**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 22 September 2016
in Room 235, Joseph Black Chemistry Building, King's Buildings**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016**   Enclosed

2. **Matters Arising**

   - **Convener's Action (MSW Social Work)**
   - **Impact of Industrial Action**
   - **Zhejiang Update**

   For Discussion

3. **CSPC Membership and Terms of Reference 2016/17**   CSPC 16/17 1A

4. **Strategic issues regarding academic policy development,**   CSPC 16/17 1 B
   implementation and supporting business processes

5. **Collaborative activities - arrangements for certificates and transcripts**   CSPC 16/17 1 C
   for dual / multiple awards

6. **Elevated Hurdles for Honours Progression**   Verbal Update

7. **Board of Examiners Handbook**   CSPC 16/17 1 D

8. **The future of Degree Programme Specifications in the light of**   CSPC 16/17 1 E
   Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines on consumer
   protection law

9. **Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy**   CSPC 16/17 1 F

10. **Thematic Review of Mental Health Services: Support for Study Policy**   CSPC 16/17 1G

11. **Review of the Academic Year**   CSPC 16/17 1 H

   For information and formal business

12. **Resits and Academic Failure Task Group**   Verbal Update

13. **Degree Programme Specifications: removal of reference to Innovative**   CSPC 16/17 1 I
   Learning Week

14. **Student Discipline Committee Membership and Student Discipline**   CSPC 16/17 1 J
   Committee Officers 2016/17

15. **Students' Association Priorities 2016/17**   CSPC 16/17 1 K

16. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report   CSPC 16/17 1 L

17. Any Other Business

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, 15 September 2016

H/02/27/02
CSPC: 02.06.16

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)
held on Thursday 2 June 2016 at 2.00p.m. in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSCE)
Dr Theresa McKinven	Head of PG Section (CHSS)
Ms Joy Candlish	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CHSS)
Professor Allan Cumming	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)
Ms Imogen Wilson	Vice President Academic Affairs, EUSA
Mr Ed Auckland	Academic Adviser, EUSA
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services
Mr Barry Neilson	Director of Student Systems
Dr Soledad Garcia-Ferrari	ESALA, Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Ewen Macpherson	School of Engineering

In attendance:

Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services

Apologies for absence:

Mr Alan Brown	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), (CHSS)
Professor Helen Cameron	Director, Centre for Medical Education (CMVM)
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Professor John Stewart	Director, Biomedical Teaching Organisation
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 14 April 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Item 2 (Matters arising – CSPC 14/15 3 F – Mitigating the Impact of Industrial Action)
Dr Adam Bunni reported on electronic Committee business (by correspondence, 16-18 May 2016). A Mitigating the Impact of Industrial Action paper had been circulated. This paper invited the Committee to approve temporary concessions to allow Boards of Examiners to operate during the planned industrial action. The paper had been approved by the

Committee, and invoked its powers regarding significant disruption to assessment processes under Taught Assessment Regulations (2015/16) 67 and 68. The approach taken was intended to minimise the impact upon students without compromising academic standards.

Item 8 and 9 – Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2016/17 Leave of Absence

Mr Tom Ward reported on electronic Committee business conducted in relation to degree regulations (by correspondence, 16-18 May 2016). CSPC had been invited to endorse some clarifications to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2016/17 on 'leave of absence'. These changes were relatively minor, and did not affect the underlying definition of 'leave of absence' that CSPC had agreed during the regulations review.

The University's UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Compliance team had recently identified that requiring approval for leave of absence only of 60 calendar days or more (when accompanied with a statement that other forms of leave of absence did not need to be recorded in EUCLID) could have an unintended consequence of creating risk for the University's compliance with UKVI requirements. Academic Services had made some modest changes to the regulations, which it had discussed with the senior College administrators, Student Systems and the UKVI Compliance team.

The changes were:

- a reduction in the period requiring approval to 30 calendar days;

- clarification that there was no need for formal approval processes for types of leave of absence which are an organised aspect of the programme (e.g. Medical placements);

- to make it clear that Colleges and Schools must maintain records of all leaves of absence but not stipulating the form this record-keeping would take;

- an amendment to the level of approval from 'School' to 'College'. The reason for this change was that one College had indicated that it would like to keep approval at College level. Degree Regulation 2 (UG Degree Regulations) / Regulation 4 (PG Degree Regulations) already gave Colleges power to delegate permissions, so the other two Colleges would be allowed to delegate this power to Schools if they wished.

The amended undergraduate and postgraduate regulations for 2016/17 (UGDRPS 2016/17 regulation 26, PGDRPS 2016/17 regulation 29) would read as follows:

'Leave of absence is required for compulsory and optional activities related to the programme of study that are not undertaken on campus in Edinburgh. Students must have the formal approval of the College for any leave of absence to study away from Edinburgh that is 30 calendar days' duration or longer. Study location changes of less than 30 calendar days must be agreed with the Supervisor or Personal Tutor. Where the activity is a compulsory part of the programme of study and is organised by the School or College, permission may be given by the College for a cohort of students without individual applications being made. Colleges and Schools must maintain records of all leaves of absence. This regulation does not apply to students on a recognised distance learning programme.'

The above revised text had now formally been approved by both CSPC and Senate, and was to be submitted to University Court for final approval of the University Resolution on 20 June 2016.

> **ACTION: Academic Services (Ailsa Taylor) – to ensure that revised 'leave of absence' text is submitted to University Court for approval of the final University Resolution at their 20 June 2016 meeting.**

3. Academic Year Dates (Verbal Update)

Mr Tom Ward gave a verbal update on the current review of the academic year, and invited CSPC members to feed in their views. The University was reviewing the structure of the academic year to see whether a different structure would better meet the needs of students and staff. A Task Group established by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee had developed a proposal for an alternative model for the academic year. A range of material had been developed to support the consultation process:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/review-of-the-academic-year

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

Following the consultation with students and staff during April/ May 2016 on the proposed alternative academic year structure, the Task Group were now reviewing the findings of the consultation. Students, Colleges, Schools, EUSA, and Trade Unions had now provided their feedback. The Task Group was due to submit its final report to Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration at its meeting on 21 September 2016. It would then be reported to the meeting of the University's Senate on 28 September 2016 and (if appropriate) to a relevant University Court meeting.

Dr Soledad Garcia-Ferrari outlined issues that Edinburgh College of Art had identified with the academic year date proposals; these had already been fed into the consultation process. The main specific issues identified included: the need for time for students to reflect, assimilate, synthesise and produce work in the period after teaching is completed; the logistics of access to printing, workshop and other limited resources which were presently staggered over a period of three weeks, and would be impossible if all hand-ins were due within one week; the way in which the proposal undermined the newly approved architecture degree structure (which would curtail the period in practice to January-end August, and would be untenable if students could not start until the end of February). The School would then need to apply for an 'opt-out' from the standard academic year, which would not be acceptable, as the School would still want their students to be able to take outside courses. In addition, general factors that had been raised included issues with the lack of a spring vacation for family-friendly policy purposes, the 'learn…test…forget' implications of immediate post-teaching assessment without reflection, and the feeling that the option to 'retain the status quo' should have been offered as an option.

4. Feedback and Assessment (Verbal Update)

Professor Alan Murray provided a verbal update on recent feedback and assessment discussions. Professor Susan Rhind was unable to attend CSPC, but had asked for some feedback from the Committee on some early ideas. The regulations in relation to feedback for 2016/17 had already been formally approved, but it was anticipated that changes for 2017/18 would be likely. Professor Rhind felt that the 15 working day "rule" was helpful in raising awareness and ensuring consistency, but was concerned that in some cases, it may actually be prohibiting detailed, creative, principled thought at course/lecturer level, and even potentially reducing the quality of some feedback on larger assignments. There were also a small number of opt-outs from the regulation, which had been requested for sound

pedagogical reasons, but created an additional administrative burden for Schools and Colleges. The proposal that was currently being considered involved a move away from the 15 day "rule", to a regulation where the timing was based more upon the sequencing between elements of feedback, in relation to the "usefulness" to the student.

Detailed discussion was held on:

- perceptions of students, and the difference between feedback and results;

- feedback across courses, feedback at programme level, feed-forward;

- planning for feedback as part of course and programme design;

- the need to focus more on quality, and impact, and appropriateness of feedback, rather than simply focusing on adhering to the 15 working day deadline;

- National Student Survey results;

- the potential implications of the new Teaching Excellence Framework in relation to feedback satisfaction;

- the requirement to find a solution that did not create more work (particularly in system terms) for the people who were monitoring it (e.g. if it created further variation), thus diverting attention away from student support.

5. Assessment and Progression Tools Steering Group Recommendation (CSPC 15/16 6 A)

Mr Barry Neilson presented this paper, which followed on from a paper that had been presented to CSPC in March 2016. CPSC approved the recommendations contained in the paper. These recommendations had also been endorsed by the Assessment and Progression Tools Steering Group. The agreed model for 2016/17 would:

- ensure that course marks were ratified prior to decisions being made regarding awards and progression;

- set two dates after the semester 2 examination diet for course marks to be ratified in the EUCLID system, to enable effective sharing of marks (one date for ratified honours course marks to be in EUCLID and a later date for ratified non-honours and postgraduate taught marks to be in EUCLID);

- provide scope to run both a 'closed' board, or two-stage Boards, for both awards and progression decisions;

- clarify that any award or progression decision that cannot be made at a 'closed' Board needed to be taken as Convener's action once all course results for a student have been ratified;

- split the deadlines between communication of awards and the communication of progression decisions.

A table within the paper provided an example of how the key dates had been applied to the 2015/16 academic year for illustrative purposes. It was clarified that although the deadline for ratified marks for honours courses to be in EUCLID had fallen on a Friday (Friday 3 June 2016, two weeks after the end of the exam diet), this did not mean that marks needed to be released to students on a Friday. In practice, the date of publication of these results rested with the Schools, so they could, for example, choose to publish up to 12 noon on that Friday, and then wait until the following Monday to release other marks).

Discussion was held on the firmly endorsed recommendation arising from the November 2015 CSPC meeting, whereby ratified semester 1 course marks were to be published after semester 1 Boards of Examiner meetings (rather than being ratified by a Board at the end of semester 2). This recommendation had been particularly firmly supported by the Committee, but it had not been clear who would ensure that Schools adhered to this procedure. In some areas there were sound pedagogical reasons for approved opt-outs (by College), but it was understood that this was not the situation in all cases, and felt that more could be done to encourage Schools to comply. It was agreed that Colleges would strongly encourage Schools to adopt this model wherever possible, through the relevant Learning and Teaching committees. It was agreed that Mr Barry Neilson, Mr Tom Ward and Professor Alan Murray would co-ordinate efforts and provide some text on this, which Colleges could then circulate to Schools.

ACTION: Mr Barry Neilson, Mr Tom Ward and Professor Alan Murray to draft text for circulation to Colleges on the requirement for ratified semester 1 course marks to be published after semester 1 Board of Examiners meetings (unless an opt-out had been approved by College for sound pedagogical reasons).

6. Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy (CSPC 15/16 6 B)

Mr Tom Ward presented this paper, which asked for some initial comments on proposed changes to this policy, prior to wider consultation and drafting over the summer, then re-circulation to CSPC. The original policy was created as part of the Programme and Course Management (PCIM) Project and approved by the Committee in April 2015. The initial proposals aimed to ensure that the University was compliant with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance, whilst minimising the constraints on innovation. The Committee were broadly supportive of the proposed changes outlined in the paper, recognising that there were lots of points of detail to return to following the wider consultation. Any further comments that CSPC members had over the summer 2016 were to be directed to Tom Ward (tom.ward@ed.ac.uk)

7. Courses with no Enrolments (CSPC 15/16 6 C)

Mr Tom Ward presented this paper.

CSPC approved the proposal outlined in the paper, which suggested a movement towards deleting courses which had had no student enrolments over the last four year period. The Committee was also supportive of deleting these courses in a systematic way (e.g. Student Systems deleting them as complete batches). However, the Committee suggested that it would be more appropriate to begin by giving the Schools the information about the courses that were about to be deleted, strongly encouraging them to delete these courses themselves - then move to systematically deleting them within Student Systems a year later, if they still existed. It was also suggested that it would make sense to tie in this process with the annual course roll-forward process if possible.

It was noted that the Programme and Course Design, Approval and Closure Policy did assign responsibility for closing courses to Boards of Studies, and that the Terms of Reference for Boards of Studies also referred to this responsibility. However, the Committee took the view that CSPC, as the overall owner of policy in this area, could agree to allow Student Systems to close courses, as long as there were strong communications to signal to Schools that this was about to occur.

Mr Tom Ward agreed to check whether, formally speaking, Student Systems could delete courses, since course closure was technically the responsibility of Boards of Studies. It was agreed that CSPC would be content, in due course, for Student Systems to action course closure on the Committee's behalf, subject to confirmation from Mr Ward that the Programme and Course Design, Approval and Closure Policy and Terms of Reference for Boards of Studies were not an obstacle to this.

8. **Credit for Study Abroad – Task Group Report (CSPC 15/16 6 D)**

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item. The following was agreed:

- CSPC agreed in principle to look at any non-standard credit agreements as a one-off (possibly by Convener's Action if required) in the short-term. This was not expected to be necessary longer-term ,as the intention was that processes would be in place for approval of non-standard agreements via the College/International office standard procedures;

- Professor Graeme Reid was to speak to the International Office and Colleges about processes for approval of credit agreements, and the need to ensure academic input;

- work to develop the Exchange Coordinator role was to continue in 2016/17, with a view to having a role description in place for 2017/18; Professor Reid to lead on this work with various Task Group members (including Professor Reid, and College Senior Administrative staff, with the addition of the new EUSA VPAA, as he was understood to have a particular interest in this area).

> **ACTION: Professor Graeme Reid to contact International Office and Colleges about processes for approval of credit agreements, and continue to lead on work to develop the Exchange Co-ordinator role with members of the Task Group (and including the new EUSA VPAA).**

9. **Proposed review of regulations for 2017/18 regarding resit entitlement and failure to make academic progress (CSPC 15/16 6 E)**

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item. A short-life task group to clarify regulatory issues surrounding the University's approach to resit entitlement and exclusion for failure to make satisfactory academic progress was to be established. Significant issues of interpretation had been raised, but these could not be resolved in time for publication of the 2016/17 regulations. The expectation would be that any changes that were required would be implemented for the 2017/18 academic session.

10. **College of Humanities and Social Science: Academic Year Dates Opt-Out – BSc Hons Social Work (CSPC 15/16 6 F)**

This paper was approved by the Committee.

11. College of Humanities and Social Science: Proposed MSc in Activist Learning and Teaching (Verbal Update)

A paper outlining proposals for a new MSc in Activist Learning and Teaching, was at an early draft stage, before submission to College for formal approval. If CSPC approval was required at all (it was unclear at the moment whether or not the proposals were fully compliant with the Curriculum Framework) then the Committee gave their consent for Professor Alan Murray to take this forward by Convener's Action over the summer.

12. Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee Membership – Academic Year 2016/17 (CSPC 15/16 6 H)

The membership of the Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee for academic year 2016/17 was approved, subject to the following amendments:

Student Appeal Committee Membership 2016/17
Dr Richard Holt, Economics, was not to be a member.

13. Student Appeal Regulations (CSPC 15/16 6 I)

The Student Appeal Regulations had been revised to incorporate elements of the Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes (Regulation 23 under 'Student Responsibilities' had been added). The new regulations would be live from 19 September 2016.

> **ACTION: Stuart Fitzpatrick in Academic Services to replace Student Appeal Regulations with new version as of 19 September 2016.**

14. Academic Misconduct Procedures (CSPC 15/16 6 J)

The draft Academic Misconduct Procedures were approved, subject to some minor edits to content and correction of typographical errors. The new Procedures were to be in place for 2016/17.

15. Senate Committee Planning – approach for next session (CSPC 15/16 5 K)

The Committee noted the plans outlined in the paper for 2016/17.

16. Proposal for a Board of Examiners Handbook (CSPC 15/16 5 L)

This paper proposed the development of a Board of Examiners Handbook, which would incorporate a number of existing policies, remits and principles. The Committee endorsed this proposal.

17. Update on Collaboration with Zhejiang University (CSPC 15/16 5 M)

Mr Tom Ward presented this item. The Committee noted the update on the Zhejiang University initiative.

18. Concessions Sub-Committee Meeting - Thursday 9 June 2016 at 10.00a.m.

This meeting had been scheduled for Thursday 9 June 2016 at 10.00am. All CSPC representatives who were expected to be present had already agreed to attend directly.

19. Any Other Business

Dr Soledad Garcia-Ferrari, Ms Joy Candlish and Ms Imogen Wilson were leaving the Committee and were sincerely thanked for their contributions during their terms of office.

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, 9 June 2016

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

CSPC Membership and Terms of Reference 2016/17

Executive Summary

This paper contains the CSPC membership list, and Terms of Reference for 2016/17. The Terms of Reference are unchanged from 2015/16.

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

Aligns with strategic goal of excellence in education

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The membership list and terms of reference are available on the Academic Services website at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression/members

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression/terms-reference

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)** N/A

2. **Risk assessment** N/A

3. **Equality and Diversity** No major equality impacts

4. **Freedom of information** Open

Originator of the paper

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, 1 September 2016

Membership of CSPC 2016/17

Name	Position/School	Composition	Term of Office
Professor Alan Murray	Assistant Principal, Academic Support	5.1 (Convener)	
Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSCE)	5.2 and 5.3 (Vice-Convener and College - academic governance and regulation)	
Mr Alan Brown	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CHSS	5.3 (College - academic governance and regulation)	
Dr Theresa McKinven	Head of PG Section (CHSS)	5.3 (College - academic governance and regulation)	
Ms Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)	5.3 (College - academic governance and regulation)	
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)	5.3 (College - academic governance and regulation)	
Professor Helen Cameron	Director, Centre for Medical Education (CMVM)	5.3 (College - academic governance and regulation)	
Professor Peter Higgins/ Mr. John Lowrey	Dean of Students (CHSS)/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CHSS)	5.4 (College - quality of student experience)	
Professor Allan Cumming	Dean of Students (CMVM)	5.4 (College - quality of student experience)	
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)	5.4 (College - quality of student experience)	
Mr Patrick Garratt	Vice President Academic Affairs, EUSA	5.5 (EUSA sabbatical officer)	Ex Officio
TBC	Academic Adviser, EUSA	5.6 (EUSA representative)	
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development	5.7 (IAD representative)	Ex Officio
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team	5.8 (Academic Services)	Ex Officio
Mr Barry Neilson	Director of Student Systems	5.8 (University Secretary representative)	Ex Officio
Dr Ewen Macpherson	School of Engineering	5.9 (co-opted)	1 August 2014 - 31 July 2017
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web	5.9 (co-opted)	1 August 2014 - 31 July 2017
Professor John Stewart	Director of Teaching, Edinburgh Medical School: Biomedical Sciences	5.9 (co-opted)	1 January 2016 - 31 December 2018
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback	5.10	Ex Officio
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations	5.10	Ex Officio

The University of Edinburgh

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose and Role

1.1　The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senatus, for the academic regulatory framework apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework.

1.2　The Committee is also the forum which oversees the process of maintaining and disseminating the regulations, and other guidance, in light of policy developments and changes in the internal and external environments.

2. Remit

The remit of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee is to:

2.1　Offer strategic advice on the University's portfolio of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.

2.2　Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of a fit for purpose regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities.

2.3　Examine the need for, and approve the simplification, development and review of any specific components of the regulatory framework in light of new innovations or specific trends, issues or problems.

2.4　Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet the organisational needs of the University, especially within the context of the designated powers and authority of the University and its Colleges and Schools.

2.5　Act with delegated authority from the Senatus on matters of student conduct and discipline[1].

3. Governance

3.1　The Committee will act with authority, as delegated by the Senatus, in order to take decisions regarding the regulatory framework for the University's educational activities.

3.2　In taking forward its remit, the Committee will support and encourage diversity and variation where this is beneficial, whilst seeking consistency and common approaches, where these are in the best interests of staff and students.

3.3　The Committee will report direct to the Senatus as necessary, but at least annually.

3.4　The Committee will liaise with relevant Court Committees and with specific managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of academic policy intersect with management issues.

3.5　The Committee will identify and agree the ways in which it will periodically interact and exchange information with relevant committees and academic and student services in matters relating to the academic regulatory framework.

4. Operation

4.1　The Committee will meet at least four times per annum. The Committee will also interact electronically, as is necessary for its business to be effectively progressed. The Convener of the Committee may approve items by Convener's Action between meetings. The Convener is

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[1] This responsibility came into effect on 1 January 2014 when the Standing Commission on Discipline was dissolved.

advised on such decisions by the secretariat of the Committee and/or the academic governance member. This advice draws on previous Committee decisions and on issues agreed in principle with delegated authority granted to the Committee Convener, while ensuring the maintenance of academic standards and the appropriate consistency of treatment of students.

4.2   The Committee may also meet electronically to note formal items or items which are not considered to be of strategic importance.

4.3   The Committee will follow a strategic agenda which is set prior to the start of the academic year and which is agreed through consultation with Senatus, the Conveners of the other Senatus Committees, and other relevant members of the University community.

4.4   A concessions sub-committee will be established on an annual basis, primarily comprised of at least five members of the Committee, including at least one Committee member from each College, the academic governance member of the Committee and the Convener or Vice-Convener. The sub-committee may decide to co-opt additional College representatives. This concessions sub-committee will have delegated authority, on behalf of the Committee, to make decisions on student concession cases. The sub-committee may also operate its business electronically where appropriate.

4.5   Limited life task groups and working groups will take forward as relevant the detailed examination of, and consultation on, the strategic issues which make up the majority of the Committee's work.

4.6   Any task or working groups will be given a clear brief and will consult as appropriate during their work in order to ensure the confidence of the Committee, the Senatus, and the wider University Community in the resulting conclusions and recommendations.

4.7   Information on any activities will be made available electronically to ensure that members of the University community are kept informed and can contribute to specific developments.

4.8   Agenda, papers and approved minutes will be published on the University's web pages in accordance with the University's agreed publication scheme and the status of the above listed in respect of freedom of information legislation. This will include details of the membership of the Committee.

4.9   The University Secretary or his/her nominee will be responsible for ensuring the provision of secretariat support for the Committee.

4.10   The Conveners of the other Senatus Committees shall receive papers for the Committee and can attend any of the meetings.

5. Composition

5.1   The Committee will be convened by the Assistant Principal, Academic Support.

5.2   Before the first annual meeting the Committee shall identify a Vice-Convener for the Committee from amongst its membership. The Vice-Convener should serve for a period of at least one year.

5.3   The Colleges will each identify up to two senior members of staff within the College who have responsibility for academic governance and regulation.

5.4   The Colleges will each identify a senior member of staff within the College who has responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience.

5.5   An Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) sabbatical officer will be an ex officio member of the Committee.

5.6   The Edinburgh University Students' Association will provide a relevant nominee for the Committee.

5.7   A member of staff of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) will be an ex officio member of the Committee.

5.8   The University Secretary or his/her nominee will be an ex officio member of the Committee. The University Secretary or his/her nominee will also identify a member of staff from Academic Services to act as the expert academic governance member of the Committee.

5.9   Up to five additional members may be co-opted onto the Committee by the Convener depending on the expertise required. Co-opted members will normally serve a three year term.

5.10   The Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback and the Assistant Principal, Community Relations will be ex officio members of the Committee.

5.11   The Convener may invite individuals by invitation for specific meetings or agenda items.

5.12   Substitutions of members (i.e. due to an inability to attend) will be at the discretion of the Convener of the Committee.

6. Responsibilities and Expectations of Committee Members

6.1   Members are expected to be collegial and constructive in approach.

6.2   Members should attend regularly and participate fully in the work of the Committee and its task/working groups. This will involve looking ahead and consulting/gathering input in order to provide the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions which are necessary for proper consideration of the area being discussed.

6.3   Members will need to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee's remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. In taking ownership of the work of the Committee, members must take steps to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.

6.4   Members are expected to be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University community.

Version 10, 22 September 2016

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Strategic issues regarding academic policy development, implementation and supporting business processes

<u>Executive Summary</u>

This paper highlights:

- Key issues that the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme has identified regarding the University approach to implementing academic policy and guidance; and

- Key findings from a recent benchmarking and mapping exercise regarding the University's approach to academic policy and regulation.

It reflects on the implications for the University of these issues for the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and the consequences in terms of consistency of treatment for students, and workload and complexity of process for academic and administrative staff.

Since this paper raises strategic issues for the University's governance and learning and teaching, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee will also discuss it at its meeting in September 2016.

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

This paper is designed to assist the University to support the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

<u>Action requested</u>

The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised by the paper and to consider how the University could approach policy development and implementation in the future.

<u>How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?</u>

The Director of Student Systems & Service Excellence Programme Lead will pass the Committee's comments to the Service Excellence Programme, and the Director

of Academic Services will take account of them in future policy development. No further action is required.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Since the paper is not seeking approval for a course of action, it does not have direct resource implications. The paper does however highlight various resource issues associated with the University's approach to policy development and implementation.

2. Risk assessment

N / A since the paper is not seeking approval for a course of action.

3. Equality and Diversity

N / A – The paper is not asking the Committee to approve a course of action.

4. Freedom of information
Open

Key words

Policy Regulation Business Processes

Originator of the paper

Barry Neilson, Director of Student Systems
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
With input from Ailsa Taylor (Academic Policy Officer) and Tracey Dart (Service Excellence Programme)

Strategic issues regarding academic policy development, implementation and supporting business processes

1 Overview

This paper highlights:

- Key issues that the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme has identified regarding the University approach to implementing academic policy and guidance; and
- Key findings from a recent benchmarking and mapping exercise regarding the University's approach to academic policy and regulation.

It reflects on the implications for the University of these issues for the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and the consequences in terms of consistency of treatment for students, and workload and complexity of process for academic and administrative staff.

2 Student Administration strand of Service Excellence Programme - background

The University's vision is to recruit and develop the world's most promising students and most outstanding staff and be a truly global University benefiting society as a whole. In support of this vision the Service Excellence Programme has been established to promote service excellence across professional services within the University. The programme is being mobilised to ensure the University has high quality, efficient services and processes that are needed to sustain and enhance the University's ability to contribute in the future as one of the world's top 25 Universities.

The Service Excellence Programme is tasked with improving the professional services offered by the University by ensuring that the University gets the best from the sum of its efforts with a clear focus on the effective and efficient delivery of services by university colleagues in the Centre, Colleges and Schools. This will be achieved through the development and delivery of a series of programmes/projects focussing on our key services.

More details are available here: http://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/service-excellence-programme

The first strand has been set up to review student administration & support within the University. A methodology has been adopted which has two primary phases:

- **Phase 1**: a Current State Assessment (CSA) which sets out to establish what are the key issues and how important are they within this area of business. This is achieved through a series of workshops, validation activities, data analysis and other evidence gathering;

- **Phase 2**: an Options Identification Phase which sets out to develop potential solutions to the issues identified, test the potential solutions with relevant stakeholders; develop high level estimates of the likely cost/benefits of

3

implementing any change; and present the Programme Board with a series of solution options (in the form of Outline Business Cases).

3　Student Administration strand of Service Excellence Programme – key findings regarding the implementation of policy and guidance

The following are key findings from the 'Current State Assessment' Report:

- **Flexible implementation of policy/guidance –** policy and guidance on key activities is provided by central University departments (and in some instances Colleges), however, Schools are left to implement many of these policies as they see fit. his lead to '22 different ways of doing things' which in itself causes significant challenges for interdisciplinary working and the development of systems to support some of these key processes. Furthermore, the systems requirement of many new policies/guidelines are not factored into roll out plans, which encourages off-system working and prevents the development of corporate systems.

- **Historic structures and governance arrangements –** many of the issues summarised in the previous bullet point appear to stem from historic decisions on the structure of the University and where decision making, responsibility and autonomy should reside. According to many of the stakeholders engaged in the Current State Assessment, one of the reasons why implementation of policy/guidance has been left relatively flexible is that Schools are used to operating autonomously and prefer to determine how they will implement certain requirements. However, in many instances, colleagues from Schools have argued that they would rather be told how to implement new policies, rather than having to create new ways of working for themselves. This disjuncture between historic University structures and new governance requirements appears to create a complicated decision-making environment, which is fundamentally inefficient and dissatisfying for many of the staff involved.

- **Academic and administrative activity divide –** many of the issues identified during the Current State Assessment have highlighted cultural challenges regarding the perceived division between activities that are deemed 'academic' and those deemed 'administrative'. Workshop participants frequently cited issues with the delineation of roles and responsibilities between Academic and Professional Services staff, with questions raised about how the University determines which activities require Academic decisions. Issues ranged from delivery of exam papers to exam halls to enrolling student on Courses, with significant variation in roles and responsibilities between different Schools.

4   Benchmarking and mapping regarding the University's approach to academic policy and regulation - background

In 2015-16 the Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) set up a task group to explore where there may be potential to simplify policies and practices regarding learning, teaching and assessment. During 2015-16, the Group (and the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, CSPC) made progress on some aspects of this, for example streamlining some aspects of decision-making on student cases. See:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/simplification-project/early-wins

The simplification group has suggested that there may be further opportunities to simplify the University's academic regulations and policies. At their annual meeting, the Chairs of the Senate and Court Committees suggested that the University should undertake a full 'review' of the University's regulations and policies.

In order to assist CSPC (which has overall responsibility for the University's academic regulations and policies) to decide whether to initiate such a review, Academic Services undertook:

- An initial desk-based benchmarking exercise (covering Heriot Watt University, University of Glasgow, University College London, and University of Manchester) to explore how other institutions approach academic policy and regulation and how they publish that information;

- An internal mapping exercise to consider where there are policies on the same academic issues at College level, and/or School level, as well as University level;

- An internal mapping exercise to consider the levels (to University / College / School) at which academic decisions are made for individual students, in order to explore whether there is scope to delegate any further decision-making (building on the progress already made by CSPC in 2015-16).

5   Benchmarking and mapping regarding the University's approach to academic policy and regulation - background

- **Findings from the benchmarking**
  - The University's approach to academic policy and regulation at institutional level appears broadly equivalent to that of comparator institutions, for example in terms of the issues on which the University has policy and regulation, the approach to policy and regulation (for example the number of different documents, the level of detail and length of those documents).

  - The University's approach to publishing its academic policies and procedures appears broadly equivalent to that of comparator institutions. For example, it is common practice to have a large number of separate PDF documents grouped together on a single website, most commonly listed A to Z, but sometimes organised thematically.

- **Findings from the mapping of policy and procedure**
  - For many academic regulatory or policy issues, Colleges and Schools have opt-outs from University regulation or policy, or have their own policy statements or procedures in addition to University level documentation. They appear to be doing so either to assist the School / College to implement the University policy by setting out specific guidance / procedures on implementation to accompany broader University-level statements; to add supplementary requirements to those required by the University (or, in a small minority of cases, to diverge from University requirements); or to provide a 'one stop shop' on the local website by restating (often in different words) University-level policy and procedure.

  - Where Schools / Colleges are adding supplementary (or divergent) requirements to those required by the University, it is sometimes clear that there will be necessary disciplinary reasons for doing so. However, that is not always the case.

  - In some cases, where Schools / Colleges produce documents providing implementation procedures or supplementary requirements, these do not cross-refer to or incorporate all the provisions in the University documents. Conversely, where Schools / Colleges have supplementary policies or guidance, this is not always highlighted in the University-level policies. In addition, it is relatively common for local documentation to be out of date and not reflect the current University position.

- **Findings from the mapping of levels of academic decision-making**

  - The majority of academic decisions regarding individual students are made at School level (most typically by Boards of Examiners). However, a significant proportion involve decisions at College level, or, to a much lesser extent, University level.

  - In general, the categories of decision requiring approval at College or University level are those which have the biggest impact on a student's academic studies, require a degree of externality, and / or require the University to have a high degree of consistency of approach. However, some of the decisions requiring additional levels of approval do not appear to be fundamentally different in type to those that can be agreed at School level.

  - For some issues, decision-making is taking place at College level in some Colleges but at School level in others, implying that College level approval may not be necessary. In addition, for some of the categories of decisions that are considered at College or University level, only a small proportion of cases supported by Schools are rejected at that higher level. It is therefore not clear whether the additional level (s) of approval are adding value in all cases.

6   For discussion

While the Service Excellence Programme and the benchmarking and mapping work have taken distinct approaches to considering how the University manages

academic policy development, implementation and supporting business processes, these two exercises have highlighted the following key themes:

- **Flexible, multi-layered and devolved approaches** – while the University-level approach to policy and regulation appears broadly equivalent to comparator institutions, there are also layers of College or School specific policy or regulation, and considerable variation in how Colleges and Schools are implementing policy and regulation.

- **Staff time** - Considerable staff time at College and School level is spent interpreting University policy, drafting local policy, and developing local procedures and systems. The existence of multiple and complex layers of policy and procedure will be making it more onerous for staff to understand and follow the appropriate policy. It is also likely that in some cases University or College layers of decision-making for individual student cases are adding limited value and may not be good use of staff time.

- **Staff roles and responsibilities** – grounds for revisiting the respective roles of academic and professional support staff, and of staff at School / College and University levels, in policy development, implementation and operation.

- **Efficiency of business processes and systems** – the current approach is contributing to a variety of business processes and systems at School level, which in turn is causing various practical issues.

- **Student experience** – the variety of different policies and procedures on some issues may be adversely affecting the quality of service delivery and increasing the possibility of inconsistent treatment of students.

The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised by the paper and to consider how the University could approach academic policy development and implementation in the future.

7 Next steps

The Student Administration & Support is currently in the second phase of delivery: an Options Identification Phase which sets out to develop potential solutions to the issues identified; test the potential solutions with relevant stakeholders; develop high level estimates of the likely cost/benefits of implementing any change; and present the Programme Board with a series of solution options (in the form of Outline Business Cases).

Comments from the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee and Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, a specially organised workshop/meeting on the issues identified relating to policy, and a range of other related activity will help feed into the options identification work.

The programme is working to tight deadlines with an initial set of outline business cases delivered to the Student Administration & Support Board in mid-October and to the Service Excellence Board in early November. The Board will, at that stage, be

invited to make a decision on whether the Outline Business Cases should be progressed to the next stage – the development of detailed design and final business cases before any decisions are made regarding implementation.

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Collaborative activities - arrangements for certificates and transcripts for dual / multiple awards

Executive Summary

This paper asks the Committee to discuss one aspect of the University's policy on Dual / Multiple Awards – whether wording regarding the (dual / multiple) nature of the award should be on the degree certificate, the transcript, or both.

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

Aligns with the current strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

The Committee is asked to:

- discuss the issues regarding the policy on Dual / Multiple Awards;
- decide whether wording regarding the (dual / multiple) nature of the award should be on the degree certificate, the transcript, or both;
- endorse the relevant wording.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

N /A

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Modest - any changes to the University's Dual / Multiple Awards Policy will in themselves have minimal resource implications. It is however likely that developing student systems to support some aspects of the business processes will have resources implications.

2. **Risk assessment**
   Not required.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted on the University's Dual / Multiple Awards Policy in September 2014.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open.

Key words
Collaboration

Originator of the paper
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
3 August 2016

Collaborative activities - arrangements for certificates and transcripts for dual / multiple awards

The purpose of this paper is to invite the Committee to clarify one aspect of the Policy on Dual / Double and Multiple Awards – whether wording regarding the (dual / multiple) nature of the award should be on the degree certificate, the transcript, or both. The Committee is invited to:

- discuss the issues regarding the policy on Dual / Multiple Awards;
- decide whether wording regarding the (dual / multiple) nature of the award should be on the degree certificate, the transcript, or both; and
- endorse the relevant wording.

Issues regarding arrangements for including wording regarding dual / multiple awards on degree certificates

At its September 2014 meeting, alongside approving the University's Policy on Dual / Double and Multiple Awards, the Committee agreed to a set of recommendations to implement the Policy. One of these recommendations covered the arrangements for degree certificates and transcripts:

> "The University of Edinburgh's degree certificate should include a form of words explaining that the degree is awarded for a jointly-delivered programme of study with another institution (named), for which the graduate has also been eligible for a separate degree from the other institution, stating the location of the partner and of the location of study. The transcript and HEAR should also include this form of words."

Since Sept 2014, QAA has issued more detailed guidance on managing Qualifications Involving More Than One Degree-Awarding Body:

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2984#.V0MNFJ1waDY

This guidance includes a suggested approach to the certificate and transcript:

> "a certificate from each of the degree-awarding bodies involved - the certificate and/or transcript or record of achievement, or Diploma Supplement, of at least the UK degree-awarding body or bodies refer to the existence of the other(s) and makes clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly conceived, programme of study and assessed learning leads to more than one separate qualification. Where legally permissible, the same reference is included on the documents issued by the other degree-awarding body or bodies." (p16)

The QAA guidance is slightly broader than CSPC's agreed position – while CSPC has agreed that both the degree certificate and transcript should include relevant wording, QAA suggests that it would be acceptable to include the wording on one or the other.

Feedback from two of the University's dual award developments in China suggest that there may be challenges in reconciling the University's policy of having the relevant wording on the degree certificate with the Chinese Ministry of Education's own policies. As a result, the Convener of CSPC has granted a time-limited concession to allow one of these collaborations (the collaboration between ECA and Donghua University, the agreement for which pre-dated the introduction of the Dual / Multiple Awards policy) to include wording on

the transcript alone. In addition, benchmarking suggests that the most common arrangement for UK higher education institutions running dual award programmes is to include relevant wording on the transcript but not the degree certificate.

Degree certificates and transcripts

In considering whether to include relevant wording on the University's degree certificate (rather than, or as well as, the transcript), it may be helpful for the Committee to note what the University (and other institutions) put on their degree certificates, and the relationship between the degree certificate and the transcript.

The University's degree certificate states the fact of the award of the degree, and the Higher Education Degree Certificate (HEAR, an expanded form of transcript) provides detailed information regarding the content and mode of delivery of the programme.

The degree certificate includes:

- Name of degree
- Class of Degree
- Name of candidate
- Date issued
- Name of institution issuing it (the University of Edinburgh in most cases, but names or crests of other institutions are also included for jointly issued degrees)
- Signatures of Principal, Head of College, and University Secretary

The HEAR contains the following:

- Information about the qualification - degree title and subject, awarding institution(s).
- Information about the level and nature of the qualification - level of study, duration, entry requirements.
- Information on the content of the studies and results gained - programme description/requirements (via a link to the degree specification document) and full academic transcript.
- Information on the function of the qualification - access to further study, professional status.
- Additional information - this is the section that allows the University to confirm information related to a student's wider achievements whilst a matriculated student.
- Information on the national higher education system - description of higher education in Scotland, diagram of higher education levels.

When the University was beginning to develop Online Distance Learning provision, there was some discussion regarding whether the degree certificate should also indicate the 'distance / online' nature of delivery. The University decided not to do so since the mode of delivery does not affect the degree itself.

Benchmarking confirms that the University's approach to degree certificates and the HEAR mirrors the standard approach in the sector (although not all institutions have developed their transcript into a HEAR).

Proposed wording for inclusion on degree certificate and / or transcript

Student Systems are developing options for incorporating appropriate wording into degree certificates and / or transcripts. The University will however need to agree a form of words.

Academic Services and Student Administration propose the following wording:

"Awarded by the University of Edinburgh as part of a programme delivered with XYZ. The recipient of this award may also have received an award from XYZ".

For discussion

As such, **the Committee is invited to consider** whether to continue with the current policy regarding wording regarding dual / multiple awards, or whether it would like to amend it (so, that, for example, the wording is routinely only included on the transcript). The Committee should however note that, since the University only issues a degree certificate (not a transcript) for PGR degrees, it would be necessary to continue including this wording on the degree certificate for dual / multiple PGR awards.

The Committee **is also invited to endorse** the proposed wording for inclusion on the degree certificate or transcript (as appropriate).

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
3 August 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Board of Examiners Handbook

Executive Summary

At its 2 June 2016 meeting, the Committee approved a proposal to develop a Board of Examiners Handbook.

Academic Services has developed the attached draft Handbook. It is intended to assist staff involved in Boards of Examiners by simplifying the current myriad of documents associated with Boards of Examiners into a single "how-to" guide for members of Boards of Examiners, which complements the Taught Assessment.

The draft Handbook is based largely on consolidating and reviewing existing documents, many of which were due for review in 2016. Only a small proportion of the material was not previously set out in University policy or regulation.

Student Services is planning to produce a short (c. 1-2 page) summary of key Board of Examiner business processes, taking account of the implementation of the Assessment and Progression Tools project, with a view to inserting this into Appendix B of the Handbook. Since this additional material has not been ready in time for this meeting, the Committee will be invited to delegate to the Convener to approve it on behalf of the Committee.

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

Aligns with the current strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to:

- Discuss and approve the structure and content of the draft Handbook, focussing on new material rather than the material incorporated from previously agreed documents;
- Agree a position on each of the specific policy issues highlighted by the drafting of the Handbook (see section 6 of the covering paper);
- Agree the formal status of the Handbook (see section 7 of the covering paper);
- Delegate to the Convener to approve the additional material on business processes for Appendix B;
- Agree the introduction of the Handbook with immediate effect following the insertion of the additional material in Appendix B (and the immediate withdrawal of the existing documents – see section 3 of the covering paper)

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper includes a plan for implementation and communication.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   N/A – Since the Handbook is largely a consolidation and re-presentation of existing documents and processes, its introduction does not have any resource implications.

2. **Risk assessment**

   This Handbook will form part of the University's approach to setting and maintaining appropriate academic standards and as such forms part of the risk management approach of the University. Since the Handbook is largely a consolidation and re-presentation of existing documents and processes, there are no new risks associated with its introduction.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   N/A – The Handbook is largely a consolidation and re-presentation of existing documents and processes, and does not involve any changes to the University's processes and practices. As such, an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment is not necessary.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open.

5. **Key words**
   Board of Examiners, Assessment

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward (Director of Academic Services), Adam Bunni (Academic Policy Manager) and Sara Welham (Academic Policy Manager), in consultation with Assistant Principals Prof Alan Murray and Prof Susan Rhind, and Chris Giles (Senior Business Analyst, Student Systems)

Board of Examiners Handbook

1   Overview

At its 2 June 2016 meeting, the Committee approved a proposal to develop a Board of Examiners Handbook.

Academic Services has developed the attached draft Handbook. It is intended to assist staff involved in Boards of Examiners by simplifying the current myriad of documents associated with Boards of Examiners into a single "how-to" guide for members of Boards of Examiners, which complements the Taught Assessment Regulations.

The draft Handbook is based largely on consolidating and reviewing existing documents, many of which were due for review in 2016. Only a small proportion of the material was not previously set out in University policy or regulation.

2   Benchmarking

In order to consider whether the Handbook should include any types of information other than that currently included in University documents, Academic Services undertook desk-based benchmarking with a range of comparator Universities (eg Manchester, Sheffield). The benchmarking confirmed that, in general, the types of issues covered by the University's current documentation on Boards of Examiners are in line with those provided by other institutions in relation to Boards of Examiners (for example, it is common for institutions to provide role descriptions for key Board of Examiner roles and templates for agenda / minutes for boards of examiners). While other institutions have a range of different ways of presenting the information (eg collections of policies and procedures, webpages listing multiple documents or providing brief summaries) we did not identify any models that offered advantages over a Handbook approach.

3   Draft Handbook

The draft Handbook incorporates material from the following documents (all of which were due for review in 2015-16):

- Overarching Principles for Taught Course and Programme Board of Examiners
- Overarching Remit for Board of Examiners
- Board of Examiner Roles: Convener
- Board of Examiner Roles: Course Organiser
- Board of Examiner Roles: Regulations Expert
- Board of Examiners Guidance: Minuting

It also summarises what the Taught Assessment Regulations say about anonymity, conflicts of interests, and the roles of Heads of Schools and Heads of Colleges in relation to Boards of Examiners.

In incorporating pre-existing material, the Handbook has largely left the substance intact, while redrafting to ensure consistency of style and tone, to improve the presentation, to update to reflect changes in University policy and regulations, and to remove clauses that no longer appear relevant or necessary. The more substantive changes to pre-existing material are:

- Deleting some of the Overarching Principles, since they appeared unnecessary and (despite the title) did not appear to have the status of principles;
- In the Course Organiser role description (and the template minute for Boards of Examiners) replacing the requirement to set out "the format of the assessment (e.g. multiple choice), the assessment regime for the course and any aspects of this and the marking which need to be formally noted in the minutes" with a more general requirement to "note any particular issues regarding the marking".
- Removing some of the specific guidance regarding the reporting of Special Circumstances Committee (SCC) outcomes to Boards of Examiners (previously incorporated in the Boards of Examiners Guidance: Minuting), given the recent changes to the Special Circumstances Policy;
- Updating the section on Data Protection and Freedom of Information (Records Management advised on these changes);
- Incorporating guidance regarding the business to cover during BoE meetings into the guidance for minuting BoE decisions.

The Handbook also incorporates a small amount of material not previously incorporated in policy or regulation. This relates to key timelines associated with Boards of Examiners taking account of the Assessment and Progression Tools project. In addition, Student Services is planning to produce a short (c. 1-2 page) summary of key Board of Examiner business processes, taking account of the implementation of the Assessment and Progression Tools project, with a view to inserting this into Appendix B of the Handbook (see 8 below).

Where material in the Handbook duplicates that included in the Taught Assessment Regulations, it is replicated word for word to ensure no divergence between the two documents.

4   Moderation

A separate review is currently underway regarding the University's policy / procedures on Moderation. Moderation is a key function associated with Boards of Examiners, and, ideally, the revised policy / procedures on Moderation would be incorporated into the Handbook. However, since the review of Moderation is not due to be completed until November 2016, it is not possible to incorporate material on moderation into this version of the Handbook. As such, the Handbook cross-refers to the University's policy / procedures on Moderation rather than making any detailed statements on the issue.

5   Simplification

The development of the Handbook is contributing to the broader objective of 'simplification' of academic policies and processes. By removing redundant material and overlap between different documents, it has reduced six documents to a single document, and reduced 21 pages to 15 pages.

6   Specific policy issues

The process of preparing the Handbook highlighted some ambiguity regarding policy issues regarding the operation of Boards of Examiners:

- The Taught Assessment Regulations state that, in order for a Board of Examiners meeting to be quorate, half of the Internal Examiners (and no fewer than two) must be

present. The Regulations do not however define what is meant by 'present', for example, whether an Internal could be viewed as 'present' if they skype or teleconference into the meeting, as long as they have access to all materials, and can follow and contribute to the meeting in full.

The Committee is invited to consider whether the Handbook and Taught Assessment Regulations should provide greater clarity on this issue.

- Feedback from the Assessment and Progression Tools project suggests that there is some ambiguity regarding whether the Regulations Expert has an 'advisory' or 'compliance' role, that is, whether they are there to provide advice on regulations when requested, or whether their role is to actively encourage or require the Board to follow the regulations appropriately.

The Committee is invited to confirm its understanding of this issue. In doing so, it should note that the Taught Assessment Regulations are clear that the Convener of the Board has formal responsibility for ensuring the Board operates in line with Regulations.

- There is a lack of clarity in the University's regulations regarding whether Colleges are required to approve the appointment of internal examiners. Taught Assessment Regulation 2 variously refers to Colleges "appointing" the internal examiners, "certifying" the list of internal examiners, and being "informed" of the list – these verbs imply different types of responsibility.

The Committee is invited to consider whether it is necessary for Colleges to continue to have a role in relation to establishing the internal membership of Boards of Examiners, and, if so, the nature of the role. In considering this, the Committee should note that the QAA Code of Practice indicates that degree-awarding bodies must consider nominations for External Examiners at institutional level – and given that the QAA expects this function to operate at institutional responsibility, it would not be appropriate to delegate responsibility below the current College level. In contrast, for internal examiners the QAA Code emphasises the requirement to have institutional policy regarding membership, rather than for institution-level consideration of nominations for individual members. As such, the QAA Code does not specifically require the level of approval for internal examiners.

- Taught Assessment Regulations 62.2 indicates that Schools must send Colleges copies of minutes of Boards of Examiners. The Regulation does not however indicate what the purpose of this is and what (if anything) Colleges should do with them.

The Committee should confirm whether this practice should continue, and, if so, what Colleges are responsible for doing with the minutes.

- While Taught Assessment Regulation 62.2 implies that the Convener of the Board is responsible for agreeing the minutes of Board meetings, the typical practice for other University Committees is for the Committee (not the Convener) to approve minutes. It would therefore be helpful to confirm the position in relation to Boards of Examiners.

The Committee is invited to confirm that the Board rather than the Convener is responsible for agreeing the minutes of Board meetings.

- At present, there is a lack of clarity in the Special Circumstances Policy and the current role descriptor of the Convener of the Board of Examiners regarding whether the Convener or the Head of School is responsible for appointing the Convener and members of the Special Circumstances Committee.

The Committee is invited to confirm that the Convener of the Board has this responsibility. If the Committee is content, Academic Services will make a technical amendment to the SC Policy to reflect this.

7   Status of the document

At present, all of the existing documents listed in Section 3 have the status of Mandatory Policy, with the exception of the Board of Examiners Guidance: Minuting (which has the status of non-mandatory guidance). In addition, many of the specific points in the Handbook are stated in the Taught Assessment Regulations, which has the status of Mandatory Policy.

The Committee is invited to agree that the Handbook, including the new elements, have the status of Mandatory Policy, but that the appendix (which provides guidance on minute-writing and agenda-construction, along with information on key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners) should have the status of non-mandatory guidance.

8   For discussion and approval

The Committee is invited to:

- Discuss and approve the structure and content of the draft Handbook, focussing on new material rather than the material incorporated from previously agreed documents;
- Agree a position on each of the specific policy issues highlighted by the drafting of the Handbook (see section 6 above);
- Agree the formal status of the Handbook (see section 7 above);
- Delegate to the Convener to approve the additional material on business processes for Appendix B;
- Agree the introduction of the Handbook with immediate effect following the insertion of the additional material in Appendix B (and the immediate withdrawal of the existing documents – see section 3 above)

9   Implementation

If the Committee approves the introduction of the Handbook, Academic Services will:

- Undertake a final proof-read (agreeing with the Convener any necessary amendments identified during this final drafting stage), finalise the presentation of the Handbook, and publish it on the Academic Services webpages with immediate effect;
- De-publish the existing documents with immediate effect;
- Email key contacts in Schools and Colleges to inform them of the Handbook, and promote the Handbook and invite feedback on it during briefing sessions for Conveners of Boards of Examiners in October / November 2016.

Colleges will also be encouraged to utilise their networks and Committees to promote the new Handbook, emphasising that it is largely based on existing material and does not introduce new types of requirements for Schools.

10   Future development of the Handbook

The development of the Handbook, within the scope agreed by the Committee in June 2016, has been a modest and pragmatic project to improve the quality and presentation of this information for Boards of Examiners.

In the longer-term it may be appropriate to review the material more fundamentally to take account of feedback following the introduction of the Handbook and to address the following:

- Given that the material in the Handbook was originally produced in 2010, it would be appropriate to undertake a more thorough review of the policy within it at some stage soon. That would however have entailed a more extensive project incorporating consultation with stakeholders.
- The Service Excellence Programme is considering Boards of Examiners processes, and it may be appropriate to revise the Handbook in due course to address any issues that the Programme highlights.
- Once the Assessment and Progression Tools Project (APT) has been fully implemented it may be appropriate to review the Handbook to ensure it supports Schools in relation to the business processes that APT has introduced.
- At present, there is some overlap between the Handbook and the Taught Assessment Regulations (TAR). A degree of overlap is inevitable if TAR is to set out the basic rules for the conduct of assessment (including the roles of Boards of Examiners), and the Handbook is to provide the main information relevant to those involved in Boards. More fundamental redrafting of those two documents than has been possible for this exercise may however reduce the degree of overlap.
- The Handbook does not include a role description for the main administrative role-holder, the Secretary to the Board. If there is sufficient consistency regarding the ways in which Schools deploy their administrative support for Boards it may be possible to include a role description in future editions of the Handbook.

Tom Ward (Director of Academic Services) and Sara Welham (Academic Policy Officer), in consultation with Assistant Principals Prof Alan Murray and Prof Susan Rhind, and Chris Giles (Senior Business Analyst, Student Systems)

University of Edinburgh
Handbook for Board of Examiners for taught courses and programmes

Content

University of Edinburgh

Handbook for Board of Examiners for taught courses and programmes

1   Introduction

1.1   This Handbook sets out the main responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and key role-holders involved in the operation of the Board, and provides information on the principles and remit of the Board of Examiners and guidance to help run effective Boards.

1.2   The Handbook should be read in conjunction with the University's Taught Assessment Regulations, Special Circumstances Policy, Policy on External Examiners for Taught Programmes and other relevant policies and regulations. The main part of this Handbook is mandatory policy and the information provided in the Handbook Appendices is guidance and not mandatory.

1.3   For sources of support and information in relation to this Handbook, see Section 11.

2   Why we have Boards of Examiners

2.1   A Board of Examiners is a body with membership approved by the relevant College whose role it is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a course or programme, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome. Boards of Examiners are a key part of enabling the University to judge that students have achieved their intended learning outcomes in a consistent, fair and reliable way, using agreed evidence and processes to reach their decisions.

3   Board of Examiners' Principles and Remit

Principles for Boards of Examiners

3.1   The following principles underpin the operation of Boards of Examiners:

Principle 1   The role of the Board of Examiners is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a relevant course or programme based primarily on assessment results, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome.

Principle 2   Boards of Examiners ensure that all students are treated with consistency and fairness, that the assessment process runs smoothly and correctly, that appropriate standards are set and maintained, and that the External Examiner plays an appropriate role.

Principle 3   The effective administration of assessment underpins the University's quality of learning and teaching.

Principle 4   Boards of Examiners are conducted according to standard operational procedures defined by the University and using University systems.

Principle 5   Working within the scope of the overarching remit (see 3.2), and agreed models and accompanying guidance, Schools structure Boards of Examiners according to their own requirements.

Principle 6   Members of Boards of Examiners and those working in support of Boards of Examiners receive appropriate support for and recognition of their role.

Board of Examiners' Remit

3.2   The overarching remit of Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes and Courses is:

- to oversee and conduct the entire assessment process according to the University's Taught Assessment Regulations and other relevant regulations and policies, along with the principles approved by the appropriate Board of Studies;
- to ensure that suitably detailed marking criteria are prepared for every item of assessment under the authority of the Board;
- to take responsibility for determining outcomes for students across all elements of courses or programmes for which the Board has responsibility;
- to manage the outcomes of special circumstances committees appropriately;
- to produce a set of outcomes appropriate to the assessments and to record and transmit these as required by regulations and procedures in force at the time;
- to minute its decisions in accordance with current regulation and guidance and ensure that archives of its decisions/minutes and those of any of its subsidiaries are maintained for the appropriate retention period.

4   Who does what?

Authority

4.1   This Handbook, along with the Taught Assessment Regulations and other University regulations and policies set out the authority and responsibility of key office-holders in relation to Boards of Examiners. Schools may delegate tasks associated with the administrative processes of the Board to appropriate academic or administrative staff, but responsibility for the delivery of those tasks rests with the formal office-holders. Whenever a specific role is delegated, this must be agreed with the person who has responsibility for the role, and a record kept of the delegations that are in place.

Appointment of key office-holders

4.2   The Convener of the Board of Examiners, along with Internal and External Examiners are appointed to the Board of Examiners by the relevant College on the basis of nominations from the relevant Head of School. The Taught Assessment Regulations and the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy provide further information regarding the process and timescales for appointment.

> **Commented [WT1]:** See covering paper section 6 regarding the role of Colleges in appointing internal examiners.

4.3   The Convener of the Board of Examiners is responsible for appointing the Convener and members of the Special Circumstances Committee.

> **Commented [WT2]:** See covering paper section 6.

4.4   The Head of School is responsible for appointing a Regulations Expert for each Board of Examiners. The Regulations Expert does not need to be a member of the

Board of Examiners. Schools may appoint a Regulations Expert to operate across the School or across a number of Boards of Examiners. The role may be combined with another role in the Board.

4.5 Schools are responsible for appointing a Secretary for each of their Boards of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners

4.6 A Board of Examiners is composed of the Internal and External Examiners for the courses and/or programmes covered by the Board. The Convener can also invite to attend Board meetings those markers or others involved in teaching or assessment who are not Internal Examiners, but they are not involved in decision making at the Board.

4.7 The Board of Examiners is chaired by a Convener and supported by a Secretary of the Board and a Regulations Expert.

Quorum of the Board of Examiners

4.8 In order for a meeting of a Board of Examiners to be quorate, at least half the Internal Examiners (and no fewer than two) must be present, and at least one External Examiner must participate.

Convener of the Board of Examiners

4.9 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has overall responsibility for the assessment process for courses and programmes covered by the Board, for ensuring that the Board operates within University regulations, and for corresponding on behalf of the Board. The Convener may delegate specific tasks to the Course Organiser, Programme Director, School Teaching Organisation (or equivalent), but the Convener has responsibility for the activities set out in 4.10 to 4.14.

4.10 Ensuring the Board meets deadlines for the administration of assessment:
- In consultation with the College, School, Student Systems and Student Administration as appropriate, and in line with the key University dates, setting outline dates for meetings of the Board of Examiners at least one year in advance;
- Commenting on the draft examination timetable distributed by Student Administration;
- Ensuring that all assessment administration deadlines are met, including those for recording course and programme outcomes in the EUCLID student record.

4.11 Ensuring that the necessary activities take place in preparation for assessment:
- Approving the content of examination papers, taking account of the comments of External Examiners;
- Ensuring that the statement of assessment provided to students of how and when each of their courses and programmes is to be assessed includes information about the Board of Examiners' standard setting and moderation methods;
- Ensuring the security of, and arrangements for, setting papers and assessments, including the robustness of and resources for electronic

assessment, examining and marking of assessed work, processing and storing marks and grades;

- Approving the use of email or other electronic transfer for transmission of draft examination papers and other information to external examiners for their evaluation of the assessment of students provided that appropriate security measures have been taken within the scope of current University computer security guidance;
- Considering, with the relevant College Dean and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport.

4.12 Ensuring the appropriate conduct of marking and moderation processes prior to the Board:
- Ensuring the quality and standards of marking of members of the Board, as well as those markers who are not members;
- With the Head of School, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a member of staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment;
- Coordinating arrangements for marking assessed work and ensuring that all Internal and External Examiners and markers are aware of their responsibilities and of the relevant common marking scheme;
- Ensuring the operation of appropriate internal moderation processes, and providing examples of students' summative assessments to External Examiners in line with the University's policies / procedures on Moderation;
- Deciding what action to take if markers consider a student's work to be illegible;
- Investigating cases where a student has failed to complete all assessment components of a degree programme, and ensuring that they are dealt with under the appropriate policy;
- Ensuring that any academic misconduct offences are referred to the School Academic Misconduct Officer for investigation.

4.13 Ensuring the effective operation of Board of Examiners meetings within University regulations, including:
- convening meetings, and informing the Head of School in writing when they delegate this responsibility to another member of the Board (eg where the Convener is also a Programme or Course Organiser, they must delegate formal chairing of the Board of Examiners to another member of the Board for discussion of that programme or course.);
- confirming that the Board is quorate;
- ensuring that summary information about the decisions and recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee is reported to the Board by, or on behalf of, the SCC Convener;
- applying any penalty imposed by the for academic misconduct;
- ensuring that the Board reaches decisions in line with University degree and taught assessment regulations, and, where relevant, any supplementary College rules;
- confirming the detailed assessment results;
- ensuring as part of the formal proceedings of the Board that External Examiners are invited to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the course(s) and/or programme(s) under scrutiny;

- guiding the Board of Examiners to reach a collective decision (decisions do not need to be unanimous).

4.14   Ensuring appropriate follow-up after the meeting of the Board:
- ensuring that results and decisions are recorded in the EUCLID student record and communicated to students within the deadlines published by Student Systems, and that an accurate minute of the Board of Examiners meeting is produced and sent to the College Office;
- completing any follow-up activity, concessions, or Convener's action business stemming from the Board meeting, ensuring that this is minuted and recorded appropriately;
- in the event of an academic appeal, providing the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meeting and commenting on the appellant's case;
- in the event that new information comes to light about a decision of the Board, deciding whether to reconvene the Board.

Commented [T3]: See Covering Paper, section 6

Convener of the Special Circumstances Committee

4.15   The Convener of the Special Circumstances Committee (SCC) has responsibility for ensuring that the Special Circumstances Committee operates within University regulations and the Special Circumstances Policy.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Regulations Expert

4.16   The role of the Regulations Expert is to act as an immediate source of knowledge and advice to the Board of Examiners about the relevant University Regulations and guidance and their academic application.

4.17   The Regulations Expert will attend or be available to all meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the relevant regulations and guidance are available for reference at all meetings.

4.18   Where the Regulations Expert gives advice outwith the context of a Board meeting, for example in the course of Special Circumstances Committees and academic misconduct investigations, they should consult as necessary with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

Course Organiser

4.19   The Course Organiser carries out the detailed administration of the course on behalf of the Head of School, including various administrative aspects of arrangements for assessment.   Information in 4.21 to 4.26 sets out the Course Organiser's main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners.

4.20   Preparation for assessment:
- monitoring and checking the timely setting of examination and in-course assessment work.

4.21   Marking and moderation processes:

- co-ordinating arrangements for marking assessed work, ensuring that marks are collected and recorded (in most instances via the Teaching Organisation or equivalent) and that markers are aware of their responsibilities;
- considering requests for late submission of coursework (some Schools may assign this role to the Programme Director, or equivalent);
- in line with the University's policies and procedures on moderation, organising and supervising moderation at the course level, and taking action, in conjunction with the Convener of the Board of Examiners if necessary, where inconsistency or unsatisfactory practice is identified, and supervising the recording of the occurrence and the outcome of moderation decisions;
- liaising with the External Examiners on matters relating to the assessment of the course and arrangements for the Board of Examiners meeting.

4.22 Preparing material for the Board of Examiners meeting including:
- collating or supervising the collation of marks;
- checking marks (together with the Course Secretary or other colleague as appropriate);
- preparing reports on cases of academic misconduct identified in their course;
- liaising with the Secretary to the Board of Examiners on the presentation of provisional results to the Board;
- briefing the Convener of the Board of Examiners on any complex issues, either directly or via the Secretary to the Board;
- maintaining continuity in the event of sabbatical leave in the following Semester by ensuring that marks are collected and recorded before their departure, or arrangements made for this to be done, and that all correspondence with students and notes about the assessment are handed over to their successor, with appropriate briefing.

4.23 Contributing to Board of Examiners' meetings including:
- presenting the provisional results for their course/programme, noting any particular issues regarding the marking;
- keeping a note of all decisions made by the Board in relation to individual students, particularly where a change to any initial recommendation of pass/fail status is involved, and where recommendations of the Special Circumstances and academic misconduct processes have an impact on a student's final result (these notes are informal but may provide useful support for the minute-taker in preparation of the formal minute and record of the Board of Examiners' decisions).

4.24 Following-up after the meeting of the Board:
- carrying out actions as directed by the Board of Examiners;
- ensuring that arrangements are made as necessary for re-assessment, whether re-submission of coursework or resit examinations, and that students are aware of any requirements relating to these over and above those notified by Student Systems;
- ensuring that the Course Handbook, EUCLID Course Descriptor and other published information are updated in the light of any relevant decisions of the Board of Examiners, Board of Studies, and changes to University regulations and guidance relating to assessment;
- maintaining continuity in the event of sabbatical leave in the following Semester by ensuring that marks are collected and recorded before their departure, or

arrangements made for this to be done, and that all correspondence with students and notes about the assessment are handed over to their successor, with appropriate briefing.

Head of School

4.25 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the School that owns the programme or course are:
- Nominating the Convener of the Board of Examiners, along with the Internal and External Examiners (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
- Appointing markers;
- Appointing Regulations Experts (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
- With the Convener of the Board of Examiners, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a marker, Examiner or member of staff, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment.

Commented [T4]: See Cover Paper section 5.

Head of College or nominee (typically a Dean)

4.26 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the College or nominee are:
- Appointing Internal and External Examiners on the basis of nominations from Heads of Schools;
- Ensuring that all elements which contribute to the award of a degree from the University are represented by the appropriate number of External Examiners;
- Keeping copies of Boards of Examiners minutes at College level;
- Advising the Convener of the Board of Examiners or Head of School on the interpretation and application of the relevant University Regulations and guidance regarding Boards of Examiners;
- Considering, with the Convener of the Board of Examiners and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport;
- Handling concession requests submitted by Boards of Examiners.

Commented [T5]: See Cover paper section 5

Commented [T6]: See Cover paper, section 5

5   The principle of anonymity

5.1 Anonymity is an important principle for the operation of Boards of Examiners and assessment processes. The Taught Assessment Regulations outline the requirements for:

- Marking work anonymously when possible (the marker should not know the identity of the student);
- Anonymising marks and grades during processing;
- Retaining the anonymity of a student's work at the Board of Examiners, until the best interests of the student are no longer served by anonymity;
- A final check of the un-anonymised marks and decisions;
- Anonymity for examiners (the views of a particular examiner at a Board of Examiners should not be made known to a student);
- Anonymity of results (there should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme).

6   Avoiding conflicts of interest

6.1   No member of University of Edinburgh staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.

6.2   For advice regarding what to do in the event of a potential conflict of interest, see the Taught Assessment Regulations.

7   Business to cover at meetings of Boards of Examiners

7.1   Appendix A provides a Template Board of Examiners Agenda / Minute, which sets out core items to cover at Board meetings. Schools may wish to supplement them with additional items where appropriate.

8   Minutes for Boards of Examiners and Special Circumstances Committee meetings

Responsibility for minute-taking

8.1   Conveners of Boards of Examiners and Special Circumstances Committees are responsible for agreeing an accurate record for each meeting.

> **Commented [T7]:** See Cover Paper section 5

8.2   The School should decide who is responsible for taking the minutes of a Board of Examiners or Special Circumstances Committee meeting (most commonly this will be the Secretary to the Board of Examiners). Conveners of Boards of Examiners should ensure that the minute-taker is properly briefed for any specific issues that may arise in a meeting.

Minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings

8.3   Appendix A provides guidance regarding how to record meetings of Boards of Examiners. When recording the proceedings, follow these general points:

- do not attribute views to an identifiable individual member of the Board;
- use a student's examination number rather than name when referring to an individual student;
- record the outcome of any vote taken during the meeting;
- where relevant, note any guidance or regulations consulted or invoked.

Minutes of Special Circumstances Committees

8.4   The general points regarding recording Board of Examiners meetings (see 8.3) and many of the core elements covered in Appendix A (eg Date of Meeting, Attendance and Quorum, Scope of the Meeting) also apply to the minutes for Special Circumstances Committees.

8.5   The minutes of the Special Circumstances Committee (SCC) will also include:

- A list of the evidence received and considered by the Special Circumstances Committee in relation to each case;
- The decision taken in relation to each case and the reasons for this decision, along with any recommendations for appropriate action to be taken by the Board of Examiners in response to the circumstances.

8.6 The minutes of the Special Circumstances Committee are not circulated to the Board of Examiners. Instead, the Convener should provide a written report of its decisions and recommendations on these matters to the relevant Board of Examiners.

Minutes and Data Protection and Freedom of Information

8.7 While the Board of Examiners and Special Circumstances minutes are confidential, there are circumstances in which some of their content must be made available on request:
- Under Data Protection legislation a student can make a Subject Access Request (SAR) for the disclosure of comments about themselves.
- Under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) anyone can request information contained in the minutes or reports but comments about individual candidates are exempt from disclosure. For example, comments about the general standard of the candidates must be disclosed on request.

8.8 Prior to disclosing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR or FOISA request, School Information Practitioners should ask the Convener of the Board or SCC:
- Whether the minutes are draft or approved (this should be stated when releasing the documentation); and
- Whether there are any concerns regarding releasing any particular content in the minutes (this should be taken into account when applying any exemptions and advice sought from the Records Management Section).

8.9 When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR, Schools must only provide identifiable personal information about the requestor - personal information about other individuals must be anonymised. When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a FOISA request all personal information about students must be anonymised. Information is considered anonymised if there are at least 4 individuals to whom the information could refer. Guidance on anonymisation is available on the Records Management website: www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/data-protection/guidance-policies/anonymisation.

8.10 When releasing minutes in response to FOISA requests, the names of the individuals that attended the meeting should be disclosed unless there is a justifiable reason not to do so. If the School is aware of a reason not to release the name of an individual, their Information Practitioner should seek exemption advice from the Records Management Section.

8.11 School Information Practitioners (www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/foi-practitioners) may seek advice from the Records Management Section regarding the handling of information requests, recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk.

Minutes and Student Academic Appeals and Complaints

8.12   The minutes or relevant extract from the minutes of Board of Examiners or Special Circumstances Committee meetings can be taken account in the course of student academic appeals, and may also be relevant to a student complaint. Material produced during an appeal or complaint may receive external scrutiny by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University procedures and takes their case to the SPSO.

8.13   Where a student requests minutes to assist them with an appeal or complaint, Schools should only provide extracts relevant to the Board or SCC's decisions on the individual's case, along with extracts containing any general remarks which might be held by the student to be relevant to their appeal (e.g. on the involvement of supervisors in the assessment process). When supplying minutes to students as part of an appeal or complaints process, Schools should follow the principles set out above in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Interaction between minutes and communications to students

8.14   Where Schools communicate with individual to students following the publication of course or programme results (often relating to failure to progress), they should ensure that the explanation that they provide the student for the results should reflect and be limited to that recorded in the minutes.

9   Retention of Minutes and Papers of Boards of Examiners and Special Circumstances Committees

9.1   Minutes and Papers of Board of Examiners and Special Circumstances meetings should be retained for 5 years after graduation, withdrawal or other permanent departure from University, or, in the case of lapsed students, 8 years after last contact with students:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records

10   Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

10   Annex B provides an indicative timeline and a summary of processes associated with Boards of Examiners.

11   Sources of support and information

11.1   The Handbook forms part of a suite of support and advice for Boards of Examiners, which also includes briefing and training sessions presented by College Offices and Academic Services, and student record training provided by Student Systems.

11.2   Boards of Examiners are supported by office-holders who can provide advice on the interpretation and application of this Handbook and related University Regulations and policies. Each Board of Examiners will have a Regulations Expert (see above). In addition:

- Each College will designate College Office or other College level staff to be available for consultation by Regulations Experts and by Conveners of Boards of Examiners;
- Academic Services will provide advice on the academic application of regulations;
- Student Administration and Student Systems can advise on matters regarding examinations and student systems.

11.3 In general, queries should be directed in the first instance to the College.

11.4 The University provides other sources of information about specific aspects of the assessment process.

- Appeals: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/appeals
- Exam Hall Regulations: www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/exams/regulations
- External Examining: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/external-examining
- Glossary of terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk
- Policy and terms of reference for Progression Boards: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf
- Special Circumstances Policy: http://www.edinburgh.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf
- Student Systems: www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/admin-support-staff/student-admin-colleges-schools

Template Board of Examiners Agenda and Minutes

Confidential
[Name of School]
[Name of Courses/Degree Programmes Covered by BoE]
[Academic Year]
[Date and venue of BoE meeting]
AGENDA / MINUTES

1   Introduction

At meeting:

- Confirm BoE quorate; confirm those present, including Convener, External Examiner(s) and Secretary, and whether members or "in attendance"; confirm Regulations Expert is present or available.

In minutes:

- Record that the BoE was quorate, record the names of those present according to whether they are members of the Board or are in attendance, and note any change in the capacity in which a member is attending (e.g. appointment of an Acting Convener).
- If External Examiner(s) was not present, record the reason, together with alternative arrangements made for their input.
- If the Regulations Expert was not present, confirm that they were available for consultation.

2   Apologies

At meeting and in minutes: note any apologies.

3   Confidentiality and Anonymity

At meeting:

- Remind members that discussions at BoE are confidential.
- Confirm whether the marking processes have been conducted anonymously.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

4   Minutes of Previous Board of Examiners meeting(s) of [Date(s)]

At meeting:

- Confirm Board approves the minutes as an accurate record. | **Commented [WT8]:** See Section 6 of Covering Paper
- Report any Convener's Actions or matters arising.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

5   Special Circumstances

At meeting:

- Invite Convener/representative of SCC to present summary report.
- Invite Board to determine outcomes for each candidate.

In minutes:

- Record that the Board considered the report.
- Record each decision along with the main reasons (when recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the

decision reached). Where the Board has rejected the recommendation(s) of the SCC, record the reasons for this.

6   Confirmation of course/programme results
At meeting:
- For each course/programme, invite the Course Organiser / Programme Director to introduce the provisional results and to note any particular issues regarding the marking, and paying particular attention to borderline cases.
- Decide on final course or award / progression outcomes.
- Invite External Examiner(s) to confirm that they support the outcomes.

In minutes:
- List each course/programme, with appropriate reference number, and note final results.
- Record details of any modification of provisional marks, grades, or award / progression decision, together with the reasons for these.
- Record the discussion and outcome for any borderline cases.
- Where not all results are available by the time of the meeting, record information on the availability of results for individual students and record the reasons for an award or absence of award.
- In Honours years other than final, record any particular circumstances that will subsequently be relevant to classification.
- When recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the decision reached.
- Should there be circumstances in which feedback on work has not been available which would normally have been used by students in their preparation for examinations, this must be noted in relation to the individual students concerned.
- Record comments by the External Examiner(s) about the examination of the course(s) or programme(s), the performance of the students in general, and their approval of results agreed by the Board.

7   Anonymity
At meeting:
- Once decisions have been taken on course and programme outcomes, lift anonymity and substitute student names for examination numbers, then conduct a final check and agree the results as final.
In minutes:
- Record when anonymity is lifted, and any change made to marks, grades or class of degree in the event of detection of an error which was not detectable when examination numbers were used.

8   Withdrawals and Exclusions
At meeting and in minutes: note student withdrawals and cases where students may be excluded for unsatisfactory progress.

9   Convener's Action
At meeting and in minutes: note any matters to be dealt with by Convener's Action following the meeting.

10 **External Examiner(s) comments**
At meeting: invite External Examiner(s) to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the course(s) and/or programme(s).
In minutes: record their main comments.

11 **Any Other Business**

Appendix B - Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

Main annual timelines

The following is a summary of the main annual timelines associated with Boards of Examiners. It is indicative, and Schools will be informed of the precise timelines for particular processes on an annual basis. The summary is not exhaustive as Boards may have additional activities in local remits. The timeline is based on the standard University academic year structure and examination diets, and programmes with different assessment cycles may need to adapt the checklist.

August / September
- UG resit assessment diet
- Marking and moderation of UG resit diet and PGT dissertations
- UG resit Special Circumstances Committee (SCC) and Board of Examiners (BoE) meetings
- Record UG resit and progression decisions on EUCLID student record
- PGT SCC and BoE meetings
- Course Organisers check that course handbooks, with assessment statements, are up to date and available to students

  Note that Board of Examiner activities in August / September associated with the UG resit diet and PGT assessments should be conducted according to the previous session's assessment regulations and associated policies.

October
- Schools consulted on Semester 1 examination timetable
- Semester 1 examination timetable published
- Record PGT award decisions for November/December graduations on EUCLID student record

November
- Heads of School inform the College Office of the names of examiners for S1 examination diet (by 1 November)
- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S1 examinations and agreeing them with External Examiner. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.

December
- S1 examination diet
- Marking and moderation of S1 assessment (continues into January)

January
- Heads of School inform the College Office of the names of examiners for S2 examination diet (by 15 January)
- SCC and BoE meetings for S1 courses
- Record S1 course results on the EUCLID student record
- Latest time for setting date for the next year's January Board of Examiners meetings

February

- Schools consulted on Semester 2 exam timetable

March
- Semester 2 exam timetable published

April
- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S2 examinations and agreeing them with External Examiner. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.
- S2 examination diet starts
- Marking and moderation of S2 assessment (continues into May)

May / June
- SCC and BoE meetings
- Record course results, progression and degree awards on EUCLID student record
- Latest time for setting date for the next year's May / June Board of Examiners meeting
- Communicate progression and award decisions to students
- Taught Assessment Regulations for following academic year published

July
- Schools consulted on resit examination timetable
- Resit examination timetable published

Processes associated with preparation for individual Boards of Examiner meetings

[Short summary of business processes to be inserted]

Key dates for recording results on EUCLID student record

10.3 The key dates for recording results into the EUCLID student record and communication of results to students is available from Student Systems. Requirements for communicating results to students are provided in the Taught Assessment Regulations.
www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

The future of Degree Programme Specifications in the light of Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines on consumer protection law

Executive Summary

This paper highlights issues regarding the University's compliance with CMA requirements for the provision of programme information, particularly in relation to the University's Degree Programme Specifications (DPSs). It evaluates several options for addressing issues regarding programme information, and invites the Committee to identify its favoured option. The next stage would be to have more detailed discussions regarding the proposals with a wider range of stakeholders (including the Service Excellence Project), and to estimate the technical and practical resource implications of implementation, prior to a decision on the way forward.

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

Aligns with the current strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

The Committee is asked to:

- Discuss the issues raised by the paper;
- Identify its favoured option for addressing these issues.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

N /A

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

Most of the options identified in the paper would have significant resource implications for Schools / Colleges and support services. It would be necessary to assess these resource implications prior to making a decision on the way forward.

2. **Risk assessment**

The paper identifies risks to the University associated with current arrangements and highlights the extent to which different options would address these issues.

3. Equality and Diversity

It is not necessary to undertake a formal equality and diversity assessment at this stage, since the Committee is not being invited to make a decision on the way forward.

4. Freedom of information
   Open.

5. <u>Key words</u>
   Programmes, consumer

6. <u>Originator of the paper</u>
   Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
   22 August 2016

The future of Degree Programme Specifications in the light of Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines on consumer protection law

This paper highlights issues regarding the University's compliance with CMA requirements for the provision of programme information, particularly in relation to the University's Degree Programme Specifications (DPSs). It is based on initial discussion with the University's Consumer Protection working group, and consultation with Communications and Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions, and Student Administration

The paper evaluates several options for addressing issues regarding programme information, and recommends that the University explores one of them in more detail.

The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised by the paper and the possible options, and to identify its favoured option. The next stage would be to have more detailed discussions regarding the proposals with a wider range of stakeholders (eg Colleges, relevant support services), and to estimate the technical and practical resource implications of implementation, prior to a decision on the way forward. The Service Excellence Programme has highlighted some similar issues and it will be important to take a joint approach to assessing options and agreeing a way forward.

1   Complying with CMA guidelines on information provision regarding 'courses' ('programmes')

The CMA guidelines indicate that higher education providers must provide students / prospective students 'material information' on 'courses' ('programmes', in Edinburgh terminology), in a 'durable medium' (meaning paper, email, or any other medium that allows information to be addressed personally to the recipient, enables the recipient to store the information in a way accessible for future reference for a period that is long enough for the purposes of the information, and allows the unchanged reproduction of the information store). Annex A sets out the information that the University must provide on each of its programmes in order to comply with these guidelines.

The University already holds most of the required categories of information in relation to its programmes, via the UG and PG Degree Finders, Key Information Sets, Degree Programme Specifications, the Academic Services webpage regarding professional and statutory accreditation, and in the Tuition Fees section of the University website. At present, however, there are some issues regarding the University's ability to comply with these programme information requirements:

- There are issues regarding the completeness and accuracy of information in the Degree Programme Specifications (see below);

- There are varying levels of information in the Degree Finders, due to differences in the structures of the UG and PG Degree Finders, and differences in the level of information provided by Schools for inclusion.

- The University does not systematically publish information regarding 'the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the course' (see Annex A, para a.v.);

- Where information is published, it is not always held in a 'durable medium' format.

2 Background to the University's publication of Degree Programme Specifications (DPSs)

2.1 The purpose of DPSs

Degree Programme Specifications (DPSs) contain core information regarding undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, including:

- Programme aims and outcomes;
- Programme structures and features;
- Methods and strategies for teaching and learning, and assessment;
- Career opportunities.

DPSs provide a different type of information about programmes than Degree Programme Tables (which provide information on the 'skeleton structure' of the degree programme).

The University has a standard template for DPTs. This, along with further guidance for DPSs, is available at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum/degree-prog-specific

The University uses DPSs for two distinct purposes:

1. Internal processes for managing academic standards and quality – DPSs are required as part of the process for developing and approving new programmes, and are supporting documents for Teaching Programme Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews, and may also be required by some professional and statutory bodies.

2. Providing prospective students, students, graduates and employers with information regarding the University's programmes.

2.2 Arrangements for maintaining and publishing DPSs

Since 2012-13, Student Systems has maintained a system for holding and publishing DPSs in free text / html format. It asks Schools to update these documents on an annual basis, and maintains and publishes new 'instances' for each session, as part of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Studies (DPRS) resource, with DPSs accessed via links associated with the relevant Degree Programme Table (DPT).

Proxied versions of these DPSs are published in the UG Degree Finder. At present, the PG Degree Finder does not include proxied DPSs because issues regarding completeness and

accuracy (see section 3 below) are more acute for PGT than UG DPSs. prospective PGT students are not signposted to the relevant DPSs, although they remain in the public domain.

2.3   Changes in QAA requirements for DPSs

In the past, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)'s Quality Code specifically required higher education institutions to maintain and publish DPSs. However, in recent years, the QAA dropped its requirements regarding DPSs[1], and instead states its requirements in more general terms:

> 'Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.' (Quality Code Part A, Expectation A2.2)

2.4   The Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) and Degree Programme Specifications

Section 4 of the HEAR contains 'Information on the content of your studies and results gained - programme description/requirements and full academic transcript'. At present, the University delivers the 'programme description / requirements' element by including a link to the published version of the relevant DPS (the version for the relevant session for the graduate) on the HEAR. This places an onus on the University to continue to publish legacy versions of DPSs at stable urls, in order that graduates (and prospective employers) can consult them.

3   Issues regarding the University's Degree Programme Specifications

3.1   Completeness - Not all programmes have published DPSs

- The vast majority of UG degree programmes have published DPSs (a total of c. 600 DPS), with only a very small number missing;

- In contrast, at least 130 PGT degree programmes do not have published DPSs, with some Schools not having published any DPSs for any of their PGT programmes.

3.2   Overlap between information in DPSs and other sources of information

- The DPS contains an overview of the discipline and programme which overlaps with information that, to a greater or lesser extent, is held in the UG and PGT Degree Finders;

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[1] QAA, The Quality Code for Higher Education: Your Questions 2013-15, p44
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Quality-Code-Your-Questions-15.pdf

- The DPS contains information regarding courses that students will take in each year of the programme, which replicates information provided (comprehensively) in DPTs and (with varying levels of detail) in the UG and PGT Degree Finders;
- The information on teaching, learning and assessment in DPS overlaps with the (discipline rather than programme level) information in the UG Degree Finder (and, less commonly, in the PG Degree Finder);
- The information on professional and statutory body reviews published in a dedicated field in the Undergraduate Degree Finder and sometimes included as general text in the Postgraduate Degree Finder overlaps with information published by Academic Services.

3.3 Accuracy of information in the published DPTs

While Student Systems has an annual process of asking Schools to update the published versions of their DPSs, there is currently no systematic way of ensuring that all Schools have reviewed and updated these documents.

A cursory review of a sample of DPS highlights the following issues:

- A high proportion appear not to have been updated for 3-4 years;
- Frequent examples of out of date information regarding the courses that students take as part of the programme;
- Examples of out of date information regarding aspects of the student experience (for example, references to 'Directors of Studies', despite this role having been replaced by Personal Tutors several years ago);
- Examples of out of date information regarding professional accreditation.

It is likely that this cursory review has understated the issues with the published DPSs, since it focussed on identifying inconsistency between the DPS and other sources of centrally published information and did not attempt to confirm the accuracy or otherwise of other types of information regarding the programmes; only School staff familiar with the programmes would be able to identify certain types of inaccuracy.

A more systematic review would be necessary in order to confirm how widespread these issues are. However, the findings of this initial review are consistent with anecdotal information regarding DPSs – that Schools tend not to see these documents as important, and may only update them every few years, with impending Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) / Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs) often a prompt for doing so.

3.4 Golden copy issues

In some cases, Schools are publishing PDFs of DPSs on their websites, in addition to those held by Student Systems and published in the DRPS. In some cases the versions on School websites are different to those published in the DRPS.

3.5 Fitness for purpose of the DPSs

The template for DPSs has not been reviewed since it was approved by the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) in 2010. There are no obvious reasons to change much of it. For example, the section on programme outcomes is structured in relation to the key themes in University's Graduate Attributes framework, and the Careers Services has indicated that there are no plans to make fundamental changes to that framework. However, there are reasons to review some elements of it, for example:

- There is an increased interest across the University in taking a programme-level perspective regarding assessment, for example to avoid assessment bunching and to ensure a diverse and appropriate range of assessments are used – the current DPS template may not encourage programme developers to give sufficient attention to this issue;
- Section 12 asks Schools to explain how the programme is addressing themes related to the Strategic Plan, and will therefore need to be amended to reflect the new Strategic Plan.

In addition, in practice the content of DPSs is often not engaging and fit for recruitment / student-facing purposes (for example the high level of detail of many DPSs is not well-suited for recruitment purposes), suggesting that Schools may find it challenging to write programme information that meets the needs both of internal and external audiences.

3.6   Ease of navigation to information

It is not easy to find DPSs in their current location within the DRPS, and anecdote suggests that few staff are aware that these documents are published at this location and that few students or prospective students consult them in that location (there is no web analytics on these pages, so it is not possible to confirm this). While proxied versions of UG DPSs are published in the UG Degree Finder, only a relatively small proportion of external sessions using the UG Degree Finder (2.85%) involve viewing a DPS.

4   Summary of key points

- At present, the University does not hold and publish all the information necessary to satisfy all of the CMA's 'material information' requirements in relation to programmes - the University will therefore need to take steps to expand on programme-level information.

- At present, the University is not be able to satisfy some of the CMA's 'material information' requirements without drawing on information in DPSs. Since a large number of (predominantly PGT) programmes do not have published DPSs means that the University is not able to meet those requirements in full.

- The fact that some (probably a high proportion of) Schools are not keeping their published DPSs up to date (or providing the necessary level of information regarding curriculum and learning and assessment for inclusion in the Degree Finder) represents a serious risk to the University's compliance with consumer protection law, and could leave the University vulnerable to legal challenge from individual students should they

find that the programme they enrol on does not offer the features set out in the relevant published DPS.

- The overlap in content between the content of DPSs and other sources of information, combined with issues regarding golden copy, will not only lead to administrative inefficiency but will also increase the risk of the University publishing inaccurate / inconsistent information.

- Current students are unlikely to be making as much use of DPSs as they could to aid their reflection and development.

5 Options

The following are possible options for addressing the issues regarding DPSs while addressing broader issues regarding CMA compliance:

5.1.1 *Cease publishing the 2016-17 DPSs with immediate effect (while continuing to require Schools to have DPSs – based on a standard University template - for all programmes for internal purposes)*

Pros:
- Would remove the risks associated with publishing inaccurate and overlapping information;

Cons:
- Would amplify the risks of non-compliance with CMA guidelines regarding provision of 'material information'
- Would mean that neither prospective nor current students have access to the richer information regarding programmes that is currently only available in DPSs.
- There is currently a requirement to link to programme information from KIS records on Unistats, and at present the University fulfils this requirement by linking to DPSs.

5.1.2 *Update the University's DPS template, and require all Schools to undertake a full review of DPSs – producing new DPSs where necessary and ensuring all information is up to date and written in an engaging style*

Pros:
- Would address the most immediate CMA compliance issue (eg if there were a comprehensive suite of PGT DPSs they could be proxied into the PG Degree Finder, addressing issues of overlap and golden copy)

Cons:
- Would require very significant administrative and academic input from all Schools, and particularly those Schools with large numbers of DPSs;
- Unless accompanied by new business processes for managing the annual update of DPSs, it would only offer a short-term solution, since DPSs are likely to go out of date

8

again in the future (indeed, experience to date suggests that not all Schools are likely to keep the DPSs properly up to date even if stronger business processes were in place);

- Would not address the issue of failure to publish certain categories of 'material information', overlap between different information sources, or golden copy;
- Would lead to wasted efforts on the part of Schools were the University to decide to take a different approach to articulating programme-level information in the future.

5.1.3 *Expand on the Degree Finder entries so that they meet the CMA 'material information' requirements in full, and cease publishing DPSs (while continuing to require Schools to have DPSs – based on a revised standard University template - for all programmes for internal purposes)*

Under this option:

- The Degree Finder entries for each programme would be expanded as follows:
    - The 'What you will study' section in the UG Degree Finder and the 'Programme Structure' section in the PG Degree Finder would include information on all core courses and an indication of the range of optional courses (currently, some programme entries have this information, whereas others do not);
    - The 'Learning and Assessment' section in the UG Degree Finder would include more detailed information than at present, including information at programme (as well as subject) level, and an equivalent section would be added to the PG Degree Finder;
    - An additional section will be added to the UG and PG Degree Finders regarding 'Who will deliver the programme', with guidance provided to Schools on wording for this section which would meet CMA expectations.

- Communications and Marketing would develop the UG and PG Degree Finders (administrative systems and associated websites) in order that:
    - These resources appear relevant to multiple audiences (ie current students, alumni, and graduates as well as prospective students);
    - The data is held in such a way that it can be downloadable in a 'durable medium' format and repurposed in individual communications to applicants / offer-holders;
    - Archived versions of each programme entry would be held per admissions cycle, allowing Student Administration to add the relevant url on the HEAR of graduating students (this would rely not only on the programme entries being held in an archived form but on developing a way of automatically generating the relevant urls for each student and programme);
    - It would be possible to share content to allow Schools / Colleges to reuse it in their own webpages.

- Schools would continue to produce DPSs as supporting documents when developing and seeking approval for new degree programmes. However, these documents would be used solely for internal purposes for programme development and approval. There would be no need to keep them up to date on an annual basis once the programme has been approved. They may however need to update them ahead of periodic reviews

(Teaching Programme Reviews, Postgraduate Programme Reviews), which are held on a six-yearly cycle, and some areas may need to update them more frequently for professional body purposes.

- There may be an argument for reviewing the template for DPS to ensure they are fit for their new, exclusively internal, role, and that they do not contain information held elsewhere (for example, information regarding the courses that students take during the programme).

- Student Systems would continue to publish historic DPSs.

Pros:
- Would address the CMA compliance issues and enhance the quality of the University's published information on its programmes in the longer-term;
- Improving the provision of information about learning and assessment at programme level will not only address CMA compliance issues but may also assist the University to comply with anticipated future developments to the Key Information Sets (KIS);
- By reducing duplication of information, it would lead to greater administrative efficiency.

Cons:
- Would involve significant lead-time, and therefore in the short- to medium-term would not address the risks associated with publishing inaccurate and incomplete information;
- Would involve significant input from Schools to produce expanded Degree Finder entries for all UG and PGT programmes, and likely to require significant input from Student Systems / Communications and Marketing / Academic Services;
- System development to the Degree Finders will be required (eg to publish archived version of each programme entry);
- May be challenging to develop the Degree Finders so they appear relevant sources of information to multiple audiences.

Recommendation: explore this option in more detail, taking account of any recommendations emanating from the relevant strands of the Service Excellence Programme.

Tom Ward, 22 August 2016

Annex A – 'Material' courses (programme) information as set out in CMA guidelines

The following is an extract from the CMA publication 'UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law: Helping you comply with your obligations':

4.10 The type of course-related information that is material information under the CPRs is likely to include the following:

(a) **Course information**, including:

(i) course title;

(ii) entry requirements/criteria (both academic and non-academic), and an indication of the standard/typical offer level criteria;

(iii) core modules for the course and an indication of likely optional modules, including whether there are any optional modules that are generally provided each year;

(iv) information about the composition of the course and how it will be delivered, and the balance between the various elements, such as the number and type of contact hours that students can expect (for example, lectures, seminars, work placements, feedback on assignments), the expected workload of students (for example the expected self-study time), and details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the course;[2]

(v) the overall method(s) of assessment for the course, for example by exams, coursework or practical assessments, etc (or a combination of these);

(vi) the award to be received on successful completion of the course and, if relevant, the awarding body or institution;

(vii) location of study or possible locations, which should also include the likely or possible location of any work placements to be undertaken (where known);

(viii) length of the course;

(ix) whether the course and provider are regulated and by whom, for example, where an institution is regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England or the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales or has a specific course designation;

(x) whether the course is accredited, for example by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, and by whom; and

(xi) additionally, any particular terms, such as those in the HE provider's rules and regulations, that apply to the course that students may find particularly surprising (such as,

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[2] This would include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example professor, senior lecturer or postgraduate student.

for example, a term explaining that the body awarding the degree is different to the HE provider running the course) or are otherwise important (such as, for example, any rules or regulations whose contravention might prevent a student from completing their course).

(b) **Total course costs**, including:

(i) **tuition fees** – this should include, if applicable, whether fees in future years will increase and by how much (for example, in line with inflation). If increases will apply to only a certain group (such as international students) or in respect of a particular course, this should be made clear. If the future fee is not known, you should indicate clearly the criteria for any future changes and how these will be calculated.26 Any possible fee increases should be restricted to limited circumstances where the HE provider has valid reasons for making the change; and

(ii) **other extra costs** students are likely to incur, for example for field trips, equipment, materials, bench fees or studio hire. You should indicate how much these extra costs are or are likely to be. Where they are unknown or uncertain, you should set out how they will be calculated and whether they are optional or mandatory for under-taking or passing the course. It is particularly important that you highlight any course costs that are likely to have a direct impact on the outcome of students' academic success, such as a field trip on which a piece of work will be based.

You should also set out when and how fees and any extra costs are payable and when the student will become liable for payment.

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
22 August 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy

Executive Summary

This paper asks the Committee to approve the amended Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy. Proposed changes were presented to the Committee in June and wider consultation has been undertaken over the summer. The paper proposes some quite significant changes to the Policy. The changes are designed to:

- Consolidate information on programme and course approval and management into one Policy, n line with the simplification agenda;
- Formalise good practice in relation to student recruitment;
- Assist the University to comply with Consumer and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines.

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

Aligns with the current strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

The Committee is asked to **approve** the amended Policy for immediate implementation.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The final approved Policy will be communicated to key staff contacts by email and placed on the Academic Services website.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   While processes of curriculum design and approval involve significant staff time, this is necessary to ensure the University is offering an appropriate curriculum, supports effective recruitment practices and complies with CMA guidelines.
   Clarifying that Course Organisers can approve minor changes will save staff time.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The revised policy is designed to manage risks associated with non-compliance with the CMA guidance.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   An equality impact assessment for the Policy was completed on 16 April 2015 and will be reviewed.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open.

Key words
Programme, course, approval, management.
Originator of the paper
Nichola Kett and Tom Ward, Academic Services, 13 September 2016

Development of the Policy

The original Policy was created as part of the Programme and Course Information Management (PCIM) project and was approved by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) on 23 April 2015. The Policy was developed by a Working Group with representation from Schools, Colleges, Support Services and Edinburgh University Students' Association (the Students' Association) and wide consultation was undertaken.

The Committee considered a tracked changes version of the Policy in June 2016 with a range of proposed changes (see below). It was broadly supportive of the proposed changes, subject to wider consultation taking place over summer 2016.

Changes proposed June 2016

Incorporating the Boards of Studies Guidance Content
A review of the Board of Studies Guidance identified duplication of material which is now available in documentation elsewhere. In the interests of minimising the number of different and overlapping documents, the amended Policy incorporates some material from the Guidance, with a view to deleting the document.
- Content relating to 'What to Consider' has be incorporated into the 'Criteria for Proposal' section as examples.
- The remaining content which relates to specific points in the Board of Studies Terms of Reference has been used to create a new section in the Policy title 'Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Responsibilities'
- Content which was considered to be operational has been removed.

Recommendations from the Flexible PhD Working Group (report to Researcher Experience Committee on 4 March 2016)
- Reviewed the Policy to ensure that it is consistent with PhD distance learning programmes.
- Added as an appendix an amended version of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences checklist and added to this short prompts relating to recommendations 11 and 13 ('sufficient online training courses in research methods' and 'support community and stimulating academic environment').

Recommendations from the Simplification Working Group Meeting (28 April 2016)
- The Simplification Working Group suggested that a broader range of minor changes could be made by the Course Organiser. Feedback from the Senate Committees Symposium and the Simplification Focus Groups suggests that some Schools are already interpreting the Policy in this way.
- The Group also suggested giving the Policy a simpler title. The name of the Policy has been changed to 'Programme and Course Approval and Management'.

Research Programmes
Explicitly confirmed the applicability of the Policy for research programmes.

Online Distance Learning
In 'Criteria for Proposals' added a reference and link to the Online Distance Learning Policy which is to be consulted for online distance learning programmes.

Reference Points
Added Degree Regulations and Assessment Regulations as internal reference points requiring consideration.

Consumer and Markets Authority (CMA)
The CMA has provided guidance to universities regarding the material information institutions must provide prospective students, for example:

- Programme title;
- Entry requirements/criteria (both academic and non-academic), and an indication of the standard/typical offer level criteria;
- Core courses and an indication of likely optional courses, including whether there are any optional modules that are generally provided each year;
- Information about the composition of the programme and how it will be delivered, and the balance between the various elements, the expected workload of students, and details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the programme;
- The overall method(s) of assessment for the programme.

The CMA guidance also sets out institutions' obligations in the event that they subsequently change their programmes and courses from that material information given to the applicant at the pre-contract stage, for example to tell students about these at the earliest opportunity.

The CMA guidelines have significant implications for how the University manages its programme and course approval processes, and the associated processes of publishing programme and course information.

Following discussion with the University's Student Consumer Protection Working Group, the Policy has been revised to include new sections on: Timescales for Approval Processes; Arrangements for Publishing Information; and Responsibilities to Students, Offer-Holders and Applicants in the event of changes to programmes.

For further information on the CMA guidelines see:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf

Summer 2016 Consultation

College Offices were consulted on the proposed changes to the Policy only. A number of staff from across all Colleges responded to the consultation and comments were incorporated where possible (i.e. where they did not constitute a major material change to the Policy). Colleagues were supportive of the development of the Policy and were generally looking for clarification or further detail. Some of the comments that were received did not relate to the proposed changes and will be held for the next review.

Service Excellence

The Service Excellence Programme is currently exploring aspects of programme and course approval and management. Therefore, it is possible that the Policy and supporting business processes will be updated in future to take account of these developments.

Programme and Course Approval and Management

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Purpose of Policy

This Policy outlines for staff and students the University's approach to programme and course approval and management (including design, development, approval, changes and closure, but not monitoring).

Overview

The Policy was developed following the publication of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

Applies to staff and students who are involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure and to both taught and research programmes. The University's Quality Framework covers annual and periodic monitoring and review. This Policy covers all credit bearing provision.

Contact Officer	Nichola Kett	Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services	Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 22.09.16	Starts: 22.09.16	Equality impact assessment: 16.04.15	Amendments: 22.09.16	Next Review: 2019/2020

Approving authority	Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee
Consultation undertaken	Staff in Schools, Colleges and support departments (including those who formed the Working Group), students, Project Board
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Curriculum webpages (Academic Services) Enhanced Course Descriptor Guidance Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release
UK Quality Code	Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval
Policies superseded by this policy	Draft University Level Principles for Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.
Keywords	Programme, course, design, development, approval, changes, closure, Board of Studies

Programme and Course Approval and Management

The University is required to have strategic oversight of and to consistently apply effective processes for the design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Programmes and courses are defined in the University's [glossary of terms](#).

This Policy, and the [curriculum](#) pages of the Academic Services website, constitute the University's approach to and management of the processes for design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Supplementary College level guidance provides additional information on local practice such as timescales, specifics roles and responsibilities, and templates:

- College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science – [undergraduate](#) | postgraduate
- [College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine](#)
- [College of Science and Engineering](#)

Programme and Course Design and Development

Programme and course **design** is a creative activity which may result in innovative ideas for higher education provision. It is followed by a process of **development** which leads to the creation of a programme or course. This is where the content, modes of delivery, structure and components of the programme or course (including assessment and feedback methods and the means by which students will be engaged with the curriculum) are considered and, for programmes, developed into a coherent programme of study. This development process may also be used to enhance an existing programme, for example in response to the outcomes of programme monitoring and review. Programme design and development is carried out at the School or subject area level.

Criteria for Proposals

Programme and course proposals must demonstrate the following (please note: some aspects are not directly relevant for postgraduate research programmes):

Programmes	Courses
Purpose	
Learning outcomes (LOs) necessary to meet that purpose.	
Mechanisms by which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the LOs.	
Organisational aspects such as workload, volume and nature of assessment in order for students to meet LOs.	
Details of the level of award and credits	Details of the credit level and credits
The programme as a whole is coherent	The relationship of the course to programme(s) and how the course delivers and assesses the learning outcomes set out in the Degree Programme Specification (not applicable for standalone courses).
Where other Schools are involved and/or impacted: evidence of consultation; consideration; communication of impact; and support for the proposal. Confirmation of primary responsibility should be defined at the outset (there can only be one owning School).	
Consultation with relevant support services (e.g. Library, IS) and (where relevant) any external providers/contacts (e.g. employers, alumni, business, industry or professional contacts)	

Programme and Course Approval and Management

Programmes	Courses
Evidence of consideration of Internal Reference Points: • Degree and Assessment Regulations • The University of Edinburgh's Strategic Plan 2016-2021 • The Curriculum Framework • The Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles Policy • The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy • The Graduate Attributes Framework	**Evidence of consideration of Internal Reference Points:** • Degree and Assessment Regulations • The Curriculum Framework • The Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles Policy • The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy • The Graduate Attributes Framework
Evidence of consideration of External Reference Points: • QAA Subject Benchmark Statements • Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) • Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements • Employers and Industry • European Higher Education Area • Designing programmes to be accessible so they do not present any unnecessary insurmountable barriers to students with protected characteristics	**Evidence of consideration of External Reference Points (as appropriate):** • QAA Subject Benchmark Statements • Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) • Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements • Employers and Industry • European Higher Education Area • Designing courses to be accessible so they do not present any unnecessary insurmountable barriers to students with protected characteristics
Student involvement Students must be proactively involved at the earliest practicable point in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure processes. Their involvement should be proportional to the activity taking place and representative and could include student feedback from the quality assurance processes (course evaluations, student surveys, Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes etc.). The opportunity to be involved must allow for representation from students with protected characteristics. Consultation should involve students academically closest to the proposed changes and be in line with the EUSA and University Student Engagement Statement.	
For Online Distance Learning Online Distance Learning Policy	
Evidence of expertise from outside the programme. In programme approval, the involvement of individuals external to the University is required to offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.	

Key issues to consider when developing proposals include:

- Business case: potential student demand (market analysis); potential for funding; scale; resource implications (e.g. staffing, requirements for IT, library or other facilities, requirement for External Examiners).
- Curriculum, syllabus, assessment methods, feedback opportunities, timeline and profile of learning and assessments (aligning with the University's academic year), moderation methods.
- Whether a course is core, compulsory, optional and the implications this has for its assessment and for award and classification decisions.
- Whether the course or programme is compliant with the University's Curriculum Framework and academic year.
- How the course/programme/award fits into the subject or discipline environment.
- Sustainability, social responsibility, and internationalisation.

Programme and Course Approval and Management

- Delivery method: campus-based, online, teaching team, lectures, tutorials, laboratories, practicals, field work, placements, year abroad, timing of delivery.
- Awards: proposals for programmes that involve new qualifications should include information about exit awards and whether the qualification can be awarded at Ordinary/Honours level or, for taught postgraduate degrees, includes the award of named diploma or certificate.

Collaboration/Partnerships

Details about the University's collaborative agreements and arrangements, and guidelines for developing collaborative provision, are available from the Governance and Strategic Planning website: Collaborative Activity

Distance / Flexible PhDs

When developing proposals for Distance / Flexible PhDs, Schools should consider the Checklist attached as an Appendix, along with the main body of this Policy.

Documentation for Proposals

Programme and course proposals must ensure a transparent and auditable 'paper-trail' providing a rationale for decisions. Documentary evidence must include the following:

Programmes	Courses
For taught programmes: Degree Programme Specification (the final version is posted on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study)	Course creation, approval and maintenance information (EUCLID)
Details of the structure of the programme (informs the Degree Programme Table once the programme is approved)	More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance.
Distance / Flexible PhDs – Checklist (see Annex)	
For proposals for non-standard tuition fee arrangements, Programme Proposal Template for Fees Strategy Group approval	
More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance	

Following approval of a programme: (1) complete New Programme Request Form and (2) create Degree Programme Table.

Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Levels of approval

The University programme and course approval, changes and closure processes ensure institutional oversight of standards and quality. Authority is delegated by the University, via the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC), to Colleges and, where appropriate, to School Boards of Studies. Colleges may elect to wholly delegate the authority to approve all changes to existing courses, proposals for new courses, and closure of courses to Schools but must retain a method of oversight, particularly to ensure that decisions are taken independently of the home subject area of the course. Colleges must retain authority to approve major changes to existing programmes and new programmes, and the closure of programmes. All programmes and courses are approved indefinitely unless otherwise stated.

Programme and Course Approval and Management

THE UNIVERSITY *of* **EDINBURGH**

Minimum Levels of Approval

COURSE ORGANISER
Approve (*where they comply with the Curriculum Framework and the academic year structure and there are no wider implications*):
- minor changes to existing course

BOARD OF STUDIES (SCHOOL)
Approve (*where they comply with the Curriculum Framework and the academic year structure and there are no wider implications*):
- minor changes to existing programmes
- major changes to existing courses
- new courses
- closure of courses
Endorse:
- changes to existing/new/ closure of courses/programmes that are not compliant with the Curriculum Framework, the academic year structure and/or with wider implications
- major changes to existing programmes and awards
- new programmes and awards
- closure of programmes

COLLEGE COMMITTEE
Approve (*where they comply with the Curriculum Framework and the academic year structure and there are no wider implications*)**:**
- major changes to existing programmes and awards
- new programmes and awards
- closure of programmes
Oversight (*method to be determined by the College*)**:**
- major changes to existing courses
- new courses
- closure of courses
Endorse:
- changes to existing/new/ closure of courses/programmes that are not compliant with the Curriculum Framework, the academic year structure and/or with wider implications

SENATUS CURRICULUM AND STUDENT PROGRESSION COMMITTEE

Approve:
changes to existing/new/ closure of courses/programmes that are not compliant with the Curriculum Framework, the academic year structure and/or with wider implications

Minor and Major Changes to Existing Programmes

Changes to any of the following are **major** and require College approval:

- The name of the programme: any change made to the name of a programme, other than to correct spelling or syntax, is considered a 'major change' and requires a new programme to be proposed and approved.
- The overall content of the programme: major change to the content of a programme is defined as the addition or closure of courses or major changes to existing courses (see below 'Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses') comprising 20% of the total credit volume of the programme, or at least 50% of the credit volume in any single year of the programme.
- The overall approach to assessment for the programme.
- The structure of a programme: major change to the structure of a programme is defined as a change in the balance of credits between different components of the programme (e.g. between core/option courses or dissertation/taught courses) comprising 20% of the total credits of the programme, or at least 50% of the credits in any single year of the programme.
- The mode of study – part time, full time or intermittent
- The place of study - on campus or distance learning
- The period of study
- Collaboration or change of partner
- The home School or College

All other categories are regarded as **minor** change and therefore can be approved at School level.

Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses

The categories outlined below are regarded as **major** changes:

- Name of the course*
- Level of the course*
- Credit value*
- Learning outcomes
- Balance of assessment types and their weightings (components of assessment)
- Home subject area*

* Will result in a new course being created

Changes to all other categories, which generally cover course content and administrative aspects, (e.g. course descriptions, transferable skills, reading lists/learning resources, Course Organiser and Secretary, and delivery information) are regarded as **minor** and are within the power of the Course Organiser to approve.

New Degree Qualifications

New degree qualifications, with degree titles not already used by the University, need to be approved by CSPC, on the basis of a proposal from the relevant College committee. CSPC asks the University Court for any necessary degree Resolution and adds the degree qualification title to the list of degrees in the annual Court Resolution on undergraduate or postgraduate degree regulations. The Resolution to create the degree qualification needs to come into effect before the University opens the programme for applications. The Secretary to CSPC can advise on whether a

degree needs a Court Resolution. For example, an MA or BSc for a new discipline does not need a Resolution.

Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Responsibilities

This Policy covers academic aspects of programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure. The responsibility for consideration of the business case and resourcing aspects resides with the School (or Deanery in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine) and/or College and takes place in consultation with other support services as appropriate. Information on the requirements for business case and resourcing aspects will be detailed in College level guidance.

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

The remit and operation of CSPC are detailed in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

College Committee

Each College should produce a clear Terms of Reference setting out the remit and operation of their Committee(s) responsible for programme and course approval and management.

School Boards of Studies

The University's Board of Studies Terms of Reference sets out the purpose, role, remit, governance, operation and composition of Boards of Studies. The text below provides some supplementary guidance on specific aspects of the Terms of Reference (ToR).

List of Members and Composition: At the beginning of each academic session each School produces an agreed list of the members of its Board(s) of Studies and makes this available online and/or sends it to their College Office. This membership needs to align with the Board of Studies Terms of Reference and must include relevant student and external members. It can include members from other areas of the University, for example from other Schools or from relevant support services.

Quorum: There is no formal quorum for the Board of Studies, but the minimum composition of Board of Studies meetings needs to provide effective academic oversight of the decisions made by the Board and therefore some roles may have to be represented for the Board to be considered robust. Colleges may have particular requirements detailed in their guidance.

Student representatives: Student members need to represent the range of subjects covered by the Board and to be linked to the appropriate School Representation structure. If student members are unable to attend, it is appropriate for them to send an alternate student representative or provide comments to the Board of Studies in advance. For student members, the School should invite the School Convenor, School Undergraduate Vice Convenor, and/or School Postgraduate Vice Convenor who was elected in the Edinburgh University Students Association (the Students' Association) elections in the first instance. If they are unable to attend, other possible student members are other Student Representatives who have attended the Students' Association's representation training.

Timing of Meetings: The timing of Board of Studies meetings should align with the School and College committees to which the Board reports, and any other key dates.

Key Information Sets and Accreditation Information: Boards of Studies are responsible for the annual approval of Key Information Set Learning, Teaching and Assessment course information and Degree Programme Accreditation information.

Timescales for approval of proposals for new courses and programmes and changes to existing courses and programmes

It is important that accurate information regarding programmes is available to applicants when they submit their applications, and to offer-holders when they decide whether to accept offers. As such, Colleges need to approve new programmes and significant changes to existing programmes sufficiently early that accurate and complete information can be included in the relevant corporate publications. Failure to meet these timescales will result in Schools / Colleges having to undertake additional communications with applicants and offer-holders. It may also create additional obligations towards those applicants and offer-holders, and expose the University to reputational and financial risk.

It is also important that accurate information regarding courses is available well in advance of the academic session, to enable students to make informed decisions regarding their choices of courses and to prepare for their studies.

Schools / Colleges should therefore approve proposals within the following timescales.

	Undergraduate	**Postgraduate**
New programmes	November, for the admissions cycle starting the following September (ie 20 months in advance of entry of students onto the programme)	By April, for the admissions cycle starting in October, for entry the following September (ie 16 months in advance of entry of students onto the programme) – to allow for inclusion in Print School-level Brochures. In principle, if the programme is not to be included in the Print School Brochures, Schools could approve new programmes later than this (eg as late as July for programmes opening for applications in October). However, in practice, this is rarely advisable since it leaves little time for recruitment.
Major changes to existing programmes	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as August, for the admissions cycle starting in September, as long as the Print Prospectus entry has anticipated these changes.	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as September for the admissions cycle starting in October, as long as the entry in the Print School Brochure has anticipated these changes.

Programme closure to new entrants	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.
New courses	Prior to the Semester in which they are to run.	Prior to the Semester in which they are to run.
Changes to or closure of existing courses	Where this would constitute a major change to published information about a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)	Where this would constitute a major change to published information about a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)

Arrangements for publishing information on approved courses and programmes

Programme and course information is entered into EUCLID, which feeds information to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS), and forms the definitive record of programmes and courses. In addition to these publications, Schools / Colleges are responsible for publishing accurate, complete and up to date information on approved courses and programmes in other corporate publications for recruitment purposes. The timescales for publication are as follows:

Publication	Type of information	Timescales
EUCLID Course Descriptor	Detailed information regarding the course	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session. Minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August.
Degree Programme Specification	Summary information including programme learning aims and objectives and how they are demonstrated and achieved	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.

Degree Programme Table	Information regarding the curriculum structure for the programme	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.
Key Information Sets (UG only)	Information regarding aspects of programmes including types of assessment and contact time.	End June, for the UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Prospectus (Print)	General subject/discipline overview, year by year breakdown of courses studied (relevant to the whole subject area), additional costs, and approach to learning and assessment, along with careers outcomes. Details of any professional accreditation, placements and careers opportunities. Location of study. Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.	Annual update to be complete and returned to Communications and Marketing by December for publication in March – for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Degree Finder (Online)	Subject information as above for print prospectus. In addition, for programmes: Overview of the programme. Details of courses studied each year. Details of any professional accreditations, placements and careers opportunities. Location of study. Approach to learning and assessment. Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.	Timescales in line with Undergraduate (Print) Prospectus. Amendments approved after the December deadline can be made up to early August, before UCAS applications open.

	Entry requirements. Additional costs.	
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)	Brief summary regarding the reasons for studying the programme, along with brief information about career opportunities	Annual update to be undertaken by late May for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Postgraduate School-Level Brochures (Print)	Programme level information including: summary description and structure; breakdown of compulsory and optional courses offered. Careers opportunities and additional costs Entry requirements	Annual update to be complete by July for publication in September to apply to applications for entry the following September.
Postgraduate Degree Finder (Online)	Programme title, award and study modes. Programme description (PGT only) Programme structure (PGT and PGR) Learning outcomes (PGT only) Career opportunities (PGT only) Online learning (PGT only) Work placements / internships (PGT and PGR) Research profile (PGR only) Training and support (PGR only) Facilities (PGR only) Entry requirements Additional costs Scholarships and funding	Annual update to be complete by the end of September for applications opening on 1 October for entry the following September (note however that agreement for any changes to entry requirements must be secured early in line with Student Recruitment and Admissions policy)

Changes to programmes – responsibilities to students, offer-holders and applicants

If, after starting to accept applications for a programme of study, a School or College approves changes to the programme or to courses within it which lead to a divergence from that described in the published information regarding the programme, the School or College owning the programme is responsible for amending the published information at the earliest possible opportunity. This applies irrespective of the School which owns the individual courses that are changing.

If the approved changes are significant – that is, they constitute 'major' changes to the programme (in the terms set out above), the professional accreditation / recognition status of the programme changes, or the location at which the programme is taught changes significantly (for example, the location of the owning School changes from one campus to another) - the School or College is also responsible for:

- Informing all students, applicants and offer-holders about the changes at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Where students / applicants / offer-holders request this, seeking to offer a suitable replacement programme for which they are qualified at the University, or, if the University is unable to offer a suitable replacement programme, seeking to refer students / applicants / offer-holders to a comparable higher education institution offering a suitable replacement programme;

In the event that students, offer-holders or applicants choose to withdraw as a result of significant changes to a programme, the University may also consider making an appropriate refund of tuition fees and deposits paid prior to notification of the change.

Student Recruitment and Admissions and Academic Services are able to provide Schools and Colleges with advice regarding whether any changes to a programme should be treated as 'significant' for these purposes.

Programme Closure – Responsibilities to Students

Programmes may be withdrawn for a variety of reasons such as a decline in student demand, a reduction in funding or in funded student numbers, or a change in University/College/School priorities for academic development.

In the event of a decision to discontinue a programme, measures must be taken to notify and protect the interests of students matriculated on, or accepted for admission to, the programme. The School must ensure appropriate management and resourcing of the final student cohorts in the programme to be closed. Collaborative partners must also be informed in a timely manner.

In normal circumstances a programme must be supported for every student matriculated or accepted onto the programme. Only in the most exceptional circumstances may a programme on which students have been offered a place, admitted to, or matriculated be closed. In these circumstances, the students(s) must be informed and the Head of School must ensure that the situation is resolved in line with the University's admissions Terms and Conditions. No programme to which students have been admitted or matriculated may be withdrawn until the University's obligations to those students have been reasonably and fairly fulfilled.

Programme and Course Management – Responsibilities

Programmes

The Head of College is formally responsible for degree programmes. Within this overall responsibility each programme, and course within it, is owned by a particular School which ensures its management. The Head of School or Director of Teaching delegates responsibility for the management of a degree programme to a Programme Co-ordinator or Director (or equivalent).

Courses

Course Organisers are responsible for individual courses within a School. The Head of School or Director of Teaching appoints Course Organisers to take responsibility for individual courses. The scope of the Course Organiser's remit varies according to local School organisation, but in outline the Course Organiser is responsible for:

- general course management
- assessment and feedback
- advising and supporting students on course-related matters

- monitoring and reviewing courses
- agreeing minor changes to courses

Staff Support and Development

Training and support is available for those involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes, and closure from the Institute for Academic Development.

22 September 2016

Appendix – Distance / Flexible PhD Programmes – Additional School Requirements

In deciding whether to set up a distance learning programme, or accept students once a programme has been established, the School should consider the following in addition to addressing the issues in the main body of the Policy:

Is distance learning research methods and generic skills training available online? If not, how will students access it?	
Availability of orientation programme	
Availability of training for potential supervisors of distance PhD students	
Have potential supervisors undergone training in supervising distance learning students?	
Supervision arrangements, including arrangements for joint supervisor/local advisor	
Is the technology available in the department to support supervising distance students?	
Is there a cohort, or likely to be a cohort in place?	
How will the School support a community and stimulating academic environment? Consider: - How to enable access to residential PhD student communities, research seminars or research groups - Technology-based solutions for capturing and streaming	
Is English language support available on an online basis?	
What are the arrangements for conducting annual reviews and the viva?	
Will there be a requirement for study visits?	
- By the applicants to Edinburgh?	
- By the supervisor to the site of study?	
- If so, who is responsible for paying travel fees?	
- Will this be written into the student contract/memorandum of agreement?	
- Will the requirement be compatible with UKVI visa requirements?	
How will any student issues related to the distance learning nature of the programme be addressed?	
Do any potential funding bodies permit students to study by distance? (Note that some funding bodies require students to be resident where they are studying)	

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Thematic Review of Mental Health Services: Support for Study Policy

Executive Summary

The final report of the recent Thematic Review of Mental Health Services contains a recommendation (recommendation 4) that has been remitted to CSPC. This recommendation is as follows:

4.   The Review Team recommends that the Support for Study Policy is reviewed as the current Policy lacks the option to require the students to interrupt their studies where the Support for Study panel deems it appropriate.

The full review report has been approved by the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee and is available on the Academic Services website at:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thematicreviewreport-mentalhealthservices-final.pdf

CSPC has been asked to make an initial response on this to the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee by Friday 23 September 2016. CSPC will then be asked to make a further, year-on report to the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee in September 2017.

The Support for Study Policy was approved by CSPC in April 2015 (http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/CSCP/2014-15/20150423Agenda.pdf). During the development of the policy, this particular issue was discussed across the University, but there were conflicting views and it was finally discounted prior to submission to CSPC for approval.

CSPC members are now asked to consider this Thematic Review of Mental Health Services recommendation, and make a decision about whether or not, in principal, this option (*requiring* an interruption as part of Support for Study) should be reconsidered and incorporated into the Support for Study policy.

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

Aligns with strategic goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

CSPC representatives to communicate any action taken to amend this policy in their areas. Policy to be available online at:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files//supportforstudypolicy.pdf

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   None.

2. **Risk assessment**

   N/A – amendment to previously approved policy.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Equality and diversity was considered at an earlier stage when the policy was approved.

4. **Freedom of information**

   Open.

Originator of the paper

Professor Alan Murray, Convener of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

8 September 2016.

Support for Study Policy

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Purpose of Policy

The Support for Study Policy outlines the University's approach to supporting students who may be struggling with their studies due to health issues.

Overview

The University of Edinburgh welcomes a diverse student body and aims to support all students throughout their studies. This includes students who have temporary or long-term physical or mental health conditions which may have an adverse impact on their ability to study.

The University takes seriously its duty of care to all members of the University community. This policy and procedures are to be followed by staff where the behaviour of a student is giving cause for concern, and where it is believed this may be caused by a mental health problem. The Support for Study Policy applies to all students and to all aspects of University life.

Occasionally, physical or mental ill-health and/or a disability may lead to a student behaving in a way which has an adverse impact on the student or on others. This policy is intended to provide an effective framework to support students in cases where such circumstances are having an adverse impact on an individual student's studies, or are impacting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of others.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to all students of the University and is used by staff to handle cases where students need additional support due to health issues. Specific roles are outlined for Support for Study panels in each College.

Contact Officer	Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience	gavin.douglas@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 23.4.15	Starts: 1.8.15	Equality impact assessment: 3.6.15	Amendments: 11.09.2015, 22.09.2016	Next Review: 2018/19
Approving authority	Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee				
Consultation undertaken	The policy was developed on behalf of the Mental Health Strategy Group and had widespread consultation within the University and EUSA, including Student Disability and Student Counselling Services.				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Code of Student Conduct: http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline				
UK Quality Code	n/a				
Policies superseded by this policy	n/a				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Student support, support for study, fitness for study, fit to study				

Support for Study Policy

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

1   SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1   The University of Edinburgh welcomes a diverse student body and aims to support all students throughout their studies. This includes students who have temporary or long-term physical or mental conditions which may have an adverse impact on their ability to study. Students who are aware of such conditions are encouraged to seek support at an early stage – through the Student Disability Service, Student Counselling, Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team, or Edinburgh University Students Association - EUSA's Advice Place; a list of support agencies is available in the Guide for Staff on Helping Distressed Students http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/help-distressed-students .

1.2   The University takes seriously its duty of care to all members of the University community. This policy and procedures are to be followed by staff where the behaviour of a student is giving cause for concern, and where it is believed this may be caused by a health problem. The Support for Study Policy applies to all students and to all aspects of University life.

1.3   Occasionally, physical or mental ill-health and/or a disability may lead to a student behaving in a way which has an adverse impact on the student or on others. This policy is intended to provide an effective framework to support students in cases where such circumstances are having an adverse impact on an individual student's studies, or are impacting on the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of others.

1.4   Students are responsible for the management of their own wellbeing wherever possible, and the aim of staff throughout is to support the student in a collaborative manner. However, where a student is unable or unwilling to cooperate in the management of their wellbeing, this policy makes provision for proceeding without input from the student.

2   OPERATION OF THE POLICY

2.1   There are two stages to the policy, which are described below. It is possible for a case to start at either stage of the policy; it is not necessary to work sequentially through Stages 1 and 2.

2.2   Use of the Support for Study Policy should be considered in the following range of circumstances:
   - The student raises concerns about their wellbeing and the impact this is having on their studies
   - A third party raises concerns about the student's wellbeing or behaviour and its impact. The third party (who may be academic staff, another student, housemate, support staff – the list is not exhaustive) believes the underlying cause is ill health or disability
   - A student's behaviour is impacting adversely on the health, safety or wellbeing of other students and/or staff and it is thought this behaviour may stem from ill-health or disability

- Unacceptable behaviour which would normally be regarded as a disciplinary matter is considered to be due to an underlying health issue or disability.

3   INTERACTION WITH OTHER POLICIES

3.1   The Support for Study policy is designed to be a supportive way of assisting the small number of students whose behaviour gives cause for concern. It offers an alternative to disciplinary action when a student's behaviour may be affected by health conditions or disabilities. However, the University has a duty to ensure that members of the University community are not subjected to unacceptable behaviour and therefore any allegations of inappropriate behaviour may still be investigated and action taken under the Code of Student Conduct.
http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline

3.2   Student conduct may also be considered at the same time but separately as part of professional Fitness to Practise policies

3.3   Any case which is considered under the Support for Study Policy but which cannot be resolved through the policy is likely to be referred for action under the Code of Student Conduct. Similarly, where urgent concerns arise, a case may be referred for immediate action under the Code of Student Conduct.

4.   EMERGENCIES

4.1   Where a student's behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others, the Emergency Services should be contacted by dialling 999. For matters arising on University premises, University Security should also be alerted by dialling 650 2222.

4.2   Urgent concerns should be raised with the University Secretary or one of the Deputy Secretaries with a view to immediate suspension under the Code of Student Conduct.

4.3   Further information on handling emergencies is available online.
http://www.health-service.ed.ac.uk/out-of-hours-58661-htm
www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/support/emergencies
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/help-distressed-students

5   SUPPORT FOR STUDY STAGE 1 – EMERGING CONCERNS

5.1   When initial or moderate concerns arise about a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and the impact this is having on their academic engagement or on staff or other students, these should be dealt with locally by the appropriate member of staff. This will usually be the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team, who may wish to discuss the issues with the Senior Tutor or other appropriate staff member. In some cases, concerns will arise in residential accommodation, and should be dealt with by the warden, ResLife team or others as appropriate, who may discuss the issue with the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.

5.2 The concerns should then be discussed with the student in an informal and supportive manner. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter. Possible outcomes from such a discussion might include:

- No follow-up action necessary
- Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling, Student Disability Service, etc.
- Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
- An agreement about changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed, and a review undertaken by the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team
- An agreement about a review period/further discussion undertaken by the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.

5.3 Where an interruption of studies is under consideration, the student should be referred to the Advice Place for advice on funding arrangements and any other relevant issues, and/or to the International office where immigration issues are relevant.

5.4 In the majority of cases, Support for Study Stage 1 should be adequate to enable the student to re-engage appropriately with their studies and the University community. The staff member responsible for handling the case at Support for Study Stage 1 is responsible for keeping appropriate notes on the student's record. If the student is unable or unwilling to discuss the concerns at Support for Study Stage 1, the case should be referred to Stage 2 for consideration.

6   SUPPORT FOR STUDY STAGE 2 – ONGOING, REPEATED OR MORE SERIOUS CONCERNS

6.1 Where actions taken under Support for Study Stage 1 do not resolve the issue (or where concerns are more acute and/or reappear at a later date), the case should be referred to the Support for Study Panel in the student's College. Cases may also be referred to this Panel under the Code of Student Conduct by Conduct Investigators or Discipline Officers investigating allegations of misconduct. Each Support for Study Panel comprises two members of staff from the College, one of whom will normally be the Dean of Students, who will chair the Panel, and a member of staff from the Student Counselling Service or the Student Disability Service (depending on the situation). College Panels consider cases relating to students studying in that College, whether the issues are academic-based or are related to non-academic activities (e.g. concerns about behaviour in halls of residence).

6.2 The Panel will review the concerns reported, and will then seek to meet with the student. The student is entitled to be accompanied at any meeting by their EUSA adviser, a fellow student or a member of staff. Other members of staff may be invited to attend, for example a member of staff from Residence Life if the student is in University accommodation.

6.3 If the student is unable or unwilling to attend such a meeting, the Panel may proceed in the absence of the student.

6.4 The College Support for Study Panel will discuss the issues with the student in a supportive manner. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter. Possible outcomes from such a meeting may include:

- No follow-up action necessary
- Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling Service, Student Disability Service, etc.
- Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
- Adopting a case management approach coordinated by a member of staff from the appropriate professional service
- A written agreement about necessary changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed
- A record of likely consequences of any continuation of concerns, which may include referral to the Head of School for action under the Code of Student Conduct
- Where the student's behaviour appears to be in breach of the Code of Student Conduct, the Convenor of the College Panel should refer the case to the relevant Head of School for action under the Code.

6.5 If the student is unwilling or unable to attend the meeting of the Panel, they may be represented at the meeting by their EUSA adviser (if they have one) or another member of the University community. Whether represented or not, a written report of the findings of the Panel will be sent to the student after the meeting.

6.6 Where an interruption of studies is under consideration, the student should be referred to the Advice Place for advice on funding arrangements and any other relevant issues, and/or to the International office where immigration issues are relevant.

> **Commented [TA1]:** Is this the approximate place for it, if we wanted to add something in about the option re: Support for Study panel requiring the student to interrupt if the panel deemed it appropriate. For discussion only if CSPC thinks that this is something we should be considering in principal.

7 STUDENTS DETAINED UNDER THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

7.1 For any student who is detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act 1983 and who is therefore unable to interact with the University in the management of their wellbeing, an appropriate interruption of studies will be put in place. Prior to the student's return to study, and in order to ensure appropriate support is in place, the case will be considered under Support for Study Stage 2, where further evidence may be sought regarding the student's fitness to return to study.

8 RETURN TO STUDY

8.1 Successful return to study is the aim after any period of interruption of studies. When a student's studies have been interrupted under this policy, a review period should be set at the time of the interruption. The review period for interruption should ideally be agreed with the student, and should take into account:
- The student's health and any medical prognosis
- The support in place for the student, such as counselling or ongoing medical treatment
- The phasing of the student's studies (e.g. the need to interrupt for a full semester to ensure readmission at an appropriate point academically)
- The regulations for the degree/programme of study, e.g. limitations on the total period of interruption permitted
- The implications of an interruption on any placement arrangements or professional qualification linked to the programme of study

- The implications of an interruption on any external funding arrangements and/or immigration status

8.2 Following any interruption of study on medical grounds, the student will be required to provide evidence from relevant professionals, such as confirmation that the student has engaged with counselling or has taken appropriate medical advice to ensure that the behaviour which caused the referral under this policy has been addressed. This evidence may be assessed by the University's Occupational Health professionals, or may include referral of the student to Occupational Health for assessment. Such an assessment may lead to a recommendation of return to study, or a recommendation that a further interruption is put in place, subject to the regulations etc. above. The recommendation must be sent to the Chair of the College Support for Study Panel, who will arrange for consideration of the case by the Panel. The Panel may consider such cases electronically, and will notify their decision to the student and the Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.

9 MONITORING AFTER RETURN

9.1 Once a student has returned to study, the Personal Tutor/Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of the student for a period of up to six months, and if any concerns re-emerge, must raise these promptly with the student. A re-referral for consideration under the Support for Study Policy may be appropriate in such cases.

10 REPORTING AND RECORDING

10.1 The Secretary of each College Support for Study Panel keeps a record of Support for Study cases and reports annually to the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on case numbers and outcomes. Details of concerns logged at both stages of the policy are held as confidential notes on the student's record. Concessions, such interruption of studies, are recorded on the student's record in the normal way.

22 September 2016~~23 April 2015~~

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Review of the Academic Year

Executive Summary

A task group of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) was established to review the University's academic year structure in January 2016, and this included consultation across the University. The review of the academic year has now concluded, and the attached final task group report was considered by LTC by correspondence (27 June 2016). This paper was approved by LTC.

The main message from the consultation was that the majority of staff and students felt that the current structure, while not perfect, was the best available, and preferable to the alternate proposal of holding examinations in January. The Learning and Teaching Committee listened carefully to these views and decided that the University should continue with the current academic year structure.

CSPC members are asked to consider the recommendations that have been remitted to the Committee on page 11 of the report.

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

Aligns with current strategic goal of excellence in teaching and the strategic theme of outstanding student experience.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

An approach to communicating the outcome of the review is outlined in the attached paper that was approved by the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   During the review the task group took account of resource implications relating to different models for the academic year structure.

2. **Risk assessment**
   During the review the task group assessed risks associated with different models for the academic year structure.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Since the task group did not recommend and changes to the academic year structure, an equality impact assessment was not required.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words
academic year

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 1 September 2016

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 June 2016 (For consideration by correspondence)

Final Report of Task Group to Review the Academic Year Structure

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 27 January 2016, LTC agreed to establish a task group to review the University's academic year structure. LTC considered the group's interim report at its meeting on 16 March 2016.

The paper is the group's final report. It summarises:

- the overall approach that the group has taken to the review;
- the alternate models for the academic year that the group has considered;
- the modelling and benchmarking that the group has undertaken;
- the consultation process that the group has conducted, and the findings of that process;

It recommends that the University should retain the current academic year structure, and makes some supplementary recommendations regarding Innovative Learning Week, arrangements for revision for and examination of Semester One courses, and academic year structures for Online Distance Learning Programmes.

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

Excellence in Teaching, Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

For discussion and decision.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper proposes an approach to communicating the outcome of the review.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
During the review, the Task Group took account of resource implications relating to different models for the academic year structure.

2. Risk assessment

During the review, the Task Group assessed risks associated with different models for the academic year structure

3. Equality and Diversity

Since the Task Group is not recommending any changes in the academic year structure, there is no need for a formal Equality Impact Assessment.

4. Freedom of information

Open

<u>Key words</u>

Academic year

<u>Originator of the paper</u>

Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services
27 June 2016

Final Report of the Task Group to Review the Academic Year Structure

1   Remit and Membership

The Group's purpose was to consider whether a different academic year structure would enhance the student and staff experience.

The Group's remit and membership is attached as Annex A. Since the Group's second meeting, the membership was expanded to include representation from Estates and Buildings, and a representative of the recognised trade unions.

2   Operation of group

The group met five times: 1 February 2016; 29 February 2016; Tuesday 22 March 2016; Monday 25 April 2016; and Thursday 16 June 2016.

3   Issues regarding the University's current academic year structure

At its meeting on 27 January 2016, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) agreed to initiate the review since recent discussions at Senate Committees, feedback from staff in Schools and Colleges, and representations from EUSA, suggest that many stakeholders would like the University to review its academic year structure. In initiating the review, LTC recognised that the asymmetrical nature of the current structure has the following downsides:

- Students can find Semester One tiring since it is intensive and offers no opportunity to rest and consolidate their learning. Similarly staff can also find Semester One tiring.

- The relatively compressed nature of Semester One and the short period of time between the end of teaching and the start of the examination diet in Semester One may be contributing to the bunching of assessments. Some Schools are also reluctant to set Semester One exams for Semester One courses (especially at Honours level) given the lack of time for consolidation and revision.

- Students have less time to receive and take account of feedback on Semester One coursework assessments, or to consolidate their learning and revise in the period between the end of teaching and the start of the examination diet than in Semester Two (normally one week in Semester One, compared to three weeks in Semester Two). This issue is particularly acute in 2015-16 and 2016-17 due to the way the calendar falls (resulting in only three working days for revision between the end of teaching and the start of the examination diet in Semester One).

- The examination diet is shorter in Semester One than Semester Two (12 days of examinations, compared to c. 20 days in Semester Two). As a result, in Semester One students typically have less of a gap between examinations and more chance of having two examinations on the same day (although in practice this affects only a small proportion of students).

3

- The compressed Semester One examination diet creates significant pressures on available space for examinations, particularly when key large venues are unavailable due to estates development work.

3   Evaluation criteria

The Group agreed a set of criteria against which to evaluate options. These are set out in Annex B.

4   Benchmarking

The task group took account of benchmarking of the models operating at other institutions in the UK, with a particular reference to Scottish higher education institutions and Russell Group institutions. This benchmarking involving:

- Desk based analysis of c. 40 higher education institutions' academic years;
- Discussions with five institutions (University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, University of Aberdeen, University of Manchester, University of Nottingham).

The key findings from the benchmarking are:

Year start dates

- Most Scottish Universities start before UoE (this is likely to relate to the fact that, unlike Edinburgh, many Scottish universities are primarily recruiting students with SQA school qualifications, the results of which are available earlier than A-levels);
- Most Russell Group Universities start later;

Semester One exams

- Only three Scottish Universities have their S1 exams after the winter break, and one of these is moving towards examining in December;
- The majority of English and Welsh Russell Group Universities that examine S1 do so after the winter break, and this model appears to work without major difficulties;

Spring / Easter break

- The vast majority of institutions have a Spring Break, typically 2-3 weeks long;

End of S2 exams

- Only three Scottish Universities finish their year-end exams after UoE;
- Almost all English Russell Group Universities finish their exams after UoE;

Graduations

- The majority of Scottish universities hold their graduations earlier or at the same time as UoE, although five hold their graduations (slightly) later than UoE;

4

- Only four English Russell Group Universities hold their graduations before UoE, with most holding them 2-3 weeks later (this is understandable given that school holidays start later in England than Scotland).

Number of Teaching/Consolidation/Revision weeks

- The total of teaching/consolidation/reading/revision weeks varies from 18 to 28 (at 25 UoE is in the middle);
- Only three Scottish universities have fewer teaching weeks than UoE (22 to our 23);
- Six Russell Group institutions have fewer teaching weeks than UoE (most of these have 22 weeks).

6   Options

The group considered a range of alternatives to the current structure:

6.1   *The 'Start Early' model*:

- Hold the Semester One Welcome Week a week earlier than at present;
- Start Semester One a week earlier than at present;
- An additional week for structured revision and consolidation during Semester One (a variant on this model would be to use the additional week for addition revision time instead);
- The University would continue to examine Semester One courses in December, and there would be no change to the current structures for Semester Two.

6.2   The 'Examine After Christmas' model:

- Welcome Week and Semester 1 start one week later than at present;
- 11 weeks of teaching in Semester 1 inclusive of one week at the end for revision and consolidation. This is a week in which Schools provide structured and timetabled teaching activities to assist students to reflect on what they have learned on their courses and to prepare for examinations / assessments;
- Semester 1 courses would be examined in mid to late January, following a revision week;
- The Semester 1 examination diet remains two weeks long (12 examination days). This is long enough to ensure that all semester 1 courses can be examined in semester 1;
- 11 weeks of teaching in Semester 2 starting at the beginning of February, inclusive of one week at the end for revision and consolidation (as in Semester 1, the revision and consolidation week will include formal teaching);
- A one-week break after 6 weeks of teaching in both Semester 1 and Semester 2;
- Semester 2 examinations would be held at the beginning of May following a revision week, as at present;
- The Semester 2 examination diet is reduced to 3 weeks, which is sufficient to examine all semester 2 courses and all year long courses;
- Graduations would take place in late June / early July as at present;

5

- The structure would not apply to programmes that already have opt-outs from the University's current academic year structure, for example undergraduate Medicine, Education and Veterinary Medicine.

6.3 The 'Three term' model

- Typically, under this model, the first term runs from September to December, the second term from January to March, and, following a break in March / April, the third runs from April to June;
- Under this model, the third term tends to include few if any teaching weeks, with the remainder of the term given over to revision and examinations.

6.4 The 'Accelerated' model:

- Three terms / trimesters running over the full year from September to August;
- Students would have the potential to complete the equivalent of a full four-year honours degree within three years.

6 Options considered and ruled out

Following initial analysis and discussion, the Group has rejected three of the possible options for the following reasons:

6.1 The 'Start-early model'

The Task Group recognised that this model would offer some significant benefits for the student and staff experience. However, it discounted it on the grounds that it would have significant academic down-sides:

- It would have significant disadvantages for the transition of new students who would need to arrive much sooner than for many other Universities;
- It would lead to more students starting the academic year late (eg due to delays in obtaining a student visa), which would disrupt the transition of those students as well as the experience of the cohort as a whole; and
- It would also put the University at a disadvantage for recruitment (particularly for international students but increasingly for home students, bearing in mind that the University would enter Clearing for the first time in 2016 and that Clearing was playing an increasingly important role in recruitment of high quality students).

The Group concluded that the modest benefits of an extra week in semester 1 were outweighed by the significant recruitment and transition risks outlined above.

6.2 The 'Three term' model

While recognising that some Russell Group institutions have this model, the Task Group discounted this option, as any potential benefits for the staff and student experience would

be modest and would not justify the considerable disruption involved in moving to this model.

6.3   The 'Accelerated' model

While recognising that some institutions (predominantly post-1992 institutions) are introducing this model, particular for certain professional programmes (eg Law), the Group identified very few benefits and significant disadvantages to this model in terms of student or staff experience, and did not think there is likely to be substantial demand for this model from prospective University of Edinburgh students.

7   Option explored in detail – the 'Examinations After Christmas' model

The Group recognised that the 'Examinations After Christmas' model is common among Russell Group institutions and an initial analysis of this model against the agreed evaluation criteria suggested that it could have a range of benefits for the University:

- Moving examinations from December to January would free up time in Semester 1 to start Welcome Week and Semester One teaching later than at present;
- Starting Welcome Week later will make aspects of admissions, pre-arrival and induction smoother, particularly for new first year undergraduate students who often do not receive their school examination results until August or who are recruited late in the admissions cycle (e.g. via Clearing & Adjustment routes) and for new international students who require visa clearance before entering the UK;
- Starting Welcome Week later would also give academic staff more opportunities to conduct research or attend conferences during September;
- A mid-term in each semester would make the semesters less pressured for both staff and students;
- Moving examinations from December to January would further reduce the pressure on students by allowing a reasonable period for revision prior to Semester 1 examinations. For students new to the UK (and international PGT in particular) there would be more time to adapt and acclimatise before sitting exams;
- Examinations in January would make it easier to provide students with feedback on their coursework before they sit examinations;
- Staff will no longer have to mark examination scripts over Christmas and New Year.

However, the analysis also identified that the model could have a range of cons:

- Staff may need to mark examination scripts for the Semester 1 exam diet at the same time as teaching for Semester 2;
- There may be additional costs incurred if the Library and other services need to remain open over Christmas and/or New Year to support students preparing for exams.
- The current two weeks of Spring vacation would be replaced with teaching weeks, reducing the scope for staff to take annual leave at that time of year and (on the basis

that some student use spring holidays for revision) reducing available revision time for students before the Semester 2 examination;

- There will no longer be space for Innovative Learning Week in Semester 2;
- Visiting undergraduate students who are at the university for Semester 1 only would not be able to remain in Edinburgh during January for examinations, meaning that staff may need to set them alternative assessments in order to assess these students during Semester 1.
- Students who have few or no exams in the Semester 1 exam diet would experience a substantial gap between the end of teaching in Semester 1 and the beginning of teaching in Semester 2.

A visual representation of this model is attached as an Annex C.

8   Consultation

The Group consulted on the 'Examination After Christmas' model. The consultation process, which ran between April and May 2016, involved:

- All-student and all-staff surveys - completed by approx. 6,500 students (approx. 20% response rate) and approx. 2,000 staff (approx. 15% of staff);
- 18 Schools, two Colleges, four subject areas, and two support groups provided written submissions, as did EUSA, EUSU, the trade unions, as did a small number of individual students and staff;
- 'Town-hall' meetings in the Central Area and Kings Buildings (a planned 'town-hall' meeting at Little France had to be cancelled and it was not possible to reschedule it);
- Views from relevant Senate Committees; and
- A website with further information on the consultation:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/review-of-the-academic-year

9   Main findings of the consultation

The main findings of the consultation were that:

- While the current academic year is not ideal, the University community appears to consider it to be workable – in general, Schools / Colleges identified as many positive as negative features to the current structure, and the vast majority of staff, and students responding to the survey did not view the current academic year structure as problematic (only 11% of staff respondents and c. 6% of students said it was 'bad' or 'awful' – the rest thought it was 'perfect' / 'good' / 'ok').

- One School, and a minority of students and staff (31% of staff; 25% of students), thought that the proposed 'Examinations After Christmas' model would be better than the current model, although only 5% of staff and students though it would be a vast improvement. In general, where respondents welcomed the proposed model they particularly valued:
    o   The introduction of mid-term breaks in each semester

- o The later starting date of Semester One
- o The additional time for revision before Semester One examinations.

- However, a substantial majority of students did not support moving to the proposed 'Examinations After Christmas' model (57% of survey respondents say it would be worse than the current model, with 26% saying it would be much worse). Similarly, 46% of staff thought it would be worse than the current model (with 22% thinking it would be much worse). The survey suggested that academic teaching staff and undergraduate students are particularly opposed to the proposed model. Similarly, the vast majority of Schools did not support the proposed 'Examinations after Christmas' model, and other stakeholders (eg support groups, EUSU, trade unions) saw more disadvantages than advantages. While EUSA did express support for the proposed model, it recognised that the strength of student view was against it.

- The main reasons for not supporting the proposed 'Examinations After Christmas' model were:
  - o The vast majority of students and staff prefer the University to hold Semester One examinations in December rather than January (with UG students particularly opposed to examinations after Christmas);
  - o For both staff and students (particularly staff), the absence of a Spring Break was a major concern that raised equality / family friendly issues;
  - o For staff, the requirement to start Semester Two immediately after the end of Semester One Examinations without dedicated time allocated for marking Semester One assessments was a significant concern;
  - o For some Schools, the impact both for incoming Visiting Students (the requirement to set alternate assessments for Semester One Visiting Students) and outgoing study abroad students (creating practical barriers to students studying abroad for a single semester) was also a significant concern.
  - o The long gap between the end of teaching in Semester 1 and the beginning of teaching in Semester 2, and the impact this would have on students not sitting S1 Examinations (roughly 5,000 UG students and 5,000 PGT students).

- In addition, some respondents raised more specific concerns regarding the model's impact on:
  - o Placement arrangements
  - o Studio-based disciplines
  - o Sporting activities
  - o Online Distance Learning students (in MVM in particular)

10   Consultation findings – examination arrangements for Semester One courses

The survey responses indicated that students (and, to a lesser extent, staff) have a strong preference for examinations both at the middle and the end of the year, rather than just at the end. This finding is consistent with students' feedback to EUSA, which suggests that many students whose Semester One courses are examined at the end of Semester Two are dissatisfied with this arrangement.

At present, c. 12% of Semester One courses are examined during the Semester Two examination diet. EUSA, Senate Curriculum and Student Progress Committee, and the College of Science and Engineering, support the idea of increasing the proportion of S1 courses examined in S1. It is particularly important to examine pre-Honours Semester One courses in Semester One, since students early in their programmes of studies will gain a particular benefit from early feedback. In contrast, there may be arguments in some cases for Honours courses to examine Semester One courses in Semester Two to allow more time for consolidation (which can be more important at Honours level, where students are spending the whole year studying the same discipline).

The Task Group had initially thought that it would be challenging to move many examinations from the S2 to S1 examination diet without increasing the length of the diet given the timetabling and space pressures that the S1 examination diet already faces. However, further analysis has confirmed that the current length of the S1 examination diet could accommodate all S1 examinations currently held in the S2 diet.

11 Consultation findings - Innovative Learning Week

The consultation findings indicate that, while staff and students have mixed views regarding Innovative Learning Week, if there is a spare week in Semester Two, substantially more students and staff would prefer it to be used as a mid-term break than Innovative Learning Week. While LTC has agreed that in 2016-17 and 2017-18 it would move away from Innovative Learning Week and allow Schools to use the week for a broader range of purposes that best suit their staff and students, LTC was awaiting the outcome of this review before deciding how to use that week after 2018-19. In the group's view, in the future Schools should utilise this week as a mid-term break for students and staff, although there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for subjects areas to utilise the week for compulsory activities that cannot be accommodated within normal timetabled teaching weeks (for example, fieldtrips).

12   Academic year structures for Online Distance Learning programmes

During the review, the task group became aware of some variation in academic year structures for PGT Online Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. While in CHSS, most ODL programmes follow the normal semester dates (albeit with the potential for a January intake), in MVM ODL programmes operate on a three-term, rather than semester model. In MVM, while Term 1 matches the normal Semester One dates, Term 2 starts a week earlier than the standard University Semester Two. The Group agreed that there would be merit in the University revisiting the academic year structures in order to consider any impact of the current variation in ODL programme academic year structures upon the University's ambitions in relation to online learning – in particular, the impact on the ability of Schools to develop new interdisciplinary ODL programmes sharing courses from different areas, and the ability of the University to allow on-campus students to access ODL courses as part of their programmes.

13   Overall conclusions and recommendations

It clear from the examples of other institutions, including a higher proportion of Russell Group institutions, that large research-intensive universities can operate an 'Examinations After Christmas' model, and that such a model could have advantages for Edinburgh. However, given the strength of opposition to this model from students, staff, and Schools / Colleges, and the significant issues regarding time for marking at the end of Semester One, the absence of a Spring Break, and Visiting Students, it is not advisable for the University to consider implementing such a model.

The Group's main recommendations to LTC are that:

- It rejects the 'Examinations after Christmas' model, along with the other alternatives the group had identified – the 'Start Early' model, the 'Three-Term' model and the 'Accelerated' model;
- The University should retain the current academic year model, including maintaining the current length of the Semester Two examination diet (since there would be disadvantages to students and no significant advantages to reducing it);
- The University should maintain the principle that all taught programmes and all levels of study will operate to the same academic year unless a programme has a valid reason for an opt-out (valid reasons would relate to external factors, such as professional practice requirements, which require programmes to operate on an alternate academic year), and that the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) should continue to be responsible for considering requests for opt-outs.

The Group also makes the following supplementary recommendations to LTC:

- That Innovative Learning Week has fulfilled its purpose, and that – building on the plans for the more flexible use of that week in 2016-17 - the University should in the medium to longer-term utilise that week in Semester Two for a mid-term break for students and staff, but to also explore whether there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for subjects areas to utilise the week for compulsory activities that cannot be accommodated within normal timetabled teaching weeks (for example, fieldtrips);
- That LTC ask the CSPC to continue to encourage Schools to avoid teaching on the final two days of Semester One where it is appropriate to do so, in order to maximise the amount of time for revision within the current academic year structure;
- That LTC asks CSPC to continue to encourage Schools to move towards examining Semester One courses in Semester One, with a particular focus on pre-Honours courses; and
- That LTC invites CSPC to consider any impact of the current variation in ODL programme structures upon the University's ambitions in relation to online learning.

14   Proposed approach to communicating the outcome of the review

Given the extremely positive levels of stakeholder engagement with the review process, and the levels of concern regarding the proposed 'Examinations After Christmas' model, it is

important to communicate back to stakeholders regarding the outcome of the review as soon as possible after LTC reaches its decision.

The Group recommends that the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) takes the following approach to communicating the outcome of the review:

- All-staff and all-student emails on the subject
- A News article on the University website

The Group recommends that (in the event that LTC accepts its overall recommendations) the communications should include the following points:

- The University has listened to and taken account of the views of students and staff;
- All universities find it difficult to design an academic structure that meets all their needs, and, having looked carefully at alternate models, the University has concluded that the current model, while not perfect, is the best available;
- The decisive reasons for ruling out the option of starting Semester One earlier relate to student recruitment and induction - that option would not be viable even if the University did not contribute its facilities to the Edinburgh Festival.

16   Constraints to the academic year structure

Having conducting the review, the group has identified a set of fundamental constraints to University's options for its academic year structures. While all institutions will have some constraints to how they design their academic year structures, Edinburgh is perhaps uniquely constrained as a result of having a staff population domiciled in Scotland (and therefore subject to Scottish school holiday dates) combined with an undergraduate student population a significant proportion of which is drawn from the Rest of the UK, and a high proportion of international students both at UG and PG level (including a large number of visiting students). This combination of constraints makes it difficult for it to adopt models that work well for many Russell Group institutions outside Scotland, and also raise challenges in applying models operated by other Scottish institutions.

In summary, the key constrains are:

Constraints regarding the start of the academic year

- The timing of the UCAS admissions process (in particular, the date of Results Day for A-level candidates and the start of post-confirmation Clearing), combined with the strategic importance to the University of recruiting UG students with A-level qualifications;

- The strategic importance to the University of recruiting UG students with school-level qualifications from countries that tend not to confirm results until late in the summer;

- UKVI immigration processes that require Tier 4 students to take significant time to secure a visa after they have met entry conditions;

Constraints regarding the end of Semester One

- The strategic importance to the University of recruiting single-semester Visiting Students;

Constraints regarding the end of Semester Two

- Summer holiday dates for Scottish schools (there would be significant issues for staff were the University to hold graduations during school holidays).

Since the current academic year structure is not perfect and Semester One in particular will continue to have problematic features, it is likely that in the future some stakeholders will again make the case for reviewing the academic year structure. Reviews of this type are resource-intensive and can distract the University from other priorities. The Group therefore **recommends** that the University does not consider any further reviews of the structure in the future unless there is a material change to any of the fundamental constraints to the University's academic year structure.

Annex A - Remit and Membership of the Task Group to Review the Academic Year Structure

Remit

The remit of the Task Group is to:

- Evaluate options for changing the academic year taking account of the implications for the student and staff experience, as well as other practical and resourcing implications;
- Manage consultation and communication activities regarding the review; and
- Make recommendations to Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, which would then make recommendations to Senate and other relevant bodies, and consult Principal's Strategy Group and other bodies as appropriate.

Composition and Membership

- Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) (Convener) – Gavin Douglas
- One Assistant Principal – AP (Academic Support), Prof Alan Murray
- One Dean and one senior administrator from each College:
    - Lesley Yellowlees (Head of CSE) / Graeme Reid (Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE)
    - Joy Candlish (Head of Academic Affairs, CSE)
    - Richard Sparks, (Head of School, Law)
    - Catherine Martin (Registrar, CHSS)
    - Sheila Lodge (Head of Academic Administration, MVM)
    - Prof Anna Meredith (Director of Postgraduate Taught, MVM)
- EUSA representative
    - Imogen Wilson / Patrick Garratt (Vice-President, Academic Affairs)
    - Sarah Purves
- Representative of Student Recruitment & Admissions – Ian Sutherland (Head of Admissions)
- Representative of Information Services – Bryan McGregor (Director of User Services Division)
- Director of Human Resources or delegate – Linda Criggie (Deputy Director, HR)
- Director of Student Administration or delegate – Robert Lawrie (Director of Student Administration)
- Director of Academic Services or delegate – Tom Ward (Director of Academic Services)
- Corporate Services Group representative – Richard Kington (Director of Accommodation Services)
- Estates and Buildings representative – Gary Jedd (Director of Estates and Buildings)
- Joint trade unions representative – Janet Philp

Annex B - Criteria to use for evaluation of models

- Pedagogical and student experience considerations

- Meeting the principles underpinning the review of the academic year

- Staff experience

- Student experience for Visiting Students

- Alignment with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

- Operational academic considerations, including sufficient time allowed for marking and examining and graduations

- Simplicity and consistency – minimising the number of programmes that require opt-outs from the standard academic year structure

- Impact on availability of space for teaching and examinations

- Access to University facilities and services

- Financial impact on students

- Financial impact on the University

- Impact on the University's and EUSA's involvement with the Edinburgh Festival

- Legal implications

- Admissions issues

- System issues

- Implications for Study Abroad arrangements

- Impact on collaborative programmes with other institutions

- Change management issues

- Equality and Diversity

Annex C - Examinations After Chrismas model

Semester	N/A				Semester 1																						Semester 2																		N/A	Semester 3 (Postgraduate Only)															
Month	September				October				November					December				January				February				March					April				May				June					July				August				
Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5
Vacation																																																				
Welcome Week																																																				
Teaching Block																																																				
Revision																																																				
Exams																																																				

Semester 1 would start a week later than now

6 weeks of teaching, a mid-term break, another 5 weeks of teaching

3 week Winter Vacation

Last week of Semester 1 teaching is consolidation

New Semester 1 revision week and 2 weeks of exams in January

All Semester 1 courses could be examined at end of Semester 1

Semester 2 starts late January / early February

6 weeks of teaching, a mid-term break, another 5 weeks of teaching

Last week of Semester 2 teaching is consolidation

1 week of revision, 3 weeks of exams

Any Semester 1 exams moved to January

Semester 3 during the summer (Postgraduate courses only)

Notes

More information:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/review-of-the-academic-year

Consolidation:
A week of taught activities to help with revision and consolidation of new material.

Outline Only:
Specific dates to be confirmed.

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Degree Programme Specifications: removal of reference to Innovative Learning Week

Executive Summary

A Degree Programme Specification exists for each programme offered by the University, which outlines the structure of the programme, and its approach to teaching and assessment. CSPC is formally responsible for the template for Degree Programme Specifications. Over the summer, Academic Services identified an issue with the existing template, and, as a result, the DPSs for most programmes, since they included details of activities undertaken on the programme during Innovative Learning Week. As Innovative Learning Week will no longer take place in its current form from 2016-17, it was important to remove reference to such activities, in order to ensure compliance with Competition and Markets Authority guidelines.

Academic Services have therefore removed the section of the template which referred to Innovative Learning Week. Student Systems have manually removed references to Innovative Learning Week from each existing Degree Programme Specification.

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

CSPC has a programme of reviewing policies to ensure they remain accurate.

Action requested

CSPC is invited to note the action taken.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

N/A

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   No future impact; removal of references to ILW from individual DPSs required temporary staff resource in Student Systems.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Failure to take the action noted would have placed the University at risk of non-compliance with Competition and Markets Authority guidelines.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

N/A

4. Freedom of information

Open.

<u>**Key words**</u>

Degree Programme Specifications.

<u>**Originator of the paper**</u>

Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services.

22nd August 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Student Discipline Committee Membership and Student Discipline Officers 2016/17

Executive Summary

Approval of staff members of the Student Discipline Committee and Student Discipline Officers for 2016/17 is required.

New student members of the Student Discipline Committee were formally approved by Convener's Action on 2 August 2016, therefore student members of the Student Discipline Committee are noted here for information only.

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

Aligns with the current strategic theme of excellence in education.

Action requested

For approval

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The information will be conveyed directly to new members and available on the Academic Services website at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/discipline-committee

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/StudentDisciplineOfficers.pdf

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   There are resource implications in terms of time commitment for the staff and students involved.

2. **Risk assessment** N/A

3. **Equality and Diversity** Equality and diversity implications have been considered.

4. **Freedom of information** Open.

Originator of the paper
Ms Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services, 26 August 2016

Student Discipline Committee Membership 2016/17

The Student Discipline Committee consists of members of the academic staff of the University and matriculated students. The Student Discipline Committee meets as and when required.

Staff

- Professor Alan Boyle (Convener)
- Professor Jeremy Crang (Vice-Convener)
- Mrs Lisa Brannan
- Ms Nathalie Caron (on secondment until June 2017)
- Professor Stephen Fry
- Ms Sarah McAllister
- Dr Andrew Newman
- Dr Paul Norris
- Professor Simon Parsons
- Dr Claire Phillips
- Dr David Kluth
- Mrs Gill Aitken

Students

- Mr Arran Byers
- Mr Tom Greenstein
- Ms Ieva Kaleinkovaite
- Ms Lorna Macfarlane
- Ms Michelle McFarlane
- Ms Maggie Morrison
- Ms Corrine Robinson
- Mr James Seale
- Ms Nicole Serzhantova
- Mr Tobias Seger
- Ms Joy Vamakari
- Mr Matjaz Vidmar

Lead Secretary

Ms Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

September 2016

Student Discipline Officers 2016/17

College of Humanities and Social Science
Professor Dorothy Miell, Vice Principal and Head of College
Professor Richard Coyne, Dean of Postgraduate Studies - Research
Mr Alan Brown, Associate Dean (Academic Progress)
Professor Pete Higgins, Dean of Students
Dr John Lowrey, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Dr Gale MacLeod, Dean of Postgraduate Studies - Taught
Dr Catherine Martin, College Registrar

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Professor Sir John Savill, Vice Principal and Head of College
Professor Jeremy Bradshaw, Assistant Principal Researcher Development
Professor Philippa Saunders, Director, Postgraduate Research
Professor Anna Meredith, Director, Postgraduate Taught
Dr Sarah Henderson, Deputy Director, Postgraduate Taught
Dr Geoff Pearson, Dean of Students
Professor Neil Turner, Director of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching
Dr Catherine Elliott, College Registrar

College of Science and Engineering
Professor Lesley Yellowlees, Vice Principal and Head of College
Professor Graeme Reid, Dean of Learning and Teaching
Dr Antony Maciocia, Dean of Students
Dr Gordon McDougall, Dean (Quality Assurance)
Professor Andy Mount, Dean of Research
Dr Bruce Nelson, College Registrar

Corporate Services Group
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Mr Richard Kington, Director, Accommodation Services
Ms Lynne Duff, Assistant Director Residence Life, Accommodation Services
Mr James Jarvis, Warden Grant House, Accommodation Services
Mr Abdul Majothi, Warden Mylne's Court, Accommodation Services
Mr Jim Aitken, Director, Centre for Sport and Exercise
Ms Louise Campbell, Depute Director, Centre for Sport and Exercise

Information Services Group
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
Mr Simon Marsden, ISG Deputy
Mr Jeremy Upton, Director Library and Collections

University Secretary's Group
Ms Sarah Smith, University Secretary
Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary and Director of Planning

Designated Vice Principals
Professor Mary Bownes, Vice Principal Community Development
Professor Chris Breward, Vice Principal Creative Industries & Performing Arts
Professor Jeff Haywood, VP Digital Education
Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice Principal
Professor Richard Kenway, Vice Principal High Performance Computing
Professor Jane Norman, Vice Principal Equality and Diversity

Academic Services, September 2016

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Students' Association Priorities 2016-17

<u>Brief description of the paper, including statement of relevance to the University's strategic plans and priorities where relevant</u>

This paper seeks to provide an introduction to Students' Association new sabbatical officers and their priorities for 2016-17.

<u>Action requested</u>

This paper is for information

<u>Resource implications</u>

Does the paper have resource implications? No

<u>Risk Assessment</u>

Does the paper include a risk analysis? No

<u>Equality and Diversity</u>

Has due consideration been given to the equality impact of this paper? Yes

<u>Freedom of information</u>

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

<u>Any Other Relevant Information</u>

<u>Originators of the paper</u>

Patrick Garratt, Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs, September 2016

Students' Association Priorities 2016-17

The sabbatical officers elected for 2016-17 are:

Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson, Students' Association President

Patrick Garratt, Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs (VPAA)

Jessica Husbands, Students' Association Vice President Societies & Activities (VPSA)

Jenna Kelly, Students' Association Vice President Services (VPS)

VPAA Objectives for 2016-17:

1. Breaking down student-teacher barriers

The aim is to increase provision of open platforms, through which students can have constructive input into both the content of their courses, and the assessment methods of these courses. All students should be able to take part in a pedagogical process that they feel adequately represents and accommodates for their needs, backgrounds and academic interests.

- Creating platforms for mid-semester feedback from students to staff, pertaining mainly to seminars, tutorials and laboratory sessions, and putting less weight on surveys, thus establishing a more conversational dialogue between students and staff. These platforms would serve to ensure that small but pertinent changes can be implemented during the semester, at which point students have more of a stake in their course.
- Working with all Schools to explore how students' curricula can be liberated, varying from changes to content in some disciplines, to further exploring the diversification of assessment methods and pedagogy in others
- Improving the functioning of the Class Rep system across all Schools, and putting greater weight on the role of School Conveners.
- Ensuring there is stronger transparency about the outcomes of staff-student liaison committees, and working with Schools to strengthen their communication with students.
- Continuing the Students' Association's promotion of co-curriculum.

2. Reducing the stress of studying and enhancing accessibility

The Students' Association will work with the University to ensure that the pastoral needs of students are met whilst they are studying, continuing the work of the previous sabbatical officers and the University on support for students suffering from mental health issues. We

will also be putting particular weight on helping students who are on, or returning from, their year abroad.

- Working with the University to convince academics about the pedagogical benefits of lecture capture, and particularly making the case for the ways in which the recording of lectures assists the accessibility needs of students.
- Ensuring that students who are on a year abroad scheme are able to effectively communicate with their personal tutors, that they receive adequate pastoral support whilst they are at their host institution, and that they are provided with greater support upon their return to effectively bridge the gap between pre-Honours and Honours study.
- Working with the other sabbatical officers to prioritise the enhancement of support for students suffering with mental health issues.
- Ensuring that the Learning Adjustments outlined in the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy are consistently implemented and that Learning Profiles are consistently recognised and accommodated.
- Establishing stronger support networks both within the Students' Association and at the University to help students for whom English is not their first language.

3. Prioritising postgraduate representation with our Students' Association, and putting particular weight on supporting postgraduate tutors

The aim is to establish clearer channels of communication and representative structures for postgraduate research students across the University. We want to provide greater support for postgraduate tutors, whom the University relies heavily on for the learning experiences of pre-Honours students.

- Creating stronger bonds of community between both PGT and PGR students with our Students' Association
- Greater provision of course-specific training for postgraduate tutors.
- Ensuring that both postgraduate tutors' and students' expectations of contact time and support are met.
- Putting greater weight on the pastoral and mental health needs of PGR students
- Relieving the pressure upon PGR students who are forced to work in part-time jobs external to their employment with the University.

4. Ensuring students are aware of the government policies affecting Higher Education, and working with the University to tackles these changes

The aim is to articulate to students the overarching changes sweeping Higher Education across the UK, and also explaining the specific features of the Scottish context. We will also be working with student associations and unions across the UK to protect the rights of international students, and ensuring that students remain politically aware with wider government policies imposed on higher education institutions.

- Ensuring that students at the University of Edinburgh can have their voices heard whilst the Scottish HE sector looks to find a possible alternative to the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- Promoting wider discussions amongst the student body about what constitutes 'teaching quality', particularly through the research of last year's Teaching Awards.
- Tackling the PREVENT agenda with the University.
- Working with NUS Scotland and the University to explore possible concessions following the cross-party steering groups' review into the reintroduction of the post-study work visa in Scotland.
- Working with the University to develop a recruitment strategy for students who enter the University of Edinburgh through articulation, and recognise a variety of Further Education qualifications.

Patrick Garratt, Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs, September 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

22 September 2016

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Brief description of the paper, including a statement of relevance to the University's strategic plans and priorities

To update the Committee on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2016.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to note the report – a separate paper regarding Senate membership of Knowledge Strategy Committee was submitted for approval to the September 2016 meeting of e-Senate.

Communication and Implementation

The approved Knowledge Strategy Committee minute will be published on the University website in due course.

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? No

Risk Assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? N/A

Equality and Diversity

Has due consideration been given to the equality impact of this paper? N/A

Freedom of Information

Can this paper be included in open business?
Yes

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan
Head of Court Services
31 August 2016

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE REPORT

3 June 2016

1   Matters Arising

The Convener thanked Ms Imogen Wilson, EUSA Vice-President Academic Affairs and Professor Arthur Trew for their service to the Committee.

The Convener welcomed two observers to the meeting: Patrick Garratt, EUSA Vice-President Academic Affairs-elect, and Melissa Highton, Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division and Assistant Principal Online Education from 1 September, with the recommendation that Senate appoint Melissa Highton to fill the vacancy for a Senate member of the Committee.
[Secretary's note: a separate paper regarding the Senate membership of Knowledge Strategy Committee was submitted to the September 2016 meeting of e-Senate.]

2   Information Services Group (ISG) Strategy and Plan 2016-19

The Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University presented an update on the ISG 10 Year Strategy and the ISG Plan 2016-19, submitted for consideration within the University's Planning Round. The Committee noted changes made to the final draft of the 2016-19 Plan to incorporate Digital Transformation activities within the Service Excellence Programme and a greater emphasis on the Lecture Capture project considered under Item 5 below. The Committee noted that the 2016-19 Planning Round will be finalised at the 20 June Court meeting and associated approval requests for expenditure on information services projects may follow over the summer period.

3   Lecture Capture – Proposed Project Summary

The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division delivered an overview of options for installing a lecture capture system at the University. Members welcomed the proposals and noted the positive responses from students at universities that have installed lecture capture systems. It was noted that formal business case for the project will be developed building on the comments received, with a Project Board overseeing delivery.

4   Learning Analytics Initiative – Progress Report

The Chair in Learning, Analytics and Informatics updated the Committee on the Learning Analytics initiative involving online Masters courses and conducted in partnership with Civitas Learning. The Chief Information Officer commented that the University is at the forefront of research in Learning Analytics, with the Chair in Learning, Analytics and Informatics adding that the University is collaborating with the University of Michigan, worldwide leaders in the field. It was noted that a leadership role brings risks alongside benefits but risks will be managed carefully through involvement of interested students and ethics and privacy experts from the beginning of the project.

5   EvaSys Course Evaluation

An update on EvaSys Course Evaluation Roll-Out project, including the draft Course Evaluation Policy, was received. The intention to include all those involved in teaching

including those not solely employed by the University (e.g. NHS staff) was welcomed, with the importance of checking for any potential contractual barriers emphasised. The potential benefits for staff development and ensuring communication of this benefit was noted. It was suggested that the course evaluation form could provide an opportunity for students to comment on aspects of the course they found particularly valuable.

6   Digital Student Experience

The Director of Student Systems delivered a summary of a presentation produced by external consultants on the current digital student experience at the University and suggested improvements. The Committee welcomed the suggestions for improvement (e.g. avoiding 'navigation by acronym', providing a consistent experience across systems, user-first development of systems, improving digital communication to students) and noted that detailed recommendations for implementation will be submitted to a future meeting, following initial consideration by IT Committee.

7   Flexible PhD Working Group Report

The Assistant Principal Researcher Development presented the report of the Flexible PhD Working Group, established to examine changes required to allow for the provision of distance PhD study as part of the University's standard educational offering. Interest shown from online Masters students in progressing to online PhD study was noted and the potential for a wide range of PhDs, including laboratory-based PhDs to be offered by distance study (e.g. for academic staff without PhDs working in overseas universities with access to laboratories). Members commented on the importance of creating a single Edinburgh research experience for online and on-campus students, the potential to learn from the Open University and the expected start date of September 2017.

8   Computing Regulations

Revisions to the 20th edition of the University's Computing Regulations were approved. It was noted that IT Committee had examined the proposed revisions in detail and that the Audit & Risk Committee can be updated on the revisions relating to improving cyber security.