**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 25 January 2018 in the Cuillin Room, Charles
Stewart House**

A G E N D A

1.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017**	Enclosed
2.	**Matters Arising**	
	a) **Timing of Assessment/Semester 1 Examination Boards**	

For discussion

3.	**Service Excellence Programme - Student Administration and Support Update**	CSPC 17/18 3 A
4.	**Service Excellence Programme - Working and Study Away Update**	CSPC 17/18 3 B
5.	**Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions Update**	CSPC 17/18 3 C
6.	**Coursework Extensions and Employment Commitments**	CSPC 17/18 3 D
7.	**Acceptable grounds for Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions: Sexual harassment or assault**	CSPC 17/18 3 E
8.	**Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group Update**	CSPC 17/18 3 F

For information and formal business

9.	**Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**	CSPC 17/18 3 G
10.	**Consolidation of Programme and Course Approval and Management Documentation**	CSPC 17/18 3 H
11.	**Any Other Business**	

Academic Services 18 January 2018

H/02/27/02
CSPC: 23.11.17

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)
held on Thursday 23 November 2017 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSCE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Ms Alexandra Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSCE)
Dr Sheila Lodge	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSCE)
Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President Education Students' Association
Ms Ellie Tudhope	Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Neil Lent	Institute for Academic Development
Mrs Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback

In attendance:

Ms Esther Dominy	Students' Association Vice-President Welfare (items 8-17 only)
Ms Roshni Hume	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services (items 8-17 only)
Professor Dave Robertson	Head of the College of Science and Engineering (items 1-4 only)
Mr Scott Rosie	Head of Timetabling Services (items 1-3 only)
Professor Mike Shipston	Centre for Integrative Physiology items 1-5 only)
Ms Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Mr Stephen Warrington	Director of Teaching, School of Engineering

Apologies for absence:

Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team

Prior to the formal meeting, Committee members received a presentation from Mr Scott Rosie, Head of Timetabling Services, which summarised the Global Timetabling Modelling Project.

The Committee agreed to re-order the agenda for the meeting to allow for discussion of academic year dates, and lecture recording/timetabling (an item that was due to be raised under Any Other Business) at the beginning of the meeting.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 21 September 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Electronic business had been conducted by the Committee between 27 September 2017 and 4 October 2017. The Committee had approved a paper from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine regarding an articulation proposal between the BVM&S programme at the University of Edinburgh, and selected North American pre-vet programmes.

3. Academic Year Dates 2019/20 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2020/21

The Committee approved the academic year dates for 2019/20 and provisional academic year dates for 2020/21 as presented.

It was noted that current projections meant that in 2020/21 a potential induction start date of 14 September 2020 would have a knock-on effect on the revision/examination period in semester 1 of 2020 with a truncated revision and examination diet. Initial discussions with Accommodation Catering and Events had suggested that there was no flexibility in the induction start date for 2020/21, because of the need for sufficient time to prepare the University's accommodation and other facilities following the end of the Festival.

This would lead to a situation that was similar to that which occurred in 2015/16, when the Committee agreed to a reduction in the revision period for students to three working days, in order to have enough time to accommodate the December examination diet. Even if both Saturdays were used for examinations, and the revision week was curtailed by two days to three working days in the week beginning 7 December 2020, there would still only be a maximum of 10 days available for examinations. In December 2017, 11 days were required for examinations, and by 2020/21, more days would possibly be needed due to potential increases in timetabled examinations, December sittings, student numbers and special arrangement examinations. If 11 or more days were required, the revision period could be less than 3 working days.

It was agreed that further modelling of examinations, and further discussion of options to mitigate pressures on the revision period, would be required before academic year dates for 2020/21 were fully approved by the Committee next year.

> **ACTION - Mr Scott Rosie to undertake further examination timetable modelling, to see how many days would be required for examinations in the December 2020 examination diet.**
>
> **ACTION - Mr Scott Rosie and Mr Tom Ward to discuss estate related constraints further with Accommodation Catering and Events (and the Learning Spaces Technology team), and to explore possible options for mitigating pressures on the revision period.**

4. Data Science, Technology, and Innovation Distance Learning Programme (CSPC 17/18 2 A)

Professor Dave Robertson presented this paper. Responsibility for managing the suite of Distance Learning Programmes in Data Science, Technology and Innovation had transferred from the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences to the College of Science and Engineering. It was noted that these arrangements for managing programmes at College level were non-standard in some ways in terms of University regulations, which was why the Committee was being asked to approve the proposals.

Committee members discussed the proposed governance and operating model for the programmes. Members identified two main areas that they felt should be kept under review; the student support angle, and the proposals in relation to the handling of academic misconduct. Administrative aspects of student support would be delivered by dedicated administrative staff in the College of Science and Engineering Online Learning Team with support from College Office staff. While the Committee had some concerns regarding the adequacy of this support, Professor Robertson indicated that to date the majority of student support issues were addressed at course rather than programme level. In relation to academic misconduct, the Programme Director was to act as the School Academic Misconduct Officer (the implication of this arrangement being that the Programme Director would not be a marker for the dissertation). The Committee had some concern that this may not provide sufficient separation of roles. It was agreed that both of these aspects should be closely monitored, and that the College should report back to the Committee in one year.

The paper was approved by the Committee. The Committee noted that it was likely that, as the University developed new types of provision and placed increased emphasis on interdisciplinary activities, other proposals for non-standard models of programme and course management may emerge; approval of the DSTI programme arrangements would not set a precedent for any future proposals.

5. Dual award 4 year PhD degree programme in Integrative Biomedical Sciences with integrated study (CLOSED B)

This paper contained a proposal to create a dual award, 4 year PhD degree programme in Integrative Biomedical Sciences with courses for integrated study taught entirely in English. The programme would be delivered at the Zhejiang Edinburgh Institute (ZJE) in China. The programme was due to start in September 2018.

The proposal required Committee approval for the opt-out from the Taught Assessment Regulations with regards to the single resit opportunity that would be offered for each of the level 11 or 12 courses with 20 or less credits on the programme (10 credits in Year 1, 20 credits in Year 2 and 10 credits in Year 3). This would allow the students to redeem failure in these courses, therefore mitigating against the possibility that exit from the PhD would be required due to the unexpected failure of very small components.

It was noted that, generally for taught programmes within the University, where the University did not allow resits (e.g. for honours and postgraduate taught courses), it did allow credit on aggregate. Therefore the University did have a mechanism already for making sure that failure of small components did not have a disproportionate effect, and the Committee agreed that the same principle should be applied here.

The Committee's approval was also being sought to offer this as a dual award, in line with the University's Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy. The Committee was satisfied with the rationale for offering this programme on a dual award basis.

The expectation of the Quality Assurance Agency was that institutions offering dual awards would state the joint nature of the award either on the degree certificate or the transcript. The University did not currently provide transcripts for PhDs but this was one of the planned deliverables of the Service Excellence Project (SEP). If the SEP was unable to deliver this in time for the first awards then the ZJE would produce its own transcript which would state the joint nature of the programmes.

This paper was approved by the Committee. The Committee also indicated that it might be sensible to consider a review of policy in this area for PhD with integrated study, so that the need to request opt-outs for the resit element, to mitigate against potential failure due to a small component of the taught component, would not be required.

6. Proposal for Dual Award at Doctoral Level between the University of Edinburgh and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (CLOSED C)

Mr Tom Ward presented this paper. The Committee approved the dual award aspect of the programme, should it also be formally approved at School and College level (it was recognised that the proposal had not yet been through the standard School and College programme approval processes, and this would need to be done before the programme could be launched).

7. Service Excellence Programme - Student Administration and Support Update (CSPC 17/18 2 D)

This paper provided a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, and was formally noted by the Committee.

8. Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions Update (Verbal Update)

Mr Stephen Warrington provided a verbal update to the Committee on the special circumstances, extensions and concessions strand of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP). The paperwork that had been considered at the relevant Service Excellence Student Administration and Support Board on 20 November 2017 had represented a series of interim proposals. The programme was working to a final business case deadline of 15 February 2018. Mr Warrington informed the Committee that proposals may include some policy changes:

- Students would self-certify requests for coursework extensions of up to 7 days, with no expectation of providing any supporting evidence; and

- The operation of Special Circumstances Committees at College level.

Mr Warrington confirmed that CSPC would be responsible for approving any policy changes, once the SEP Student Administration and Board had firmed up its proposals. A more detailed and formal paper was expected at the 22 March 2018 CSPC meeting.

9. Acceptable Reasons for Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Employment Commitments and Caring Responsibilities (CSPC 17/18 2 E)

The Committee discussed the recommendations in the paper and agreed:

i) that the following be added to the list of valid reasons to request a coursework extension, from the 2018/19 session onwards:

"exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control".

ii) that the following be added to the list of valid reasons to request a coursework extension or consideration of Special Circumstances, from the 2018/19 session onwards:

"exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities"

The Committee did however ask that Academic Services develop some guidance explaining what 'exceptional and significant' changes in employment commitments means in practice, in order that students and staff can differentiate them from commitments which students could reasonably have anticipated and therefore should have planned for.

10. Academic Misconduct - An Overview and Future Planning (CSPC 17/18 2 F)

Ms Roshni Hume presented this paper which provided an overview of current practices and preventative measures taken in relation to academic misconduct and discussed the recent recommendations provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in relation to contract cheating.

It was noted that the College of Science and Engineering Learning and Teaching Committee had already had some discussion of the issues outlined in the paper.

The Committee welcomed the paper, and agreed that the University should consider further action to address the issues highlighted. This action was to include broad discussion across the University regarding the issues outlined, and the development of a plan of action. The Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group (convened by Professor Susan Rhind, and reporting to the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee) would take responsibility for developing this plan of action. This would then be brought back to CSPC for further discussion.

11. Timing of Boards of Examiners for Semester 1 Course (CSPC 17/18 2 G)

The Committee approved the recommendations outlined in the paper, as follows:

- Boards of Examiners to be held following the end of Semester 1 to ratify results for all courses whose assessment is complete during, or immediately following Semester 1; Schools will be expected to comply with this recommendation for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses during the 2018/19 session.
- The deadline for entry into EUCLID of ratified course results for Semester 1 courses to be adjusted to accommodate those PGT programmes struggling to meet the current deadline.
- Academic Services (Dr Adam Bunni) to discuss with Fees and Student Support whether there is any possibility of delaying the 31st January deadline for partial fee refunds for students.

> **ACTION - The Committee agreed that Academic Services should communicate the position once it had clarified the deadline for entry of ratified marks and the deadline for partial fee refunds.**

12. Universities UK Degree Algorithm Report (CLOSED – H)

Universities UK in collaboration with GuildHE had recently published the final report of a project exploring the approach to undergraduate degree classification algorithms in UK higher education institutions. This paper summarised the recommendations from the report, and considered how the University's approach to degree classification stood in relation to these recommendations.

The Committee agreed to publish the statement regarding the rationale for the University's approach to degree classification. It also agreed in principle to work towards greater consistency in this area, and asked Academic Services to work with Colleges to explore options. It also agreed that any Schools operating approaches to borderlines for classification which involved automatically awarding the higher classification to all students whose final outcome falls within a certain range under the boundary, should take immediate steps to curtail these practices (it understood that one School was already taking steps to address this issue)

13. CMVM: MSc Transfusion, Transplantation and Tissue Banking Programme Revision (CSPC 17/18 2 I)

Dr Sheila Lodge introduced this paper, which sought the Committee's approval for a new MSc in Transfusion, Transplantation and Tissue Banking which had a structure which varied from the Models for Degree Types. The paper was approved by the Committee, on the understanding that the proposed model involved 60 credits of study broadly equivalent to a research project / dissertation, albeit tailored to the nature of the programme and its professional cohort.

14. Senate Committee Planning (CSPC 17/18 2 J)

This paper invited the Committee to input into the planning round. It was noted that the Service Excellence Project plans needed to be carefully factored into the planning round, as they unfolded at the key stages.

15. Concessions Report 2016/17 (CLOSED – L)

This closed annual report on University level student concessions 2016/17 was received by the Committee for information.

16. Any Other Business

Mr Scott Rosie and Ms Anne-Marie Scott presented this item, and tabled a briefing paper. As the Committee were responsible for the Timetabling Policy, it was felt to be appropriate to seek the Committee's views on an issue that had been raised in the Lecture Recording Programme, which was felt to be a student experience matter rather than an IT matter.

The briefing paper indicated that academic colleagues had raised concerns that the cut-off after 50 minutes of lecture recording could result in a messy end to the recording, as lectures

sometimes required a slight overrun to conclude the discussion. There was concern that vital information might not be captured in the recording. It had been suggested by some academic colleagues that an additional five minutes 'safety net' be routinely added to the end of scheduled recordings, e.g. that recordings were 55 minutes long. This was not to say that there would be a change to the current 50 minute teaching time laid out in the current Timetabling Policy; colleagues would continue to be expected to ensure that they adhered to strict time management principles.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

- There was a distinction between a lecture that may have overrun due to poor time management and one that had suffered the knock-on effect from an earlier instance, and that a class impacted in this way by a knock-on effect would still expect to be able to deliver all planned content and not be unduly penalised from a pre-determined automatic recording cut-off point.

- There was already significant pressure on our teaching estate, and staff and students had expressed frustration with late/overrunning classes, which was felt to be having a negative effect on the student experience.

It was agreed that the official teaching period would remain a standard 50 minute teaching slot, and colleagues would be reminded that it was essential that they kept to time.

It was also agreed to introduce some recording contingency, with an extra five minutes recording to be added to allow for some cushioning, which would mean that recordings would be 55 minutes long. This would be carefully monitored, and if it was not felt to be working well, then the issue could be revisited by the Committee at a later date. For example, if five extra minutes recording was felt to be excessive and beyond what was required, this could be shortened if necessary.

Mrs Lisa Dawson updated the Committee on the assessment and progression tools project, with reference to Student Systems staffing, support and training plans, communication with Schools, and the planned programme of work ahead of the main summer diet and beyond. It was anticipated that a scaled back version of the Assessment and Progression Tools project board would also be re-established, with meeting dates to be scheduled between now and December 2018.

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, 30 November 2017

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Service Excellence Programme - Student Administration & Support Update

Executive Summary
Dated 20th December 2017, this paper provides a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration & Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, as part of a commitment to ensure that the Senate Committees are appraised of progress across each of these projects.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

Action requested
To note (no requested action at this stage).

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Future SA&S project proposals will be routed through Researcher Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, Quality Assurance Committee or Curriculum & Student Progression Committee as necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   N/A at this stage.

2. **Risk assessment**
   SA&S aren't identifying risks for consideration at this stage.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   N/A at this stage.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words
Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support

Originator of the paper
Neil McGillivray
Student Administration & Support Programme Lead
20th December 2017

DEC 2017: UPDATE ON SERVICE EXCELLENCE (STUDENT ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT)

The Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Programme's proposed programme of work (emerging from previous CSA and OBC phases) has been endorsed by the Service Excellence Board and the team are now working on a number of projects.

The Programme's vision encompasses a vision for professional services staff, academic staff, students and the University
- For students – from pre-arrival to graduation: Smooth. Seamless. Easy to navigate. "My way"
- For professional services staff: Fewer, better systems so less manual processing and fewer work arounds. Less duplicated effort. Better data. Clarity over who is responsible for what.
- For academic staff: Better admin support for you / your students. Less admin for you.
- For all staff and students: Clear, easy to understand policies
- For the University: Better Value for Money

The SA&S Board last met on 20th November 2017. That meeting endorsed the work of the following projects, asking them to return to the 15th February 2018 Board with fully developed business case and blueprint documentation:

- Special Circumstances, Extension and Concessions
- Working & Study Away
- Student Immigration Service

The SA&S team has subsequently committed to attending the January CPSC meeting to highlight emerging policy recommendations, although is aware that this meeting is scheduled to take place prior to the final 15th February presentation and discussion of these proposals.

Further blueprint recommendations in the following areas will be submitted to the 10th April SA&S Board:

- Student Finance
- Timetabling

SA&S testing of an Examination Timetabling solution will continue into the New Year, seeking a solution for implementation for all centrally arranged exams before the end of 2017/18.

The recruitment of additional seconded expertise into the SA&S team to support Timetabling and PGR is ongoing, with new colleagues expected to join the team in early February 2018, in support of Phase 3 of the programme:

- Creating systems, tools and processes to support the PGR lifecycle (including recording Annual Reviews and HEAR data)
- A major project to provide a single, golden-copy, data source for all Programme and course information, to clarify associated business processes for creation and update, and to provide tools by which the golden-copy data is used to publish key Programme and course information.
- Delivery of a transparent online matriculation process that guides a student through the steps they must complete (including a fee payment stage) in order to be fully matriculated.
- Create systems and tools to support the business processes involved in running Exam Boards.
- Redesign, simplify and standardise the processes for internal reporting through the creation of a single data warehouse and creating a user-centred interface to support day-to-day reporting requirements in Colleges and Schools.
- Completion of earlier work to support the Graduation process by introducing e-ticketing for Graduation (and eliminating inefficient manual processing).

- Various other investigations are planned, including into Online Course Selection, Course Assessment and Feedback tools, and the possibility of a digital document management system to support exam processes from setting questions to marking scripts.

More detail is available on the SA&S wiki, this will continue to be adapted and maintained throughout the coming months, and into the next phase of the programme as detailed proposals are developed for future projects:

https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=346121562

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25th January 2018

Service Excellence – Working & Study Away Update

Executive Summary
Dated 4th January 2018, this paper provides early detail on a range of proposed Working & Study Away policy adjustments that are currently being explored by the Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Service Excellence Programme. For initial discussion only at this stage, CSPC are being provided with early sight of these emerging proposals in advance of the SA&S Programme Board on 15th February 2018.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

Action requested
For initial discussion (no requested action at this stage).

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Final proposals and recommended policy adjustments for Working & Study Away will be considered at the 15th February 2018 SA&S Programme Board. Consequential actions will be routed through Curriculum & Student Progression Committee's March 2018 meeting for approval of policy elements as necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   To be confirmed after 15th February SA&S Programme Board.

2. **Risk assessment**
3. To be confirmed after 15th February SA&S Programme Board.

4. **Equality and Diversity**
   N/A at this stage.

5. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words
Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support
Working & Study Away / Edinburgh Global

Originator of the paper
Neil McGillivray
Student Administration & Support Programme Lead
4th January 2018

Service Excellence Update

Working & Study Away

This paper provides detail on a range of proposed policy adjustments that are currently being explored by the Service Excellence Student Administration & Support (SA&S) team. This work will inform final blueprint and business case documentation to be considered by the SA&S Programme Board on 15th February 2018, and is being highlighted to Curriculum & Student Progression Committee in advance of that date for initial discussion.

Existing Issues & Challenges

A detailed current state assessment and subsequent detailed process design discussions with staff and students from across the institution have identified a range of existing issues and challenges:

- The university is exposed to significant risk of failing to adequately support students who are working or studying away;
- The university does not always know exactly where its students are when they are not based at the university;
- There is inconsistent recording of students working or studying away from the university (the university does not have a complete student record);
- The existing systems used are ineffective and inefficient;
- There is no single place to record what agreements are in place with other institutions/employers;
- Student data held on the existing Mobility Online system is not fed into the student record on Euclid and has to be manually entered.

In summary, the current operating model, for all its strengths, facilitates unnecessary duplication and variation, and encourages division and separation. The costs of the current operating model are too high; these costs are not merely financial but are also experiential and reputational.

Emerging Policy Recommendations

A wide range of policies and sources of guidance are being reviewed as part of the Working & Study Away project. Whilst these aren't all of direct interest to CSPC, the full list is included below for completeness.

The Working & Study Away information landscape is more complex than most, because Academic Services does not have oversight of all policies in this service area, with Edinburgh Global creating a lot of information and guidance independently. All published policy and guidelines are being reviewed as part of the Working & Study Away project, with the intention of establishing a future single owner and source.

The table below lists a high level summary of this information that currently exists at University level. Schools, Colleges and other Support Groups may hold local information which is yet to be defined, although the expectation is that local variances should be retired and replaced by the new single source of information holding policy and guidelines for this service area.

Purpose of Policy	Proposed Policy Adjustment	Anticipated Benefits
Taught Assessment Regulations (Contact Officer – Academic Services) https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment	This will need to be updated to reflect that progression decisions will now be the responsibility of the School.	There will be simplification and consistency of approaches as staff at all levels will understand their roles and responsibilities.

40.3 College Progression Boards make decisions on the credit obtained by students who have optional periods of study abroad. 55.7 Classification models for credit for study abroad are contained in the College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference.		
College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference (Contact Officer – Academic Services) https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf	This will need to be re-written with a focus on Schools being responsible for student progression, rather than this being College level activity.	There will be simplification and consistency of approaches as staff at all levels will understand their roles and responsibilities.
Special Circumstances Policy (Contact Officer – Academic Services) https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf	This will need to be more explicit about how students working and studying away should apply for Special Circumstances (SC).	Students will have clearer advice and guidance about the process of applying for SC.
Work-based and Placement Learning Policy (Contact Officer – Academic Services) https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/work-based_placement_learning.pdf	This will need to be re-written to reallocate roles and responsibilities.	There will be simplification and consistency of approaches as staff at all levels will understand their roles and responsibilities.
UG DRPS 29, 31, 26 (Contact Officer – Academic Services) http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/17-18/regulations/UGDRPS17-18.pdf **PGT DRPS 29 (Contact Officer – Academic Services)** http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/17-18/regulations/PGDRPS2017-18.pdf	UG 29. This will need to change to reflect that Learning Agreements will be the responsibility of the WSA team. UG 31. This will need to be re-written with a focus on Schools being responsible for student progression, rather than this being College level activity.	There will be simplification and consistency of approaches when this task is managed by a single team.
Go Abroad Policy (Contact Officer – Edinburgh Global/Go Abroad) https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports/fileManager/Go%20Abroad%20Policy.pdf	Should be renamed Emergency Protocol Policy, and roles and responsibilities must be updated.	The Policy will be appropriately named, so it is clear to staff at all levels what the Emergency Protocol Policy is.
Student Exchanges Handbook/Study Abroad Handbook (Contact Officer – Edinburgh Global/Go Abroad) https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/before-you-go/student-exchanges-handbook	This document will need to be updated to reflect new process and roles and responsibilities.	Students will have clearer advice and guidance about working and studying away.
Code of Practice for Students Studying Away https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports ... 20Practice%20-%20Final%20Draft.rtf	This code is not current, and should be removed from all websites.	Students and staff will only access clear, concise and current information about working and studying away.

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Service Excellence - Special Circumstances & Coursework Extensions Update

Executive Summary
Dated 4th January 2018, this paper provides early detail on a range of proposed Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions policy adjustments that are currently being explored by the Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Service Excellence Programme. For initial discussion only at this stage, CSPC are being provided with early sight of these emerging proposals in advance of the SA&S Programme Board on 15th February 2018. At its meeting in March 2018, CSPC will be invited to approve any policy adjustments.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

Action requested
For initial discussion (not approval at this stage).

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Final proposals and recommended policy adjustments for Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions will be considered at the 15th February 2018 SA&S Programme Board. Consequential actions will be routed through Curriculum & Student Progression Committee for approval as necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
   1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
      To be confirmed after 15th February SA&S Programme Board.

   2. **Risk assessment**
      To be confirmed after 15th February SA&S Programme Board.

   3. **Equality and Diversity**
      N/A at this stage.

   4. **Freedom of information**
      Open

Key words
Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support
Special Circumstances / Coursework Extensions

Originator of the paper
Neil McGillivray
Student Administration & Support Programme Lead
4th January 2018

Service Excellence Update

Special Circumstances & Coursework Extensions

This paper provides detail on a range of proposed policy adjustments that are currently being explored by the Service Excellence Student Administration & Support (SA&S) team. This work will inform final blueprint and business case documentation to be considered by the SA&S Programme Board on 15ᵗʰ February 2018, and is being highlighted to Curriculum & Student Progression Committee in advance of that date for initial discussion.

Note that this document does not contain any emerging policy recommendations for the Concessions strand of the work, with these workshops still to be completed at the time of writing.

Existing Issues & Challenges

A detailed current state assessment and subsequent detailed process design discussions with staff and students from across the institution have identified a range of existing issues and challenges:

Inconsistent Student Experience
Student Special Circumstances and Coursework Extension cases are being handled inconsistently because existing policy and the Taught Assessment Regulations are interpreted and implemented differently across Schools and Colleges. This is understood to be exacerbated by the lack of operational implementation planning and direction from the policy owners.

Inconsistencies in Policy Application
Schools are not compliant with existing policy, owing to change fatigue and limited communication and consultation when changes to the policy are made.

Unclear Roles and Responsibilities
Individual student cases are being handled inconsistently and inefficiently because roles and responsibilities are not clear at School / College / University levels. There is also a range of different interpretations relating to local workload and ownership, leading to inconsistent delivery via professional services and/or academic staff in different parts of the institution.

Use of Local Systems
Schools are duplicating effort by creating local systems and records because there is no central workflow system in place to support the Special Circumstances and Coursework Extension business processes. The University is therefore at risk of failing to comply with records management policies and legislation when handling a high volume of personal and confidential information.

No Single Source of Information
The University cannot report consistently on Special Circumstances and Coursework Extension activity at course, programme, School, College or University level. Currently this data is held locally and at a variety of levels and in a variety of mediums across the institution.

Consultation

A full stakeholder engagement schedule is included overleaf. Events are listed in broadly chronological order and took place from March 2017 to January 2018. The total number of staff given against each event represent the total number of individuals who attended this event. So, if there were two process workshops, and someone attended both, they would only be counted once. If they attended a Process workshop and People workshop they would be counted twice.

Event Title	Event Description	Total	Academic	Professional Services	Students/ EUSA Reps	Colleges		
						CAHSS	CMVM	CSE
Student Customer Journey Mapping	Interviewing students one-to-one to evaluate their experience of coursework extensions, special circumstances and concessions.	24	0	0	24	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Visits	Meetings to understand existing processes, including observation of Special Circumstances Committee meetings.	18	1	17	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
College Learning & Teaching Committee Visits	Visits to CL&TC meetings to outline the project by the sponsor and business lead.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support Group Visits	Visits to initiate work with Student Wellbeing Services.	4	0	4	0			
Process Workshops (including preparation)	Workshops to examine proposed processes for coursework extensions and special circumstances.	21	1	18	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
People Workshops	Workshops to examine proposed staffing arrangements for coursework extensions and special circumstances.	17	7	10	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Concessions	Meetings to determine the scope of concessions work to be undertaken by this project.	14	5	9	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Interviews and Focus Groups	A series of one-to-one meetings and small focus groups with students on coursework extensions and special circumstances.	19	0	0	19	Yes	Yes	Yes
Systems Workshops	Workshops to determine how processes should be supported by a system, and how that work should be prioritised.	13	1	12	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conclusion Events	Meetings to outline agreed way ahead and take comments and questions. Followed by three surgeries at Central, KB and Little France campuses.	50	14	35	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
System Design Staff Feedback Sessions	Drop-in sessions across seven locations to allow staff to comment on user screen design mock-ups.	96	32	64	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Questionnaires	Online questionnaires for coursework extensions and special circumstances to evaluate the current level of student satisfaction for comparison after the project is implemented.	121	0	0	121	Yes	Yes	Yes
Request for Data	Academic and Professional Services representatives from all Schools were asked to provide data on special circumstances activity over three academic years.	13	0	13	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blueprint Validation Events	Small meetings to inform the creation of the document outlining how the project intends to implent process, people and systems changes for coursework extensions, special circumstances and extensions, for approval by the SA&S Board in February 2018.	5	3	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
	TOTALS	415	64	182	167	13	13	13

Coursework Extensions

The following changes relate to the Taught Assessment Regulations 2017/18, Regulation 28: Late submission of coursework.

Purpose of Policy	Proposed Policy Adjustment	Anticipated Benefits
To ensure that coursework extension applications can be made self-certified.	To remove the reference to supporting evidence for coursework extensions, the proposed default is that these will be self-certified for up to 7 days with no requirement for supporting evidence. Supporting evidence is no longer required for coursework extension requests. Self-certification will provide sufficient evidence in all circumstances.	Improved student and staff experience through a clearer, more straightforward application procedure.
To ensure that Schools do not diverge from the standard form provided.	To remove the reference to "a local School online form, where available".	Improved student and staff experience, and improved efficiency through the provision of a standard online form.
To ensure that coursework extension decisions are taken by staff with the appropriate knowledge and expertise.	To clarify the roles and responsibilities of academic and professional services staff. The decision will be taken by professional services staff based upon an underlying framework which will be populated by academic staff.	Increased efficiency and reduced duplication of effort through clearer roles. Provision of centrally organised training for a pool of professional services staff making day-to-day decisions, with standardised supporting guidance.
To ensure that all students are clearly informed about the length of extension they can expect if an application is successful.	All requests will be eligible for a standard period of extension – 7 days – with clear course specific guidance (re nature and order of assessment) provided by academic staff at the outset of the course (when setting up the underlying framework).	Increased clarity and efficiency for staff and students, as decision making is simpler and students know what to expect should their extension be granted.
To ensure that all students are clearly informed about the approach the institution wishes to take to coursework extensions across every piece of coursework.	One standard process for all extension requests, and for all types and sizes of coursework.	Increased consistency through the introduction of one standard process across the University.
To ensure that all students are clear about the level of responsiveness they should expect to a coursework extension application, regardless of which School they are studying in.	Maximum turn-around time defined for all coursework extension decisions using a Service Level Agreement type approach between the institution and the student.	Improved student and staff experience through clearer expectations and more effective workflow management.

Special Circumstances

The following changes relate to the Taught Assessment Regulations 2017/18, Regulation 43: Special Circumstances and the supporting Special Circumstances Policy, at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Purpose of Policy	Proposed Policy Adjustment	Anticipated Benefits
Clarity on when a student needs to work with a member of staff, and when they don't, in the completion of the special circumstances process.	No requirement for students to consult with staff in order to be able to complete an application. Students can continue to do this if they choose to.	Increased consistency of consideration of appropriate and relevant evidence.
Clarity on the role of the Personal Tutor in the special circumstances process, and the removal of a dependency on the Personal Tutor to play a part in every application.	A Personal Tutor statement is no longer part of the application process, but the facility will exist for a student to request this as evidence, where appropriate.	Reduced expectation that Personal Tutors should input to every application.
Clarity on when it is appropriate for a student to submit a special circumstances application – in exceptional circumstances – and when it is not – for an ongoing condition which is already being supported.	Section on long term or chronic physical or mental health conditions to be update to reflect the introduction of a clear process and guidance for supporting ongoing and chronic conditions. (additional context below)	Increase in clarity on support for chronic and ongoing conditions for students and staff. Reduction in the number of recurring applications to SCCs.
Clarity on the level at which SCCs should be constituted – College – where membership should be drawn from, and what would constitute a quorum.	Significant reduction in the number of Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs) across the institution. Proposing that these be held at College level with academic membership drawn from Schools.	More consistent consideration of cases due to fewer meetings.
Clarity on the frequency of meetings, setting out final deadlines and how late applications should be dealt with. Direction to standard communications and how these should be used by Colleges and Schools when SCC outcomes are released.	Cases considered regularly, with final deadlines aligned to Board of Examiners (BoE) meetings. How decisions would be communicated will be designed and agreed with students.	Improved student experience due to easy to use, trackable, online process, more regular decisions and use of communications that meet student needs.
Clarity on what evidence can be used and what decision can be made in SCCs and BoEs. Clarity on how to handle SCC outcomes at each stage, ensuring that the appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained.	All decisions throughout the process are binding, as long as they do not disadvantage the student, ensuring confidential discussions cannot be re-opened later in the process.	Reduced duplication of effort in making decisions.

Additional Context re Learning Profiles

Via workshops and meetings with SC Convenors, senior support/professional services staff, PTs and other staff in Schools the project has clear feedback that:

1. The current processes for managing long term or chronic physical or mental health conditions are not working as effectively as they should.

2. There is no consistency across Subject Areas and Schools.

3. It is difficult for SCCs to know with any certainty when the learning adjustment is sufficient adjustment and when additional SC should be considered; this is largely on the student's word which is taken in good faith (but noting point 2).

4. This lack of consistency and complexity of two processes results in students (and staff) are not being fully clear when chronic conditions should go via SC and when a (further) Learning Adjustment should be sought.

5. The process is cumbersome as students have to submit a SC application with medical or other evidence to support the application; they may be doing this in addition to requesting changes to their Learning Profile and submitting related/same information/evidence.

6. The timeframe for getting changes to the Learning Profile may not be as responsive as students need (to avoid SC) which may increase reliance on SC.

7. Students' may not engage with further processes to make changes to learning profile, especially if they have deteriorating mental health; as such they (or their PT/Student Support team) rely on SCC and we support a simplification of the process to support students who are often in a very vulnerable position.

We note that students' with long term conditions that are unpredictable/changeable in nature are the group that raised **most concern**. Whilst these students can apply to update their Learning Profile it is common for the changes in their circumstances and the impact of this is addressed via Special Circumstances.

The feedback from staff, and limited feedback from students interviewed as part of the project, is that they would like a lighter touch way to handle these fluctuations in long term conditions. It is important that the management of support is timely and that it minimises duplication of evidence/information that a student has to submit to the University.

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Coursework extensions and employment commitments

<u>Executive Summary</u>

CSPC recently agreed to add "exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control" to the list of acceptable reasons for students to request extensions to deadlines for assessed coursework (from 2018/19). The Committee requested further guidance for Schools regarding how to determine whether a request based on employment commitments would be acceptable.

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

Application of the University's regulations in a way which is consistent and equitable to students is a priority for the Committee.

<u>Action requested</u>

CSPC is asked to discuss and comment on the draft guidance and the proposed approach to publishing this guidance.

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

Changes to regulations for 2018/19 will be communicated to Schools by Academic Services via email in June 2018. It is proposed that additional guidance will be published on the University's web pages for Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams, with a link provided in the Taught Assessment Regulations.

<u>Resource / Risk / Compliance</u>

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

   There are no significant resource implications involved in the provision of additional guidance on this issue.

2. **Risk assessment**

   The proposals present no significant risks.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   The proposed guidance is consistent with existing regulations. Fair and consistent application of regulations benefits all students, including those in protected characteristics groups.

4. **Freedom of information**

Open

<u>Key words</u>

Coursework extensions, employment

<u>Originator of the paper</u>

Adam Bunni, Academic Services

21st December 2017

Coursework extensions and employment commitments

Background

Taught Assessment Regulation 28 explains the grounds upon which students may request an extension to a deadline for a coursework assessment. As a general principle, the regulation states that students may request extensions based on "unexpected short-term circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student, beyond that student's control, and which could reasonably be expected to have had an adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time". The regulation goes on to provide a list of examples of what might constitute "good reasons" for coursework extensions. At its November meeting, CSPC agreed to add to this list "exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control". However, members of the Committee requested that Academic Services provide additional guidance regarding what would be regarded as "exceptional and significant" changes in employment commitments for the purposes of coursework extensions.

When do employment commitments constitute a "good reason" for an extension?

It is anticipated that this ground for coursework extensions will primarily apply to those students whose working hours in paid employment dramatically increase during the period prior to a coursework deadline to such an extent that this restricts the student's ability to complete their work on time. However, there are three key criteria which must be met in order for such a change in working commitments to qualify as a "good reason" for a coursework extension, according to the regulation:

1. The change must be "unexpected" and "exceptional for the individual student".

Students should be expected to anticipate busy periods in their paid employment, for example sale periods where students are working in a retail environment, or holidays and festivals in catering and hospitality. An example of unexpected changes in employment commitments may include circumstances where staff absences place an individual under greater pressure to work more hours, or lead to an individual "acting up" on a temporary basis.

2. The change must be "beyond the student's control".

In order to qualify as a "good reason" for an extension, it should be reasonable to expect that the student could not refuse to take on the additional workload without jeopardising their relationship with their employer, or potentially damaging their career prospects. As above, this may include providing cover for absent colleagues where no other staff are available, or appropriately qualified to carry out required work. Taught Assessment Regulation 28.8 explicitly states that students cannot apply for extensions based on "financial issues"; a student choosing to take on additional shifts in order to earn more money would not, therefore, qualify as a "good reason" for an extension.

3. The change must "reasonably be expected to have had an adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time".

Most coursework assignments are set a significant period in advance of the final deadline. This provides students with an opportunity to start working on assignments well before the deadline. In most cases, therefore, where a student is affected by a change in employment commitments for only a short period, it should be expected that this would not have a significant adverse impact on their ability to complete the assessment on time. Where the period affected is immediately prior to the deadline, the question of whether or not this

provides a "good reason" for an extension will depend on the nature of the assessment and the length of the period affected.

Publication of additional guidance

It is proposed that the guidance provided above should be published in a condensed form on the University's web pages for Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams, which already include content relating to coursework extensions: https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/academic-procedures/coursework-extensions

A link to this web page would be included in the Taught Assessment Regulations.

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Acceptable grounds for Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions: Sexual harassment or assault

Executive Summary

The University is seeing an increase in the number of students disclosing that they have been the victim of sexual harassment or assault. Experiencing sexual violence can have a profound impact upon a student's mental and physical wellbeing, which can necessarily have a negative impact upon their studies.

The Students' Association has requested that the University take steps to ensure that the processes relating to applying for Special Circumstances and coursework extensions encourage and handle appropriately requests from students whose studies have been negatively affected by the experience of sexual violence. This paper outlines proposals for amendment to the relevant policy and regulations to address these issues.

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

The University strategic plan states that the University will seek to ensure all students achieve their potential by providing a supportive environment.

Action requested

CSPC is asked to approve amendments to relevant policy and regulations proposed in the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Any amendments to policy and regulations will be implemented in the 2018/19 session by Academic Services, and communicated as part of a communications plan relating to the wider changes expected as part of the Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions project of Service Excellence.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

   Adding an entry to the list of acceptable circumstances for requesting consideration of Special Circumstances or coursework extensions may lead to an increase in the volume of requests, which can have workload implications for those handling requests. However, the impact of sexual violence on an individual student's studies is already implicitly regarded as an acceptable reason to make a request for special circumstances or coursework extensions. The Service Excellence SCEC project is due to deliver a more efficient process for handling requests for special circumstances and coursework extensions in time for the 2018/19 academic session.

2. Risk assessment

The proposals present no significant risks.

3. Equality and Diversity

There is evidence to indicate that people from particular protected characteristic groups are more likely to experience sexual violence than others, for example women. Amending our policies and regulations in relation to matters of sexual violence should therefore promote equality of treatment of students.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Special circumstances, coursework extensions, sexual assault, harassment

Originator of the paper

Adam Bunni, Academic Services, and Esther Dominy, Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Welfare

15th January 2018

Acceptable grounds for Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions: Sexual harassment or assault

1. Background

The University is seeing an increase in the number of students disclosing that they have been the victim of sexual harassment or assault. In the 2016/17 session, there were 25 disclosures of this kind reported to the University Secretary. Experiencing sexual violence can have a profound impact upon a student's mental and physical wellbeing, which can necessarily have a negative impact upon their studies. Should a student disclosing sexual violence wish to seek action against the other person(s), either through the criminal process, or disciplinary processes, this can also involve significant commitment both emotionally and in terms of time.

The Students' Association has requested that the University take steps to ensure that the processes relating to applying for Special Circumstances and coursework extensions encourage and handle appropriately requests from students whose studies have been negatively affected by the experience of sexual violence.

2. Current provision in policy and regulations

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Schools are often taking a common sense approach to making academic concessions for students who request consideration of special circumstances or coursework extensions due to the experience of sexual violence, although some have experienced difficulty interpreting evidence requirements in such cases. Moreover, the fact that the relevant policy and regulations make no specific reference to sexual harassment or assault may prevent some students from coming forward to request appropriate consideration of their circumstances. At the moment, the (non-exhaustive) lists of grounds both for special circumstances and coursework extensions include references to other relevant grounds, such as:

- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact;
- Significant short-term physical illness or injury;
- Significant short-term mental ill-health.

However, this may not cater adequately to those students who have experienced harassment which may not be classed as a criminal offence; who have decided not to seek prosecution of a criminal offence; or who have experienced significant emotional impact, but have not sought clinical assistance with this.

In order to ensure that students are aware that they can seek consideration of their circumstances where they have experienced sexual violence, **we are proposing to add the following to the list of grounds both for special circumstances and coursework extensions**:

- "experience of sexual harassment or assault".

CSPC is asked to approve this amendment to the relevant policy and regulation, effective from 2018/19.

3. Evidence requirements

The Special Circumstances Policy sets an expectation that students should provide evidence both of their circumstances, and the impact of those circumstances on their performance in assessment. For students who have experienced sexual violence, it can

often be very difficult or impossible to provide evidence of the circumstances they have experienced. Although the Special Circumstances Policy permits the use of self-certification in some cases, it states that this will carry less weight than other forms of evidence, and is only permissible for circumstances lasting up to seven days. While it is important to the equitable treatment of students that the Special Circumstances process remains evidence-based, it is the impact of circumstances- rather than the circumstances themselves- which should be the principal factor in any decision taken by a Special Circumstances Committee. Special Circumstances Committees are not required to determine whether a sexual offence can be proven to have taken place, only whether the student requesting consideration has been negatively impacted in their assessment.

While some students may be in a position to supply evidence from the Counselling Service, external charities (such as Rape Crisis Scotland), or from Police Scotland if they are seeking prosecution, other students may have been unable or chosen not to engage with these services. Where students experience a negative impact in their studies from circumstances beyond their control, they are encouraged to inform their Personal Tutor or Student Support Team about this. At present, the Special Circumstances Policy currently states under acceptable forms of evidence that the following will carry "greater weight":

- "Written accounts from University staff who have directly witnessed the circumstances, e.g. Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers, Residence Life Wardens"

The Policy further states that the following will carry "less weight":

- "Written account from University staff in whom the student has confided but who have not directly witnessed the circumstances".

Although some Special Circumstances Committees and students may interpret having "witnessed the circumstances" as including having encountered the student in distress, this is not currently sufficiently clear in the existing wording. We are, therefore, **proposing to make the following amendments (<u>bold and underlined below</u>) to the list of acceptable forms of evidence in the Special Circumstances Policy:**

Under "Greater weight":

- "Written accounts from University staff who have directly witnessed the circumstances**<u>, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment</u>**, e.g. Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers, Residence Life Wardens"

Under "Less weight":

- "Written account from University staff ~~in whom the student has confided~~ **<u>whom the student has informed of the circumstances</u>** but who have not directly witnessed the circumstances **<u>or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment</u>**";
- "Written accounts from the student's family or friends who have directly witnessed the circumstances **<u>or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment</u>**"

CSPC is asked to approve these amendments to the Special Circumstances Policy, effective from 2018/19.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group Update

Executive Summary

This paper provides CSPC with a brief summary of the emerging proposals from the Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group, and asks that CSPC confirm that they are content for the Task Group to begin consulting on what is proposed.

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

To provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning, Leadership in Learning,

Action requested

CPSC are invited to consider the initial proposals and confirm that they are content for consultation to begin on the items outlined in the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The Task Group will hold its second meeting on the 29th of January, and will begin consulting with relevant stakeholders immediately following this. A final report of the Task Group, containing recommendations, will be presented to the March meeting of CSPC.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing), Risk assessment and Equality and Diversity**

    This paper contains initial proposals. Implications in terms of Resources, Risk assessments and Equality and Diversity will be considered when the group arrives at firm proposals.

2. **Freedom of information**

    Is the paper open or closed? Open

Key words
Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression, Dissertation, MSc

Originator of the paper

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

January 2018

Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group

1. **Background**

    1.1 At its meeting of the 21st September 2017, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) agreed to create this Task Group to consider key issues surrounding the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) provision of the University. This Task Group was remitted to examine -
    - how the University handles progression to dissertation stages of PGT programmes;
    - whether or not all PGT programmes required dissertation or research project elements;
    - issues around resubmission of PGT dissertations; and,
    - the role of the dissertation or research project supervisor at a PGT level.

    1.2 The Task Group has held one meeting to date. The second meeting of the Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group is scheduled to take place on the 29th of January 2018.

    1.3 Following this second meeting, it is the intention of the Task Group to begin consultation on the following emerging proposals. CSPC are asked to confirm that they are content for the Task Group to consult on the following areas.

2. **Emerging Proposals**

    2.1 Resubmission of Master's Dissertations

    The Task Group had noted that students at a Postgraduate Research level had the opportunity to resubmit theses, whilst Undergraduate Students could be awarded credit on aggregate where they fail dissertations. The Task Group broadly agreed that there did not seem to be a good reason for the University not to move to a model which allowed for resubmission of Postgraduate Taught level work. Currently, only a very small percentage (approximately 5%) of students currently fail the dissertation.

    Following in depth benchmarking against Russell Group comparators, it was determined that the University of Edinburgh was one of only two Russell Group institutions that did not allow resubmission of postgraduate dissertations as a matter of course.

    The Task Group intends to consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the potential to allow resubmission of Master's dissertations. The Task Group has yet to discuss in detail in what circumstances resubmission should be permitted. At present, however, it is suggested that any resubmission would likely only be allowed in instances where the work required revisions, rather than substantial further research. This would mean that minimal further supervision would be needed, and that access to specialist equipment (e.g. within labs) should not be required.

2.2 Progression Hurdles

The Task Group had noted that, year on year, a very small number of students were adversely affected by progression hurdles. For example, in Academic Year 2015/16, 57 students were unable to progress to the dissertation element of their programme following completion of the taught element. There is a substantial amount of administration which surrounds the progression hurdle, which does not appear to add value to the student experience or serve a clear purpose in upholding academic standards. Removing the progression hurdle could allow some students to gain the benefit of achieving (for example) a Diploma award which included some taught elements, and a substantial research component.

Taught Assessment Regulation 56 currently stipulates that, in order to progress to the dissertation stage of a PGT programme, students must pass at least 80-credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits, attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits examined at the point of progression, and satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme that are outlined in the programme handbook. Students can also be awarded Credit on Aggregate in instances where they have achieved pass marks in at least 80 credits, have marks for a full 120 credits, and an overall average of 40% or more over these credits.

The Task Group is proposing consultation on the removal of the progression hurdle that students must pass before continuing to the Master's. This could mean including the current progression criteria as criteria for the award of the Masters, or merely requiring students to pass all elements of the degree with the minimum pass mark of 40%. It should be noted that, were a student to achieve the criteria for the award of a Diploma based on an average of less than 50%, and subsequently perform at a high level in the dissertation, it would be difficult to justify any refusal to award the Master's degree.

2.3 Handbook Content around Supervision

The Task Group is supportive of the production of guidelines regarding what information should be included in programme handbooks regarding dissertation supervision. These guidelines will feature information that must appear in each handbook, but it was agreed that any template should allow details entered by Schools to be programme specific. This will include information on –

- Student responsibility for the academic quality of the dissertation;
- The expected or advised volume of contact between a student and their supervisor;
- The level of feedback students should expect to receive;
- How specialised a supervisor needs to be; and,
- Supervisor availability.

2.4 Postgraduate Taught Merit and Distinction

The Task Group is supportive of proposals from the College of Science and Engineering regarding amendments to Taught Assessment Regulations 59 and 60. These proposals would allow students to qualify for the award of Merit and Distinction in spite of fail marks in up to 40 credits of courses, provided that they satisfy all other

requirements for the award of Master's. The Task Group intends to consult on this issue.

2.5 Pass marks

Related to the issue of the progression hurdle, the Task Group intends to consult on the issue regarding whether or not the dissertation element needs to be passed at 40 or 50, as the University currently defines a mark of 40 as a pass. Dissertation which receive marks between 40 and 49 are regarded as having technically 'passed'. If the criteria relating to the taught component of having to achieve 80 credits at 50%, and average of 50% across 120 credits were removed, would it therefore follow that the University would still have the expectation that the dissertation be passed at 50.

The Task Group had noted in their last meeting that a student could achieve a mark of 40, which would be deemed as a pass mark, for their dissertation but still be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) as opposed to an Master's.

The Task Group will seek to clarify whether a mark of 40 should be regarded as a pass and therefore sufficient for the award of Master's.

2.6 The Dissertation Component

Benchmarking against Russel Group comparator institutions suggested that it was standard practice in the sector for a Postgraduate Master's degree to include a substantial research component such as a dissertation. The Task Group is considering options for introducing an alternative award where students have attained 180 SCQF Credits at level 11 without a dissertation component. Such an award would be titled in a way that identified it as separate from Masters degrees, for example an 'Advanced Diploma'.

Stuart Fitzpatrick

Academic Policy Officer

January 2018

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Executive Summary

To update Senate committees on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee at its meeting on 13 October 2017.

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

Not applicable.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to note the report.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Not applicable.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

4. **Freedom of information**

   This paper is open.

Key words

Knowledge Strategy Committee

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, January 2018

REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

13 October 2017

1   Digital Transformation

The Deputy Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation on the University's digital transformation activities – the application of digital technology in all aspects of the University. Updates on underpinning digital transformation projects were noted and student focused projects and communications to Schools and Colleges discussed.

2   Distance Learning at Scale

The Senior Vice-Principal presented an update on the current status of the Distance Learning at Scale project, with 13 potential pilot courses identified and business cases in development. The following points were discussed:

- Courses will be research-led and distinctive to the University of Edinburgh;
- 'Unbundling' – opportunities for students to progress at varying rates according to their own preference without the constraint of the standard academic year model;
- Providing appropriate student support tailored to large-scale distance learning courses.

3   Bulk Email Investigation

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning presented a report on the investigation into a graduation email error in June 2017. Future actions and lessons learned were noted, including a review of email templates, the timing of potentially sensitive emails and considering which emails require human review before issuing. Members discussed avoiding issuing emails on Fridays and examples at other organisations such as secondary education exam boards.

4   Information Security Policy & Framework

A revised Information Security Policy and a proposed Information Security Framework with supporting standards and procedures were reviewed. Improving communication to staff and students, mandatory awareness training for all staff and replacing an existing code of practice were discussed. The revised Information Security Policy was endorsed, with approval of underlying standards for the Information Security Framework delegated to IT Committee.

5   Digital Research Services

The Director of IT Infrastructure presented the proposed 2017/18 Digital Research Services project programme. The programme's intention to develop and maintain a comprehensive and integrated suite of digital services for University researchers was noted and avoiding duplication of long term research data storage was discussed. The programme of work and expenditure was approved as set out in the paper.

6   Learning Analytics Update

Linkages between the development of a new learning analytics policy with the new General Data Protection Regulation and distance learning at scale programme were considered. It was agreed to delay developing a detailed learning analytics policy until later in 2017-18 and to introduce interim governance arrangements as proposed in the paper with immediate effect. Developing case studies or examples to assist Schools with interpretation of a new policy was requested.

7   Data Stewards

The Committee endorsed the:
- Catalogue of golden copy data sources, including data steward appointments for the core golden copy data sources;
- Formal definition of the data steward role;
- Proposal that Heads of Colleges and Support Groups should be accountable for appointing Data Stewards in their locales, in line with their overall accountability for information security.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

25 January 2018

Consolidation of programme and course approval and management documentation

Executive Summary
At its November 2017 meeting, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee agreed that the University should develop training for Conveners of Boards of Studies. Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development are working with Colleges to develop plans for this.

To support this University-wide training, as well as to assist with other objectives (eg compliance with Competition and Markets Authority requirements) Academic Services have agreed to consolidate the existing documentation on programme and course approval (which consists both of University policy and guidance in each College) into a single University suite of documents.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
It supports the University's Strategic Plan in Leadership in Learning.

Action requested
To note that proposals will be submitted to the Committee later in the session.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Once approved by the Committee, the planned consolidated suite of documents would be communicated to Academic Services as part of the New Policies communication, and via the planned Boards of Studies training sessions.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Modest resource implications for Academic Services.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The plans present no new risks, and will assist the University to manage risks associated with Competition and Markets Authority compliance.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   N/A – not proposing any changes in policy or practice

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words
Programme approval, curriculum development

Originator of the paper
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 17 January 2018

Consolidation of programme and course approval and management documentation

At its November 2017 meeting, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee agreed that the University should develop training for Conveners of Boards of Studies. Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development are working with Colleges to develop plans for this, with a view to running a pilot training session in March 2018.

To support this University-wide training, Academic Services have agreed to consolidate the existing documentation on programme and course approval into a single University suite of documents. A single suite of documentation will not only make the planned University-level training more effective, and make it easier for staff to find relevant information, but will also assist the University to communicate to Schools the requirements for compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority, and will also assist the University to highlight the importance of business planning for new programmes.

There is no plan for the consolidation exercise to be accompanied by a review policy or practice, given that Service Excellence will be looking more fundamentally at this area in the near future (see below). In general, Colleges have similar processes, and therefore the harmonisation of documentation should be relatively straightforward. However, in the small number of areas in which Colleges have distinct practices (e.g. one College's requirement for a formal validation event as part of the College-level approval stage), the presumption is that this would be written into the documentation as applying to that College.

Academic Services will work with contacts from Colleges to prepare proposals, with a view to presenting them to the Committee later in the Semester.

Scope of work

The work will involve consolidating the following:

- Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy
- Board of Studies Terms of Reference
- (Potentially) Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release
- The three Colleges' guidelines regarding the development and approval of new programmes (including guidelines on business planning)
- Relevant forms

The aim is to produce a single resource that provides all the information required by staff involved in developing new courses or programmes or proposing changes (or closure) of existing ones, and those staff with key roles in relation to scrutinising these proposals at School / College and (where relevant) University level.

Academic Services will work with contacts from Colleges to prepare proposals, with a view to presenting them to the Committee later in the Semester.

Link to Service Excellence Programme (SEP)

As part of the Student Administration and Support strand of SEP, over the next 2-3 years (starting in Spring 2018) there will be a major project to provide a single, golden-copy, data source for all Programme and course information, to clarify associated business processes for creation and update, and to provide tools by which the golden-copy data is used to publish key Programme and course information. The consolidation of existing documentation into a single suite of University documentation will provide a useful starting point for this SEP

project. If – as is likely – the SEP project leads to changes in business processes, the consolidation of current documentation would be subsequently amended to reflect this.