family Medicine (APRC 19/20 5E)

This paper was approved by APRC.

6. External Examiners: attendance at taught Boards of Examiners (APRC 19/20 5F)

This paper asked the Committee to consider whether it may be appropriate to relax permanently the existing requirements regarding physical attendance by External Examiners at meetings of Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes.

Members were supportive in principle of removing the requirement for External Examiners to attend a meeting in person, and to leave it to Schools to discuss with Externals on appointment whether it may be necessary (or beneficial) for them to attend in person at any point. It was noted that some Schools may prefer it if there was some flexibility built in for those programmes that wished to retain an element of physical attendance for External Examiners. Members raised a query about whether physical attendance by External Examiners at at least one meeting was required for Human Resource (HR) purposes (verification of passport details). Dr Bunni agreed to check the position on this with HR and report back to the meeting of APRC on 28 May 2020. If the proposal was supported, then it would require a change to the assessment regulations which were due for approval at the May meeting.

ACTION: Dr Bunni to check position on passport verification with HR and report back to the next meeting of APRC on 28 May 2020.

7. Mid-Year Progress Report (APRC 19/20 5G)

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

8. Convener's Forum/Committee Priorities 2020/21 (APRC 19/20 5H)

This paper was received by the Committee. Members of the Committee were invited to send comments about Committee priorities for 2020/21 to ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk for onward transmission as appropriate to Convener's Forum etc. Committee priorities could also be discussed further at a future meeting.

9. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 –Update (APRC 19/20 5I)

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

10. Update to Course Creation, Approval and Management (CCAM) Guidance (APRC 19/20 5J)

This paper was approved by APRC.

11. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report (January 2020) (APRC 19/20 5K)

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

12. Any Other Business

The Committee had previously approved a range of concessions on 19 March 2020 to be used to address the impact of Covid-19. Several members of the Committee (including representatives from each College, and the Students' Association) were involved in the ongoing work to produce guidance for Schools regarding how to address

the impact of Covid-19. Following further discussions about the impact on final assessment for courses, a small number of further possible concessions to regulations had been raised, which were discussed by the Committee.

- a) Proposal to allow up to 60 credits to be awarded on aggregate in any given year at Hons/PGT level. This would take account of situations where students had a large volume of full-year courses, or courses with a heavy (or 100%) weighting on final exams.

This was approved.

- b) Discussion of the possibility of allowing the use of credit on aggregate at pre-Honours level.

General support for this for outside courses, but understood to be unlikely to be able to apply to courses which were core, or pre-requisites for progression purposes. Some programmes operate with much larger proportions of core courses than others, so there was an equity issue, but this was unlikely to be resolvable. Colleges were keen to have further discussion with Schools about this issue.

- c) Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) had requested advice regarding late penalties on pre-Honours courses which would now be operating on a pass/fail basis due to Covid-19. Late penalties would not have any obvious application on this basis.

Agreement that late penalties could be waived in these circumstances.

- d) Discussion of possibility to discount any Semester 2 course marks from averages for Hons classification or Merit/Distinction, where these had a detrimental impact.

Colleges voiced concerns that this could lead to double-counting of impact, where adjustments had already been made to assessments, and a no-detriment approach already taken to determining course marks.