

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting
held online on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 2.30pm**

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research (CMVM)
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, Students' Association
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Jean Grier	Investigations Manager
Roshni Hume	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Harish Lockhun	Edinburgh Global

Apologies for absence:

Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
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1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous electronic business meeting held on 28 May 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

- a) **Convener's Action** – change of semester 2 dates for year 4 of BSc (Hons) Oral Health Sciences programme; change of start date for MBA to January in 2021 and 2022; approval of concession re: double marking of dissertations for an MSc

programme in Education for one year; approval of revised Degree Programme Specification Guidance; approval of minor revision to Student Appeal Regulations.

- b) Electronic Business** – 1-8 July 2020 Concession re: double marking of dissertations for an MSc programme in Education; 16-22 July 2020 MVM PGT paper (not approved); 27-28 July 2020 PGT dissertation re-submission window revised to be 40-49 as a temporary concession (previously 45-49).

3. Expected Behaviour Policy (APRC 20/21 1A)

Jean Grier presented this paper which set out a proposed new policy covering the 'expected behaviour' of parties in casework covering academic appeals, student conduct and complaints.

The Students' Association requested that specific wording be added to the policy (e.g. possibly in the description section) to ensure that it was clearer that legitimate complaints were very much welcomed/not being discouraged. Mrs Grier agreed to add something in to the policy to cover this point.

There were some further amendments to be made to the policy following some suggestions from the Students' Association, therefore the policy was not approved as presented. If the proposed changes were substantive the policy would come back to the full Committee for final approval, but if the proposed changes were not substantive the policy could be approved by Convener's Action.

<p>ACTION: Jean Grier and Dr Bunni to arrange meeting with the Students' Association to discuss proposed amendments to this draft policy.</p>
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4. Academic Misconduct – Vivas of Affirmation (APRC 20/21 1B)

This paper provided an update on discussion which had taken place within the University and externally, at a sector-wide level in relation to contract cheating and academic misconduct, particularly with regards to remote examination. The paper also included a revised draft of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for approval.

In order to accommodate the vivas of affirmation within the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for the 2020/21 academic year, the following actions were proposed:

- A minor amendment to the procedures to state that the School Academic Misconduct Officers could nominate deputies with subject specific expertise to conduct vivas of affirmation in place of the preliminary meeting which would normally be conducted by the SAMO. It was also proposed that CAMOs could nominate deputies to act on their behalf where necessary, for example where there was a conflict of interest;
- Creation of online guidance which would explain how SAMO meetings may be used for vivas of affirmation, in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

The Committee approved the draft Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures as presented, for 2020/21.

ACTION: Academic Services to publish revised Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures online for 2020/21 at www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academicmisconductprocedures.pdf

- 5. Universities UK Principles for Effective Degree Algorithm Design (CLOSED C)**
Dr Bunni presented this closed paper. The Committee agreed to take no action in relation to the paper at this time, but to keep this matter under review, returning to the issue in one year's time.
- 6. CAHSS: Non-Standard Academic Year for Postgraduate Certificate in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care (APRC 20/21 1D)**

This paper was approved by the Committee.

- 7. Concession Request - Incoming Indian PG Students 2020 (APRC 20/21 1E)**

This paper was presented by Harish Lokhun, Edinburgh Global. This paper requested Committee approval for a concession to the regulation around conflicting studies (PG Degree Regulation 12) for incoming Indian students matriculating in 2020/21 for their postgraduate studies who may be affected by conflicting studies in India. This was based on the requirement for them complete their final examinations for their undergraduate degree at their home institution, alongside their studies at the University of Edinburgh.

The Committee raised concerns about how challenging it could be for any students affected to keep up with their programmes, and suggested that they were not keen to make a blanket concession without sight of the numbers. However, the Committee accepted that there were few options here, and agreed they were content to approve a concession which would allow Colleges to take decisions on this on a case-by-case basis as they saw fit.

- 8. APRC Membership and Terms of Reference 2020/21 (APRC 20/21 1F)**

The APRC membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/21 were approved, subject to an amendment to the reference to the Convener as the Assistant Principal, Academic Support. It was agreed that it did not make sense to tie the Convener's role to a specific role but to add something in the section on the composition, explaining that the Committee could appoint a Convener of its members. The Terms of Reference did not currently identify a term of office for the Convener role, for example a three-year term, but consideration would need to be given as to whether to incorporate this in future.

ACTION: Academic Services to consider additional wording for the Terms of Reference and bring back to the Committee as needed.

- 9. Senate Committees' Members' Guidance 2020 (APRC 20/21 1G)**

This paper was received for information.

10. Senate Committee Effectiveness Review 2019/20 – questionnaire responses initial analysis (APRC 20/21 1H)

This paper was received for information.

11. Any Other Business

a) A late paper was circulated in advance of the meeting from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in relation to advice for staff about authorised interruption of studies. The paper noted that there were instances where authorised interruptions of study requests could be approved and provided a list of these instances. Schools were to be invited to consider this list when deciding whether or not to grant an authorised interruption of studies. If Schools considered any or all of these points relevant in a request for the Authorised Interruption of Study, it was strongly recommended that such applications should be approved:

- 1) Why is this student impacted more than any other student on the same degree programme?
- 2) Why is this student impacted more than any other student who is studying remotely in the same country?
- 3) Is there a direct confirmation that core learning outcomes for the programme cannot be met through any suitable and acceptable alternative means?
- 4) Is there a threat of surveillance and risk to students arising from some material used which is core to their studies and which the Course Organiser is unable to replace with other material of equal pedagogic value.
- 5) Is there anything else to do with the request, such as mental health difficulties, which would give additional reasons to grant an authorised interruption of studies – so would it be granted in “normal” circumstances?

The Committee made suggestions for clarification/amendment to point 3 and point 4 in the list of instances provided by CAHSS. The Committee agreed that the list would be amended and circulated by the CAHSS College Office to the College Offices in CSE and CMVM and the Students’ Association for further comment. The agreed guidance would then be circulated to Schools via Colleges in the name of the Convener of APRC.

b) Dr Bunni raised an item relating to Special Circumstances and Covid-19. The Committee acknowledged that, for courses being undertaken in 2020/21, the “no detriment” approach and the other provisions of Annex A which applied to courses in Semester 2 of 2019/20 no longer applied. This was due to the fact that teaching and assessment for 2020/21 had been redesigned with the impact of Covid-19 in mind. However, the University also agreed in 2019/20 to extend the range of grounds for Special Circumstances, and reduce the evidence requirements due to Covid-19. Members agreed that it would be appropriate and necessary to take similar steps in the current session for 2020/21, and apply these as a concession to the Special Circumstances Policy.

The Committee agreed that Academic Services would liaise with the Colleges, the Students’ Association, and Sarah McAllister to agree some proposals for concessions. These would then be brought to the Committee for a decision electronically, in advance of its next meeting.