

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)**  
**Hybrid meeting held online via Teams and in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**  
**Thursday 26 January 2023 at 2.00pm**

**CONFIRMED MINUTE**

<p><b>Present:</b>  Dr Aidan Brown  Dr Adam Bunni  Philippa Burrell  Professor Jeremy Crang  Professor Jamie Davies  Dr Murray Earle  Professor Patrick Hadoke  (Vice-Convenor)  Clair Halliday  Karen Howie  Professor Antony Maciocia  Sarah McAllister</p> <p>Sam Maccallum  Dr Donna Murray</p> <p>Dr Kathryn Nicol  Dr Paul Norris (Convenor)  Rachael Quirk  Dr Deborah Shaw  Professor Tim Stratford  Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif  Stephen Warrington  Kirsty Woomble</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b>  Hillary Gyebi-Ababio  Professor Tina Harrison  Olivia Hayes (Minutes)  Professor Sabine Rolle  Tom Ward</p>	<p>Elected member of Senate  Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)  Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)  Dean of Students (CAHSS)  Dean of Taught Education (CMVM)  Elected member of Senate  Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research  Experience (CMVM)  The Advice Place, Deputy Manager  Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services  Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)  Head of Student Support Operations, Student Systems and  Administration  Vice President Education, Students' Association  Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic  Development  Head of Academic Policy and Regulation  Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)  Head of Taught Student Administration &amp; Support (CAHSS)  Dean of Students (CMVM)  Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)  Elected member of Senate  Dean of Student Experience (CSE)  Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>Advance HE  Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)  Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services  Dean of Education (CAHSS), Convenor of the CE &amp; SC Task Group  Director of Academic Services</p>
<p><b>1. Welcome to new members</b></p> <p>APRC formally welcomed four new members to the Committee, who joined in November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Aidan Brown (CSE) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate</li> <li>• Dr Murray Earle (CAHSS) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate</li> <li>• Dr Donna Murray joins APRC as the representative for the Institute for Academic Development</li> <li>• Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif (CMVM) joins APRC as an elected member of Senate</li> </ul> <p>APRC extends its thanks to departing member Professor Catherine Bovill, formerly the Institute for Academic Development representative, for her service on the Committee.</p> <p>Tom Ward updated the Committee that he would be departing the University at the end of March. Thanks were extended to Tom for his service and support of the Committee.</p>	

2.	<p><b>Update on Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate and its Standing Committees - Verbal Update</b></p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate and its Standing Committees.          Advance HE have been appointed to carry out the review and Ms Hillary Ababio-Gyebi is attending APRC today as part of the review.          Committee members will have an opportunity to feed into the review via a survey and focus groups. Members were encouraged to engage with opportunities to feed into the review over the coming months.</p>
3.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting - APRC 22/23 5A</b>          For approval</p> <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the September meeting and the minutes of the October, November and December e-business meetings.</p>
4.	<p><b>Matters Arising - Verbal Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support for Study</b>              APRC had requested further work be done on the policy. A meeting with key stakeholders is scheduled in the coming weeks to discuss the policy. The work in this area has developed in an evolving context, for example, alongside the roll out of the Student Support Model. APRC will receive a further update at its meeting in March.</li> <li>• <b>In-person examinations</b>              The approach to in-person examinations was discussed at the Senate Education Committee and Student Lifecycle Group. An email was circulated to Schools with advice on holding in-person examinations.</li> <li>• <b>Curriculum Transformation</b>              There are ongoing discussions between Academic Services and the Curriculum Transformation Project team to establish the actions to be requested of APRC and the timescales for these. The Committee will be kept up to date as these discussions progress.</li> <li>• <b>Online exam arrangements for 2022/23</b>              The Committee reached a position for online exam arrangements in 2022/23, however committed to revisit the position ahead of the 2023/24 academic year. This will be considered under Item 6.</li> <li>• <b>Activating 2020/21 Covid Academic mitigation: ZJE programmes</b>              A query was raised regarding the provision of support to UoE students affected by an increase in Covid cases in China following a change of government policy. The Deputy Secretary, Students and Deputy VP International &amp; Director, Global Office confirmed that they are closely monitoring the situation in China and relevant teams are briefed and prepared to respond to the increase in cases and should there be an impact on student's wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Report of Convener's Action</b>          The Convener updated APRC on the actions which have been taken by Convener's action since the Committee last met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Code of Student Conduct</b>              APRC approved amendments to the Code of Student Conduct at its May 2022 meeting. As part of the process for the creation of Resolutions, Court passed the draft Resolution to Senate and the General Council for observations.</li> </ul>

Minor amendments to the Code were proposed and these were considered by Convener's Action ahead of the Code being formally approved by Court.

The revised Code of Student Conduct took effect from January 2023.

The revised Code will be applied to cases received from January 2023 onwards. A key changes document is being prepared and will be available by the end of January.

- **Student Fitness to Practice and Appeals Committee**

The Deputy Convener of APRC approved minor changes to the membership of the Student Fitness to Practice and Appeals Committee. The changes were to reflect departures from the Committee and these updates are identified with an asterisk under Paper H.

- **Summary of approved concessions**

A total of 38 concessions were approved, 36 related to individual students and 2 related to cohort concessions. The Convener gave a broad overview of approved concessions approved by category:

- Extensions, AIS and period of study: 20
- DPT variation, progression requirements and credits: 16
- External Examiners (Cohort): 2

The Convener confirmed that one cohort concession was circulated to the Committee earlier that week and thanked the Committee for their input. The approach to the handling of cohort concessions would be revisited under Item 5.

## 5. **Update on Industrial Action - APRC 22/23 5B**

For discussion

This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.

This paper updates the Committee on the UCU industrial action, and on action taken to take to minimise the disruption to students' studies while maintaining academic standards. The paper invites the Committee to consider three specific issues.

The Committee had an extensive discussion on the paper and reached a position on the specific issues highlighted for discussion.

The Committee agreed that no general variation to policies and regulations should be considered at this time. In reaching this decision, the following points were raised:

- The Academic Contingency Group, who monitor the impact of disruption to teaching activities, has not recommended that APRC consider a relaxation of regulations at this stage. This position may shift once the scale of the impact of industrial action is known.
- The existing regulations allow Boards of Examiners flexibility to mitigate against any limited and isolated impact on Semester 1 courses.
- A Marking and Assessment Boycott may begin later in the year, however this is not currently active.

The Committee agreed that the position reached in November 2022 on the handling concessions relating industrial action should continue as previously agreed. This decision would be revisited by the Committee at the March 2023 meeting of APRC.

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Convener and Vice-Convener to consider any requirements for temporary concessions regarding policies and regulations around External Examiners and other requests for concessions relating to, or in the context of, industrial action. Any approved concessions would run no longer than the end of session 2022-23.

	<p>The Convener agreed that should there be sufficient time, they will consult Committee members ahead of reaching a decision. The Committee would have a short window of up to 48 hours to feed comments in. The final decision would rest with the Convener or Vice-Convener and in urgent cases they would have the authority to make a decision without Committee consultation.</p> <p>In reaching this decision, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At present, the volume of concessions relating to External Examiners is low.</li> <li>• There may be occasions where a decision is required in a very tight timeframe and there is insufficient time to take account of the views of the Committee.</li> <li>• Concessions may be requested as a result of disruption or unforeseen circumstances which are not related to industrial action.</li> <li>• Schools and Colleges require a clear position and timeline for referring concessions to APRC. This would allow Schools to take appropriate steps at relevant stages when it is clear that consideration of a concession is required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare a paper on Industrial Action for the March 2023 meeting to allow the Committee to revisit its position on agreed elements.</p>
6.	<p><b>Schedule of review for policies, regulations and guidance - APRC 22/23 5C</b> For discussion</p> <p>This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.</p> <p>The paper outlines proposed changes to the schedule for reviewing policies, regulations, and guidance documents which are the responsibility of the Senate Committees. Mr Ward noted that all policies have a schedule for review, usually every 3-4 years, however the timescales for review have shifted as a consequence of the pandemic and staff capacity challenges. There is a large backlog of policies for review and the proposed schedule provides a structured approach to allow a regular review schedule to be re-established.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the paper. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schedule will align with a major review of the Postgraduate Research Strategy. The consideration of PGR policies should be taken account of in reviewing taught elements of policies.</li> <li>• The review dates on policies will be updated once the schedule is agreed.</li> </ul> <p>APRC noted the paper. Members were invited to submit further comments to Mr Ward.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare a final schedule for the review of policies, regulations and guidance to be considered for approval by APRC. The revised paper would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
7.	<p><b>CE &amp; SC Task Group update - APRC 22/23 5D</b> To note and comment</p> <p>This item was introduced by Professor Sabine Rolle, Convener of the CE &amp; SC Task Group. The paper provides APRC with an update on the work of the Coursework Extension and Special Circumstances Task Group which has taken place in the period November - January.</p> <p>Professor Rolle noted that further meetings of the Task Group are scheduled to take place in February and March and a further update will be provided to the March meeting of APRC. Discussions within the Task Group to date have highlighted that this is a challenging and complex area with strong and diverging views on the policies and application of these. In particular, the Group has struggled to reach a common understanding of coursework extensions and how these</p>

should be used. The Group have outlined some emerging recommendations which are still to be considered in the wider context of policy changes. The Group highlight that these recommendations are presented as a package of measures and do not recommend these be adopted in isolation.

The Group highlight to the Committee that there is high expectation across the University that substantial policy changes will resolve the issues experienced, however agreeing a policy that equally represents the interests of all stakeholders may not be possible in the timescale available.

The Committee noted and discussed the paper. The following points were made:

- The Group is tasked with reducing the volume of coursework extensions. Students do not see the use of coursework extensions as problematic and legitimately use this as a mechanism to support and exercise control over their studies and workload.
- There are broader institutional issues which feed into the issues which the Task Group are considering and attempting to resolve via policy. In particular, the volume of assessment, bunching of deadlines and demand on Student Support Services.
- The delay in producing recommendations may impact on the consultation and socialisation of a revised policy across the University. Equally, should there be no change to policy, this should be carefully communicated to Schools with explanation of the challenges in reaching an agreed position to take forward.
- The ESC Review has been running concurrent to the Task Group. The ESC Review is focussed on systems and guidance and is meeting with all Schools and Deaneries across the University. Some elements of policy have been raised in discussions with Schools and there are similar themes emerging from the ESC Review and the Task Group.
- Systems require time to establish if changes are required to support any recommended policy changes. The Group continue to highlight that enhanced reporting is a high priority area for development.

#### **8. Approval for non-standard programme start dates for the Online MBA - APRC 22/23 5E**

For approval

This item was convened by Deputy Convener, Professor Patrick Hadoke, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

This item was introduced by Dr Paul Norris, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The paper is seeking approval for the part time Online Masters in Business Administration to deviate from the standard academic year start dates with one of the two standard entry points to be in March.

The College noted their thanks to the Committee for considering the exceptional business to delay the start date for the Online MBA in December 2022.

The College reiterated their apology for not seeking APRC's approval for non-standard dates in relation to this programme.

The Committee discussed the paper. The following points were made:

- APRC's approval in December 2022 requested that a Business School representative attend APRC's January meeting to explain the request and sequence of decision making. The Committee noted that a School representative was not in attendance. The College confirmed that it is their responsibility to ensure that such requests are put to APRC and therefore they are attending to represent this item.
- The Committee expected to receive a detailed programme structure as requested in December 2022. The College confirmed that this is a three year part-time programme with a contained cohort. The courses to be delivered in Year 2 and 3 of the programme are still in development and therefore a detailed programme structure cannot be provided at this stage.

- A concern regarding the systems implications for the non-standard dates of the programme were raised. There is particular concern regarding the alignment of the cohort with the annual systems rollover in July and the support required for the programme to be split over separate two academic years. A calendar of dates and expected approach is required for Student Systems.
- The Committee raised concern regarding unintended consequences of approving the non-standard dates for this programme. The Committee noted concern that concessions or deviations from regulations may be required at a future date to accommodate unintended consequences of approval being granted without clarity on the points raised.

APRC approved a non-standard start date for March 2023 only.

The Committee note that approval is not required for the September 2023 intake as this is a standard start date.

APRC did not give approval for a permanent non-standard start date and the Business School and College are asked to clarify the Systems implications ahead of the request being reconsidered for permanent approval of the non-standard start dates for the Online MBA.

**Action:** The College are to contact Sarah McAllister to discuss the Systems implications and ensure this is appropriately coordinated to allow a non-standard start. The Committee will reconsider the permanent approval of non-standard start dates for the programme in light of the requested information at a future meeting of APRC.

**Action:** The College are requested to review their processes to ensure appropriate measures are put in place to prevent this from occurring again.

#### 9. **Assessment and Feedback Coordination - APRC 22/23 5F**

For approval

This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.

The paper sets out proposals for coordinating and governing various activities relating to Assessment and Feedback. The paper proposes to establish two new groups, an Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and an Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group.

As the governance arrangements relate to the work of all three Standing Committees, approval for the Group's will be required by all three Committees.

Mr Ward noted that the Senate Education Committee received the paper at its 19 January meeting and recommendations amendments to the remit and membership of both Group's. A revised paper would be presented to Standing Committees in March.

It was noted that the Group's would develop and consult on proposals, with the Group's expected to present proposals to the relevant Committees for approval.

APRC supported the establishment of the proposed Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group subject to the following comments on the remit and membership:

- Clarify the relationship between this Group and the Strategy Group (in particular, whether the first group is subordinate to the second group)
- Clarify the extent to which the Group will be taking on the authority of the Senate Standing Committees
- Increase representation on the group of staff in Schools who are responsible for implementing institutional policies on assessment and feedback (for example, teaching staff and teaching organisation staff)

	<p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare a revised paper taking account of APRC's comments, to be presented for approval at the March meeting.</p>
10.	<p><b>Academic Year Dates 2024/25 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2025/26 and 2026/27 - APRC 22/23 5G</b> For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Ms Olivia Hayes, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>The paper provides APRC with the proposed academic year dates 2024/25 and provisional academic year dates 2025/26 and 2026/27 for approval. Ms Hayes noted that the academic year dates for 2023/24 have previously been approved by the Committee and are available online.</p> <p>Ms Hayes noted that the calendar for 2026/27 causes Induction Week to be scheduled earlier than in previous years. ResLife have been contacted to confirm if there is sufficient time between the end of the Edinburgh Festival and Induction. The provisional dates for 2026/27 may be returned to APRC pending input from ResLife.</p> <p>APRC approved the proposed academic year dates for 2024/25 and provisional academic year dates for 2025/26 and 2026/27 noting that the dates for 2026/27 may be returned to the Committee.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> College representatives on APRC are asked to review and confirm the list of programmes with non-standard academic year dates.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ms Hayes to update APRC on the provisional dates for 2026/27 pending input from ResLife.</p>
11.	<p><b>Membership of Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practice Appeals Committee - APRC 22/23 5H</b> For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services.</p> <p>The paper sets out changes to the membership lists for the Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practice Appeals Committee. There has been a significant increase in the volume of appeals in recent years and the large expansion of membership is to prevent Committees from becoming a bottleneck for consideration of cases.</p> <p>APRC approved the updated membership of the Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practice Appeals Committee with immediate effect.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to update the membership of the Student Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practice Appeals Committee with immediate effect.</p>
12.	<p><b>Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2021/22 - APRC 22/23 5I</b> For approval</p> <p>This item was introduced by Ms Olivia Hayes, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>The paper provides APRC with analysis and potential actions drawn from the responses received to the light-touch internal Senate Standing Committees Effectiveness Review conducted in summer 2022.</p>

	<p>Members noted that internal review requirements should align with the recommendations which emerge from the external review which is currently under way.</p> <p>APRC approved the paper.</p>
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Expansion of Committee membership</b> A query was raised regarding the expansion of Committee membership to include student, BAME and trade union representation as supported at the 12 October meeting of Senate. The Convener confirmed that the Standing Committee Conveners were in discussion and a paper would be presented to Senate on 8 February as requested by Senate.</li></ul> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 24 March at 2:00pm.</p>