**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
to be held online on Thursday 28 May 2020 at 2.00pm**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held by electronic business between 19 March 2020 and 2 April 2020**   Enclosed

2. **Matters Arising**

   a) **Any Other Business (concessions in response to Covid-19) - Convener's Action 2 April 2020 - the award of credit on aggregate for pre-Honours students**

   b) **Electronic business - 24 April 2020 - 1 May 2020 - Extensions and Special Circumstances Service (amended paper attached)**   APRC 19/20 6A

   c) **Electronic business - 23 April 2020 - 29 April 2020 - MBChB**

   d) **Any Other Business (response to Covid-19) – Convener's Action 20 May 2020 - Appointment of additional Deputy Conveners for Boards of Studies**

   For Discussion

4. **Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances Policy**   APRC 19/20 6B

5. **External Examiners: attendance at taught Boards of Examiners**   APRC 19/20 6C

6. **Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21**   APRC 19/20 6D

7. **Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21**   APRC 19/20 6E

8. **Student Appeal Regulations Review**   APRC 19/20 6F

   For information and formal business

9. **Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students**   APRC 19/20 6G

10. **Programme and Course Handbooks Policy**   APRC 19/20 6H

11. **Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2019/20**   APRC 19/20 6I

12. **APRC committee priorities 2020/21**   APRC 19/20 6J

13. **Senate themes for 2020/21 meetings**   APRC 19/20 6K

14. **Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees**   APRC 19/20 6L

15. **Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Update**   APRC 19/20 6M

16. **Any Other Business**

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

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

Present:

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

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Present online on 26 March 2020

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

In attendance:

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Faten Adam	Student Support Operations Manager
Joan Kemp	Academic Administrative Officer (CAHSS)
Dr Sabine Rolle	Dean for Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)

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

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

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

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

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

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

This paper was approved by APRC.

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

This paper was approved by APRC.

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

This paper was approved by APRC.

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

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

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

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

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

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

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

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

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

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

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

This paper was approved by APRC.

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

This paper was received by the Committee for information.

12. Any Other Business

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

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

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

   This was approved.

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

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

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

   Agreement that late penalties could be waived in these circumstances.

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

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

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Extensions and Special Circumstances Service

Description of paper

1. This item was approved by electronic business by the Committee between 24 April 2020 and 1 May 2020. As a result of this consultation, changes were made and the amended paper is presented here for information. The paper requested the approval of the ESC Service processing and making initial decisions of accepted/not accepted of Special Circumstances applications for the academic year 19/20 to assist Schools in dealing with the predicted increase in SC applications due to Covid-19. As a result of this change, the paper also requested allowing Special Circumstances Committees to have access to provisional marks to support BoE recommendations.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For information

Background and context
3. As of academic year 20/21, the ESC service will process all SC applications, making an initial decision of accepted/not accepted. In a draft of the revised SC policy submitted in January, a suggestion of making provisional marks available to Special Circumstances Committees as a result of this change was received favourably by the committee and by Schools (via School consultation).

Due to covid-19 and the expected increase in School workload during the BoE period (e.g. prep for remote boards, BoE covid-19 related guidance etc), the Covid-19 resilience working group has suggested a partial, early launch of the ESC service. The service would process SC applications, based on current SC policy and Covid-19 guidance, and make an initial decision of accepted or not accepted. The decision would be communicated to Schools (including all Schools where the individual students are taking courses) securely (either via aSharepoint site or One Drive spreadsheet with limited access). This would be an opt-in service for Schools for the academic year 19/20.

For Schools who have opted in, as they will not be making the initial decision determining the validity of the SC application, further support can be offered by allowing Special Circumstances Committees to access provisional marks when making BoE recommendations.

Discussion

4. Comments have already been sought on the proposed changes to the initial decision-making of SC applications as well as the proposal to make provisional marks available.

Resource implications

5. The partial launch will be resourced by the ESC Team, additional support from CAHSS College Office. Should the volume of applications prove too high, ESC would request additional resource be reallocated from colleagues within Student Systems and Administration.

Risk management

6. As the ESC online system is not in operation yet, SC applications (which could contain sensitive information) will have to be shared between Schools and the ESC team. SC decisions (formatted to provide useful BoE information) will have to be communicated back. Without an online system, there is a risk to data security. Mitigation will be via a clear communication process and a secure method of sharing information (e.g. Sharepoint site with controlled access or password protected documents containing sensitive information) between Schools and the ESC service.

7. As noted in the section above, there is a risk that the current ESC resourcing with CAHSS support cannot deal with the volume of applications. This will be mitigated by additional resource provided by Student Systems and Administration.

8. As this is a partial, early launch of the ESC service, Schools can opt in for this academic year which can result in some inconsistencies in decision making between Schools who have opted out and the ESC service. Although this cannot be mitigated for in full, the ESC service will have clear operating procedures based on the current SC policy and covid-19 related guidance.

Equality & diversity

9. There will be no negative impact on particular cohorts of students.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

10. Communication will go out to Schools (via College Offices) with information on how to access ESC support, including a visual flowchart.

Author   **Presenter**
Faten Adam   *Faten Adam*

Sarah McAllister   *Sarah McAllister*
20th April 2020

Freedom of Information
Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Service Excellence Programme – Special Circumstances: Request for policy changes for 2020/21

Description of paper
1. The paper requests changes to the Special Circumstances policy in order to support the incoming Extensions and Special Circumstance (ESC) Team. The changes reflect the introduction of an online system through which the applications are made, and the ESC Team reviewing all special circumstance applications to determine the validity of the case and to secure all evidence. The academic impact of supported cases will be determined by the school.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For discussion and approval.

Background and context
3. An earlier draft of the revised SC Policy was presented to APRC in January for comment. It was subsequently circulated to all Schools and Deaneries for consideration and comment.

Discussion
4. Listed below are common themes raised that have been reflected in the revised policy:
   - 3.1: Late applications: schools expressed the need for more clarity as there is current variation in practice. The regulation has been amended to include a hard deadline linked to the University key dates after which late SC applications will not be considered by the ESC Service. Students wishing to notify the University of special circumstances after this deadline can use the academic appeals process.
   - 3.3: Preferred Outcomes: schools did raise concern over the expectations this would raise amongst students. The wording of this has been revised to add clarity on what the preferred outcomes pertain to, and that their acceptance is not guaranteed.
   - 4: Sharing of Information with PTs and Student Support Teams: schools raised concern about students choosing to opt out of sharing their applications with PTs and SSTs and what implication that has on the ability of schools to support students. After discussion with the University Data Protection Officer, Academic Services and a resubmission of the service DPIA and approval by the project board, this option has been removed from the online system and has therefore been removed from the revised SC Policy (Regulation 4).
   - 7.3: there were queries raised on the rationale behind limiting the SC committee membership to six (although the proposed wording had not set a "hard" limit). The regulation has been amended to remove a number limit but to provide guidance on keeping the membership small but robust.

- 7.6: Expedited decisions: although generally supportive, there was concern around increased workload for Conveners of SCCs. The regulation has been reworded to provide clarity on the timeline (10 working days from receipt of the application from the ESC service) for the expedited decision to be made.
- 12.1: Timeline for the input and communication of the final SC outcome to the student via the ESC online system. The initial 2 working day turnaround was deemed too short. This has been replaced by a 5 working day turnaround and linked to the deadlines as set by the University Key Dates rather than individual BoEs to ensure further consistency.
- Throughout the policy, general changes have been made to include the ESC system as the method for students applying for SCs as well as the team making an initial decision of accepted or not accepted.

Resource implications

5. The resource implications lie within the new service which has allocated budget. It is hoped the recommendations and changes to policy will enable a reallocation of time to provide focused support. As discussed previously at APRC, the change in 8.4 of the policy to allow Special Circumstances Committees access to provisional marks may lead to some efficiency gains in the process of deciding outcomes for students within Schools.

Risk management

6. The development of the online system underpinning the service is currently behind schedule. It is expected that an end to end system will be finished by December followed by a schedule of continuous improvement. A service launch (still scheduled for June) without a complete system poses a risk to the student experience as well as increased workload for both School staff and the ESC Team. This risk will be mitigated by a revised schedule of incremental deployment of the system throughout semester 1 of the academic year 20/21. This deployment will ensure that students, ESC team and school staff have appropriate access to the system to coincide with peak periods. The ESC team will work closely with schools to ensure that any temporary workarounds minimise increased workload as well as minimal disruption to students.

7. The system relies on assessment and deadline date being updated in the APT. Failure to have this information will impact on the student's application and potential outcomes.

Equality & diversity

8. We have worked closely with a variety of stakeholders to ensure there will be no negative impact on particular cohorts of students. Once the service is running, we will have access to University and School level data to review service impact and identify student cohorts requiring additional support. We would hope the service will expedite support and outcomes for students.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

9. Any agreed changes will form part of the ESC communication plan to schools (which include targeted communication to staff cohorts explaining the new

service and the changes to them) and students as well as the ESC team ways of working.

10. Any agreed changes will form part of Academic Services New and Updated Policies communication that will be sent to relevant staff in Schools and Colleges in July.

<u>**Author**</u>
Sarah McAllister
Faten Adam
11th May 2020

<u>**Presenter**</u>
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Freedom of Information Open

Special Circumstances Policy

Purpose of Policy

The University should respond in an equitable and consistent way to requests from students for special circumstances to be taken into consideration for course, progression and award decisions made by Boards of Examiners.

Overview

The policy provides a definition of what constitutes special circumstances, sets out the guiding principles for the consideration of special circumstances, the role of the Special Circumstances Committee and the role of a Board of Examiners in dealing with special circumstances. It also provides details of the actions Boards of Examiners may take in response to special circumstances requests.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, and to the taught components undertaken by research postgraduate students.

Contact Officer	Adam Bunni	Head of Academic Policy and Regulations, ~~Governance and Regulatory Framework Team~~	adam.bunni@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 30.05.19	Starts: 16.09.19	Equality impact assessment: 02.06.16	Amendments: 22.03.18 30.05.19	Next Review: 2020/21

Approving authority	~~Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (~~CSPC~~APRC)
Consultation undertaken	~~Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (CSPC)
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Taught Assessment Regulations, Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment Guidance on policy, principle and operation of Boards of Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners Degree Regulations & Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/ Special Circumstances Form: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances_form.docx
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning
Policies superseded by this policy	Special Circumstances Policy approved on 29th August 2013
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.

Special Circumstances Policy

Keywords	Special Circumstances, Special Circumstances Committee, Board of Examiners

Special Circumstances Policy

1   Introduction

1.1   The University is committed to supporting its students. ~~Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs)~~ The University will seek to take account of illness, accident or other circumstances beyond students' control that have adversely affected their performance in assessment. Decisions about how to take account of these circumstances in individual cases are made by Boards of Examiners responsible for students' courses and programmes, following input from the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service and Special Circumstances Committees.

2   Definitions of special circumstances

2.1   Special circumstances are circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student's control and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they had a significant adverse impact on the student's performance in an assessment, or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for a scheduled assessment.

2.2   Examples of circumstances that ~~a SCC is~~ the University is likely to accept include:

- Significant short-term physical illness or injury;
- Significant short-term mental ill-health;
- A long-term or chronic physical health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- A long-term or chronic mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- ~~Bereavement~~ Death or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship;
- A long-term relationship breakdown, such as a marriage;
- Exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities;
- Experience of sexual harassment or assault;
- Experience of other types of harassment;
- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact;
- Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions.

Commented [BA1]: Have not amended broadly as it is OK that these are a bit wordier than what is in the system. Changed "bereavement" to "death".

2.3   Examples of circumstances that ~~a SCC is~~ the University is unlikely to accept include:

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health) which has not worsened recently, or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment;
- A minor short-term illness or injury (e.g. a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on assessment;
- Occasional low mood, stress or anxiety;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;

- Holidays;
- Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health);
- Poor time-management;
- Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission or examination;
- Failure, loss or theft of data, a computer or other equipment;
- Commitments to paid or voluntary employment;

3   Requesting consideration of special circumstances

3.1   It is the responsibility of students to submit their ~~request~~ application for consideration of special circumstances to the ~~Convener of the relevant~~Extensions and Special Circumstances ~~Committee~~ service using the online system as soon as possible and not more than a week after the student's final assessment for the semester. ~~SCCs~~ The ESC service will only consider accepting submissions after this deadline where students provide evidence of exceptional reasons for having been unable to submit on time. No late applications will be considered after the deadline for the publication of ratified marks as set out in the University Key Dates.

> Commented [BA2]: Faten will speak to Stuart F about what potential reasons might be, and a possible deadline for this.

3.2   ~~Students should submit the Special Circumstances form in consultation with their Personal Tutor, Programme Director, or Student Support Team.~~ In their ~~form~~application, ~~they~~students should describe the circumstances, state when the circumstances affected them, and all assessments and courses affected. Students should ensure that they provide sufficient documentary evidence (see Section 6 below). It is advised that students consult their Personal Tutors, Programme Directors or Student Support Team when completing the application.

3.3   In their application, students are able to indicate whether they would wish to undertake a further attempt at assessment, if their application were accepted. The student's preference is not guaranteed to be offered, even where their application is accepted, but Boards of Examiners will consider students' preferences (where provided) where they are deemed relevant to the Board's decision regarding outcome. ~~The form is available at:~~

~~http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances_form.docx~~

> Commented [BA3]: Students can indicate preferences regarding outcomes, which may be considered by Boards of Examiners in some circumstances.

4   Confidentiality

4.1   ~~Schools~~ The University will treat the information provided by students as confidential in line with the University's Data Protection Policy, and will only share it with staff and External Examiners who have a legitimate need to access the information in order to consider the student's case or to provide students with support.

4.2   Students' applications for special circumstances may be shared with staff who are not directly involved in the special circumstances process for the purpose of providing additional support. ~~Students have the right to opt out of their~~

~~application being shared in this way, on the understanding that this may prevent the School from being able to offer relevant guidance and support. Where information provided in an application raises serious concerns about the welfare of a student, this may be shared without the student's consent.~~

5   Long-term or chronic physical or mental health conditions

5.1   The University supports students with long-term or chronic health conditions, including mental ill-health, if a student is deemed to be disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010, by putting in place a 'Learning Profile' to provide reasonable adjustments to study and assessment support arrangements. Students are responsible for contacting the Student Disability Service to discuss the adjustments and support that they need.

5.2   Where a student has received reasonable adjustments in recognition of a long-term or chronic health condition, ~~a SCC~~the ESC service would not support a case for special circumstances in relation to the condition, unless the condition has worsened significantly (whether temporarily or permanently) during the period relating to the special circumstances case. Where a student submits a special circumstances case on the basis that there has been a significant change in their circumstances, they must provide evidence regarding this change in their condition. Where a student has had reasonable opportunity to contact the Student Disability Service (SDS) to discuss the adjustments they need for a long-term or chronic health condition, but has not done so, ~~a SCC~~the ESC service would not support a case for special circumstances in relation to the condition.

5.3   Where students submit repeated requests for special circumstances relating to the same health condition, their School or the ~~School~~ ESC service should advise them to discuss the adjustments and support that they need with the Student Disability Service.

6   Evidence to support special circumstances applications~~cases~~

6.1   In order for ~~a SCC~~the ESC service to ~~support~~ accept a student's special circumstances ~~case~~application, the ~~SCC~~ ESC service must be satisfied that the student has provided sufficient evidence regarding the circumstances and the impact they had on the student's performance in an assessment.

6.2   In all applications, students are expected to provide their own account of the circumstances. Wherever possible, students should also provide corroborating evidence from a third party. T~~T~~he following can be acceptable forms of evidence, although some will carry greater weight than others:

Greater weight:

- An independent assessment of the student's illness by a medical practitioner, obtained at or immediately after the time of the circumstances;

Special Circumstances Policy

- Evidence from another professional service, e.g. Student Counselling, obtained at or immediately after the time of the circumstances;
- Death certificate, order of service, or newspaper death announcement;
- Written accounts from University staff who have directly witnessed the circumstances, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment, e.g. Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers, Residence Life Wardens;
- Written account from an independent third party from outside the University who directly witnessed the circumstances, e.g. notary;
- Documentary evidence from other sources, e.g. police report, legal documents.

Less weight:

- Written account from University staff whom the student has informed of the circumstances but who have not directly witnessed the circumstances, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment;
- Medical certification, or evidence from other professional services, which merely restates the student's own account rather than providing an independent assessment of the student's illness;
- Written account from the student's family or friends who have directly witnessed the circumstances, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment;
- Student's own word, where the student provides good reason for not providing corroborating evidence from a third party (only admissible for circumstances lasting up to seven days).

6.3   The following are unlikely to be acceptable forms of evidence:

- Medical certification, or evidence from other professional services, obtained a significant period of time after the circumstances;
- Written accounts from the student's family or friends, if they have not directly witnessed the submitted circumstances or their impact upon the student.

6.4   Where possible, students should provide corroborating evidence from a third party. In some circumstances, where the student has demonstrated good reason for not providing corroborating evidence from a third party, the student's own account can be sufficient evidence. However, for circumstances lasting more than seven days, students should always provide corroborating evidence.

6.54   In weighing the evidence, the SCC ESC service should consider what evidence it was reasonable for the student to have obtained.

6.65   The strength of evidence required to support a student's special circumstances case is proportionate to the volume of assessment affected. So, if the submitted circumstances affected a single component of assessment with a relatively low weighting for a 20 credit course, the SCC ESC service may be satisfied with relatively modest evidence, whereas if the

submitted circumstances affected all components of assessment for a 40 credit course, the ~~SCC~~ ESC service would require stronger evidence.

6.~~7~~6   In some cases, General Practitioner practices may ask students to obtain written confirmation from the University that it requires medical documentation to support requests for consideration of special circumstances. A model letter that Schools may give to students whose GP practices need this is available at:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances_medical_request.docx

Any fee charged by a GP practice for the provision of medical documentation needs to be paid by the student. If students are in financial hardship and are not able to pay any fees for these GP letters, they should be encouraged to contact Scholarships and Student Funding Services.
www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/financial-assistance

6.~~8~~7   All written documentation must be submitted in English.

7   Membership and operation of decision-making bodies

Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service

7.1   The ESC service will operate according to…the guidance set out in the Special Circumstances Policy as well as the Taught Assessment Regulations. (Add link to the service webpages)

> Commented [BA5]: Assuming you will want to put some terms of service or something up somewhere online for the service? Or do we want to say something here about how they will actually consider cases, i.e. who will be involved?
>
> Commented [MS6R5]: Yes, we prefer to link to our webpages detailing the service, this is creation with our ways of working. We will also refer to Service Level Agreements.

Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs)

7.2   Each School is responsible for having one or more Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs) to consider requests for consideration of special circumstances and report to its Boards of Examiners in relation to students on its courses and taught programmes. Schools may set up one SCC per Board of Examiners or SCCs which cover a number of Boards of Examiners.

7.3   To be quorate, a SCC will consist of an academic Convener along with at least two other academic members of staff. Schools can include additional members, including professional support staff, but should seek to keep the membership as small as is consistent with robust decision-making, in order to avoid providing sensitive information about students to more people than is necessary.

> Commented [BA7]: Does this work?

7.4   If a Board of Examiners is very small and wishes to operate as its own SCC, this requires College approval. The Board sets up a SCC as a sub-committee of the Board. The Convener of the Board of Examiners may also convene the SCC but this is not a requirement.

7.5   SCCs will meet before the relevant Board of Examiners meetings take place. SCCs can also conduct business by correspondence where it is necessary to

consider cases submitted after the scheduled SCC meeting, as long as all decisions are confirmed by a quorate membership (see 8.3).

Special Circumstances Committees: expedited decisions

7.6   Where the ESC service has accepted an application from a student requesting disregarding of late penalties, or an extension to a coursework deadline of more than seven days (where this will not lead to a deadline beyond the end of the next examination diet), SCCs are able to make expedited decisions (i.e. in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the SCC). The Convener of the SCC (or delegated authority), acting with another member of staff with relevant expertise, has delegated authority on behalf of the Convener of the Board of Examiners to decide to disregard late penalties for submission of assessed coursework (see 10.2 c). Where an SCC is able to make an expedited decision on an application, it will do so within 10 working days of receipt of the application from the ESC service.

> **Commented [BA8]:** The Convener of the SCC is empowered to make expedited decisions regarding requests for waiving of late penalties, and extensions of longer than seven days.

> **Commented [BA9]:** Should it be from the student submission or from the date it is passed on? The former is easier to understand for students but is shorter.

Boards of Examiners

7.7   The operation of Boards of Examiners (including quorum) is defined in the Taught Assessment Regulations, and Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.

8~~8~~   ~~Roles of Special Circumstances Committees and Boards of Examiners~~Process for consideration of applications

Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service

8~~8~~.1   In relation to each request for consideration of special circumstances, taking into account all information available to it, the ~~Special Circumstances Committee~~ESC service determines:

- Whether there is sufficient evidence regarding the submitted circumstances and their impact on the student's performance in an assessment;

- Whether the submitted special circumstances were exceptional for the individual student, whether they were beyond the student's control, and whether it is reasonable to conclude that they would have adversely affected the student's performance in an assessment (with reference to Section 2);

- ~~When~~During what period the submitted special circumstances ~~happened~~ were affecting the student's performance.~~.~~:

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8.2   Based on their assessment, the ESC service will determine whether the application is accepted. The ESC service will forward accepted

applications for consideration by the relevant Special Circumstances Committee(s) in the School(s) responsible for the course(s) to which the application relates. The decision by the ESC service to accept an application is binding on a Special Circumstances Committee.

8.3   Where the ESC service does not accept an application, they will inform the student of this, providing an explanation for their decision. Students have the right to appeal a decision by the ESC service not to accept an application under the Student Appeal Regulations.

Special Circumstances Committee

8.4   On receipt of an application from the ESC service, the Special Circumstances Committee will consider all of the information available to it, which may include information regarding the student's performance in the affected assessment(s) (including provisional marks, where available), and their performance in other assessments (as relevant).

Exactly what impact the submitted special circumstances had on the student's performance in an assessment, for example, whether they had an adverse impact on assessment(s) or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for relevant scheduled assessment(s).

8.28.5 The Special Circumstances Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners regarding the appropriate action to take with regard to the affected assessments, courses, or programme, in the light of the reported special circumstances. The SCC can either make a specific recommendation or recommend a range of options to the Board of Examiners. These recommendations are not binding on the Board of Examiners. Having considered these specific issues, the SCC will make a summary decision regarding whether the relevant Board of Examiners should consider taking action regarding the student's course outcome or progression / award decision in the light of the student's special circumstances.

8.38.6 The Special Circumstances Committee will provide a written report of its decisions on these mattersrecommendations to the relevant Board of Examiners through the ESC online system. The decisions made by a Special Circumstances Committee on these matters are **binding** on a Board of Examiners, and on other bodies (for example, Colleges) that may have to decide on appropriate action in relation to the student's course outcome or progression / award decision.

8.4   The Special Circumstances Committee can also make recommendations to the Board of Examiners regarding the appropriate course outcome or progression / award decision to take, in the light of the reported special circumstances. The SCC could either make a specific recommendation or recommend a range of options to the Board of Examiners. These recommendations would not, however, be binding on the Board of Examiners.

Comments (right margin):

Commented [BA10]: Need to add into the Student Appeal Regs.

Commented [BA11]: SCCs may now consider provisional marks, where these are available.

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Special Circumstances Policy

8.58.7 When considering special circumstances cases, SCCs should take into account whether students were granted permission for a coursework extension as a result of the same special circumstances (see Taught Assessment Regulation 28).

7   Membership and Operation of the Special Circumstances Committee

7.1   Each School is responsible for having Special Circumstances Committees (SCCs) to consider requests for consideration of special circumstances and report to its Boards of Examiners in relation to students on its courses and taught programmes. Schools may set up one SCC per Board of Examiners or SCCs which cover a number of Boards of Examiners.

7.2   To be quorate, a SCC will consist of an academic Convener along with at least two other academic members of staff. Schools can include additional members, including professional support staff.

7.3   If a Board is very small and wishes to operate as its own SCC, this requires College approval. The Board sets up a SCC as a sub-committee of the Board. The Convener of the Board of Examiners may also convene the SCC but this is not a requirement.

7.4   SCCs will meet before the relevant Board of Examiners meetings take place. SCCs can also conduct business by correspondence where it is necessary to consider cases submitted after the scheduled SCC meeting, as long as all decisions are confirmed by a quorate membership (see 7.2).

7.5   SCCs will not consider information relating to students' marks when making a decision on Special Circumstances.

8   Roles of Special Circumstances Committees and Boards of Examiners

8.1   In relation to each request for consideration of special circumstances, taking into account all information available to it, the Special Circumstances Committee determines:

- Whether there is sufficient evidence regarding the submitted circumstances and their impact on the student's performance in an assessment;

- Whether the submitted special circumstances were exceptional for the individual student, whether they were beyond the student's control, and whether it is reasonable to conclude that they would have adversely affected the student's performance in an assessment (with reference to Section 2);

- When the submitted special circumstances happened;

- Exactly what impact the submitted special circumstances had on the student's performance in an assessment, for example, whether they had an adverse impact on assessment(s) or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for relevant scheduled assessment(s).

8.2   Having considered these specific issues, the SCC will make a summary decision regarding whether the relevant Board of Examiners should consider taking action regarding the student's course outcome or progression / award decision in the light of the student's special circumstances.

8.3   The Special Circumstances Committee will provide a written report of its decisions on these matters to the relevant Board of Examiners. The decisions made by a Special Circumstances Committee on these matters are **binding** on a Board of Examiners, and on other bodies (for example, Colleges) that may have to decide on appropriate action in relation to the student's course outcome or progression / award decision.

8.4   The Special Circumstances Committee can also make recommendations to the Board of Examiners regarding the appropriate course outcome or progression / award decision to take, in the light of the reported special circumstances. The SCC could either make a specific recommendation or recommend a range of options to the Board of Examiners. These recommendations would not, however, be binding on the Board of Examiners.

8.5   When considering special circumstances cases, SCCs should take into account whether students were granted permission for a coursework extension as a result of the same special circumstances (see Taught Assessment Regulation 28).

9   Special circumstances: general points about Board of Examiners decisions

9.1   In coming to a decision where special circumstances are considered, Boards of Examiners should act in the best academic interest of the student without disadvantage or advantage in relation to their peers.

10   Special circumstances: decisions regarding course outcomes

10.1   Where the SCC has concluded that the Board of Examiners should consider taking action in the light of the student's special circumstances a student's special circumstances application has been accepted, the relevant Board of Examiners decides on one or more of the options set out in the table below, taking into account the specific determinations of the SCC regarding the case, and any recommendations for action that the SCC may have made of the SCC.

Special Circumstances Policy

10.2 For certain categories of decision, the Board will need to seek approval for the action from the relevant College committee. Where this is necessary, this is indicated below.

Action	College approval required?
a) No action – for example, circumstances already addressed through actions already taken	No
b) No action at course level; flag for consideration in relation to progression or award decision	No
c) Disregard penalties for late submission of coursework	No
d) Disregard missing component(s) and derive overall mark/grade from completed work (see 10.3)	No
e) Disregard unreliable component(s) and derive overall mark from completed work if to the student's benefit (see 10.3)	No
f) For pre-Honours courses, if the student has failed the course, allow further re-assessment attempts in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 27	No
g) For pre-Honours courses, record the course as a 'null sit', with the option of allowing the student to be examined at a subsequent diet, and / or to submit missing assessment and / or repeat some or all assessments, on a first sit basis	No
h) For Honours and postgraduate taught level courses, record the course as a 'null sit', with the option of requiring the student to be examined at a subsequent diet, and / or to submit missing assessment and / or repeat some or all assessments, on a first sit basis	No - If in current session (August resits count as the current session) Yes – College approval required if in next session
i) In exceptional cases, permit the student to resubmit a revised dissertation for a postgraduate Masters programme	Yes – College approval required
j) In exceptional cases, permit the student to take specially prepared alternative assessments, including oral assessment	Yes – College approval required
k) If course result is borderline (within 2 percentage points of the pass mark), award pass	No

10.3 Where marks/grades for specific components of assessment are missing or deemed unreliable, a Board of Examiners can only derive an overall mark/grade for the course from the existing assessed work if it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of attainment of the Learning Outcomes in other components of the course.

Special Circumstances Policy

10.4 Boards of Examiners cannot adjust marks / grades as a consequence of special circumstances.

11   Special circumstances: decisions regarding progression and award

11.1 Where a student's special circumstances application has been accepted, the relevant Board of Examiners decides on one or more of the options set out in the table below, taking into account the recommendations of the SCC~~Where the SCC has concluded that the Board of Examiners should consider taking action in the light of the student's special circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners (including Progression Boards) decides on one of the options set out in the table below, taking into account the specific determinations of the SCC regarding the case, and any recommendations for action that the SCC may have made~~.

11.2 For certain categories of decision, the Board will need to seek approval for the action from the relevant College committee. For very exceptional actions, the relevant College committee would need to seek approval for the action from the Senate ~~Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (~~CSPC~~APRC).

Action	College or CSPC approval required?
a) No further action – for example, adequate action already taken in relation to the outcome of individual course(s);	No
b) For Honours level year of programme, if the student has satisfied requirements in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 52, award credit on aggregate for relevant courses of that year of the degree programme	No
c) For postgraduate taught programmes, if the student has satisfied requirements in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 56, award credit on aggregate for relevant courses	No
d) Where a mark for a course is missing or deemed unreliable, exclude the affected course(s) from the classification calculation	No
e) Take account of special circumstances for progression, degree classification, award of merit/distinction, and/or award	No
f) Exceptionally, to allow a student to graduate without the required number and / or level of credits for the degree	Yes – College and CSPC

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

	approval required

11.3 For decisions regarding *aegrotat* degrees and posthumous degrees, see the relevant Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations.

12 **Notifying students of the outcomes of requests for consideration of special circumstances**

12.1 The ESC service will notify students of the decision regarding whether or not their special circumstances application has been accepted using the online system within five working days. ~~Within one week of the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners decision, the~~ The School will notify students of ~~the decision regarding~~any action taken by the Board of Examiners in relation to their special circumstances ~~request~~application using the online system no later than five working days after the publication of ratified marks ~~by the relevant Board of Examiners~~as noted in the University Key Dates.~~-~~ The School will also inform the student's Personal Tutor of the decision.

13 **Reporting and maintaining records on requests for consideration of Special Circumstances**

13.1 ~~The School will minute SCC meetings (including meetings conducted by correspondence), recording all decisions in the minutes.~~ Where the ~~SCC~~ ESC service decides not to support the request for consideration of special circumstances, the ~~School~~ service will ~~minute~~ record the reason for this decision in the relevant online system.

13.2 The School will minute SCC meetings (including meetings conducted by correspondence), recording all decisions and recommendations in the relevant online system. The SCC will report its decisions and recommendations to the Board of Examiners in as concise a form as is consistent with clarity and the student's interest, where possible maintaining the anonymity of the student.

13.3 The ESC service and the School will maintain records in line with Data Protection guidelines.

14 **Sources of further guidance**

14.1 Further guidance for students regarding the special circumstances process is available at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances

14.2 Edinburgh University Students' Association provides further guidance to students regarding special circumstances, and the Students' Association Advice Place can provide independent advice to students regarding the preparation of their requests for consideration of special circumstances.

Special Circumstances Policy

http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/special_circumstances/

14.3   In order to support consistency of handling of student requests for consideration of special circumstances, Colleges and Schools must not produce their own supplementary guidance.

~~30 May~~15 November 2019

ESC Escalated Case Response

Case received by the service
ESC staff review case – decision is made on accepted or not accepted
An internal validation process within the ESC team will take place with a senior team member
ESC staff notify School nominated contact. Notification will be by phone (always followed up by a written note for audit purposes); however, where contact is not possible with designated contacts an email will be sent.
School to follow appropriate process to support student.

Notification received from school
Schools notify ESC service of an escalated case where there is an imminent threat to life and/or where a student is unable to complete an Special Circumstances Application
ESC staff complete and application with input from the school and student (as far as possible)
An internal validation process within the ESC team will take place with a senior team member.
The School to follow appropriate process to support student.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

External Examiners: attendance at taught Boards of Examiners

Description of paper
1. The paper asks the Committee to consider a proposal to relax the existing requirements regarding physical attendance by External Examiners at meetings of Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes.

Action requested / recommendation
2. APRC is asked to consider the proposed amendment to regulation/policy for approval.

Background and context
3. At its previous meeting, APRC considered a paper (APRC 19/20 5 F) regarding requirements for physical attendance by External Examiners at Boards of Examiners once a year.

4. Under the terms of the Taught Assessment Regulations (TAR) and External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy, at least one External Examiner is required to participate in all meetings of Boards of Examiners. "Participation" is defined in the regulations (TAR 39.1) as follows:

   " "Participation" by an External Examiner does not require physical presence at the meeting of the Board of Examiners, but involves the External Examiner contributing to the meeting, ideally by video, telephone or web-camera and otherwise by email. The External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board's deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect their participation."

5. In line with the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy (38), each External Examiner is required physically to attend at least one meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners each academic year. Where they are unable to do so, this is regarded as exceptional under the regulations, and requires approval from the relevant College (TAR 39.5).

6. The paper asked APRC to consider relaxing this requirement, with particular reference to the following points:

   • A large proportion of decisions regarding course and programme outcomes (especially the former) are made at Board of Examiners meetings at which External Examiners are participating remotely;

- The environmental impact and cost of requiring External Examiners to travel to the University where this may not otherwise be required in order to run an effective Board of Examiners;
- Relaxing the requirement would not preclude Schools from making arrangements with External Examiners to attend the University in person, where this was felt to be of benefit in fulfilling their responsibilities.

7. The Committee was supportive in principle of removing the requirement for External Examiners to attend a meeting in person, and to leave it to Schools to discuss with Externals on appointment whether it may be necessary (or beneficial) for them to attend in person at any point. However, members raised a query about whether physical attendance by External Examiners at at least one meeting was required for Human Resources (HR) purposes (verification of passport details).

Discussion

8. University HR Services have confirmed that, for External Examiners acting on taught programmes (but not those involved in examining postgraduate research degrees), we are required to carry out Right to Work checks by the UK Home Office. These checks involve receiving electronic copies of identification documents on appointment, and the scrutiny of the original documents when the External Examiner attends the University. There is no requirement that these checks should be carried out annually, and there may be circumstances where the University is prepared to accept the risk of non-compliance involved in an External Examiner not having physically attended the University at any stage.

9. Based on the above, we are proposing an amendment to the requirements to state that **External Examiners are required to attend the University physically on at least one occasion in the first year of their term, but that any further physical attendance can be as agreed with the relevant School.**

10. These proposals do not affect the existing requirement for participation by at least one External Examiner in each meeting of a Board of Examiners.

11. **APRC is requested to consider whether to approve the proposal**. Appendix 1 includes proposed wording to reflect the proposal. It is proposed that the existing wording would be removed from the Taught Assessment Regulations, and updated wording provided in External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.

Resource implications

12. Boards of Examiners are already making frequent use of remote participation by External Examiners, using existing video- and teleconferencing facilities. Relaxing or removing the requirement for External Examiners physically to attend meetings in Edinburgh may lead to significant savings in relation to travel expenses currently paid to External Examiners. As mentioned above, there are also significant potential benefits in terms of the University's climate impact by reducing the need for External Examiners to make use of short-haul air travel in particular.

Risk management

13. As mentioned above, a significant proportion of Boards of Examiners decisions are already made without the physical presence of External Examiners. Reducing or removing the requirement for physical attendance should therefore pose no risk to the robustness of decisions made by Boards. Any change in the requirements would also not preclude External Examiners from attending meetings, and coming to meet students, or see the learning environment, where this was regarded as beneficial to the fulfilment of their duties.

14. Since Right to Work checks do not need to be carried out annually, there is no risk to our compliance with Home Office requirements should we remove the expectation that External Examiners physically attend the University at least once a year, provided that initial verification of their documents is carried out in the first year of their term.

Equality & diversity

15. Allowing greater use of remote attendance by External Examiners could promote diversity in the pool of External Examiners used by the University, by removing barriers to access from some individuals for whom travel may be more challenging, e.g. due to family commitments, disability, or other reasons.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

16. Should APRC agree to make changes to the requirements relating to attendance of External Examiners at Boards of Examiners, Academic Services will amend the Taught Assessment Regulations and External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy in line with the wording proposed in Appendix 1. Any changes will be communicated in the annual New and Updated Policies and Regulations communication (and associated web resource) to staff in Schools and Colleges.

Author
Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services

Presenter
Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Services

8 May 2020

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1: Proposed wording for affected regulations and policy

A. Taught Assessment Regulations

Existing wording for deletion

39.5 If an individual External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, their non-attendance must be approved by the College.

B. External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

Existing wording

38. External Examiners must participate in all Board of Examiners meetings relevant to their appointment. External Examiners are expected to attend in person at least one Board of Examiners meeting each academic year.

Application

38.1 If an External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, their non-attendance must be reported to the College. The Taught Assessment Regulations define "attendance" and "participation".

Proposed wording

38. External Examiners must participate in all Board of Examiners meetings relevant to their appointment. External Examiners are required to attend in person at least one Board of Examiners meeting in the first year of their term.

Application 38.1

If an External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in the first year of their term, their non-attendance must be reported to the College. The Taught Assessment Regulations define "attendance" and "participation".

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21

Description of paper

1. Draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21. The key changes to the regulations are included in the paper at the beginning.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval.

Background and context

3. Academic Services conduct an annual review of the assessment regulations to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Colleges are asked to provide comments regarding any regulations which require necessary amendment or clarification. Academic Services then draft amendments, with further consultation carried out where appropriate.

Discussion

4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Taught Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for academic year 2020/21. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments.

Resource implications

5. There are no potential resource implications indicated by the proposed amendments.

Risk management

6. The proposed amendments do not introduce any new risks

Equality & diversity

7. Any equality and diversity implications of the proposed changes are discussed in the Key Changes document

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

8. Academic Services will communicate approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies. Academic Services will also cover any changes to regulations in Boards of Examiners briefings and other relevant briefing events for staff in Schools and Colleges.

Author

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer and
Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance
and Regulatory Framework Team,
Academic Services.

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information

The paper is open.

Key Changes to Taught Assessment Regulations 2020/21

Regulation	What has changed
16 Feedback deadlines	**Amended** to take account of courses on some PGT programmes which do not commence at the beginning of a semester. Previously this regulation stated 'At the start of the semester in which the course is taught, Schools will publish their timetable for returning feedback and marks for in-course work. This has been amended to 'At the start of **each course**, Schools will publish their timetable for returning feedback…..'
25.2 Examination timetable	**Amended** to replace reference to 'extenuating circumstances' with 'religious reasons or participation in elite-level sport'. The removal of the wording 'extenuating circumstances' is to prevent confusion with special circumstances, and also to be clarify what is covered in this regulation. The special circumstances process and Schedules of Adjustments for disability deal with circumstances beyond students' control affecting their attendance at examinations. Regulation 25 only has relevance to religious observance and participation in elite sport, as these do not qualify as special circumstances. The change in wording does not represent a change in practice.
26 Conduct of examinations	**Amended 26.4** to add in reference to online examinations and to clarify the situation regarding extensions for take-home examinations. The revised regulation is 'Take-home examinations **and online examinations** are subject to the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations which are related to examinations but are not subject to the Examination Hall Regulations. Take-home examinations are not assessed coursework**, and are therefore not subject to extensions, although additional time may be offered to individual students in line with Schedules of Adjustments'.**
28 Late submission of coursework	**Amended** to reflect the role of the incoming Extensions and Special Circumstances Team, who will now make decisions regarding whether to permit extensions for individual students.

Amended 28.8 Added that "failure, loss of theft or data, a computer or other equipment" may be accepted as a reason for late submission of coursework in exceptional circumstances for courses taken online. This is relevant to online programmes, but may also have relevance to courses offered under "blended" learning methods. This should be of particular to benefit to students studying in locations with unreliable or intermittent access to internet, power, or IT equipment. |
| **35 Common Marking Schemes** | **New 35.3** Added reference to Pass/Fail courses, which are used in some Schools primarily on postgraduate taught programmes. The new regulation permits their use where approved by Boards |

of Studies on pre-Honours and postgraduate taught courses, but requires a specific exemption to be sought from APRC if Pass/Fail courses are to be used at undergraduate Honours level.

39 Board of Examiners: quorum	**Deleted 39.5** External Examiners are no longer required physically to attend one Board of Examiners meeting a year. At least one External Examiner must participate in every meeting of the Board of Examiners. Each External Examiner must physically attend at least one meeting in the first year of their term, as is now articulated in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy (38).
44 Borderlines	**New 44.3(c)** Examples of borderlines for progression decisions now includes 'where a student being considered for progression on a postgraduate taught programme has achieved an average of 50% or more across 120 credits of taught courses, and a mark of 50% or more in 60 or 70 credits, with a further 10 or 20-credit course carrying a mark of 48 or 49%'.
48 Degree examination scripts	**Amended** to clarify that degree examination scripts, may be returned to students on SCQF Level 7 and 8 courses (usually Year 1 and 2 pre-Honours courses) '**after the Board of Examiners has published ratified course results'.**
49 Retention and destruction of material	**Amended 49.4** to clarify position regarding requests to make available information held by the University including copies of assessments (consideration on a case by case basis of whether an FOI exemption applies). Further guidance on this is available from Records Management. **New 49.5** 'Where students have consented, assessment material can be retained for longer [than the end of the retention period or the period in which the School has agreed it will retain the information for] and be used as exemplars for future students. The material can be kept for as long as the course exists or until the student withdraws consent, whichever happens earlier. All student names must be removed before use'. This clarification has been provided by Records Management.
55 Undergraduate degree classification	**Amended** following agreement at Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (Jan 2020). For degrees with two honours years the degree classification is based on a **credit-weighted average of** performance across both honours years (with some exceptions to this noted in the regulations). Classification based on an average of separate credit-weighted averages for each Honours year is only used on programmes which use differential weightings for each Honours year (e.g. 40:60).
58 Resubmission of postgraduate	**New 58.5** 'Students who achieve a mark of 45 to 49% for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt as a result of

dissertations or research projects	a marking penalty, either for late submission or for academic misconduct, are entitled to one resubmission, in line with this regulation'.

Amended 58.6 Students must now include with their resubmitted dissertation a statement outlining the changes made to the previous submission. This places minimal additional workload on students, but should make the process of marking resubmitted dissertations more efficient for staff.

Amended 58.7 Clarification added that students may be permitted a further resubmission where special circumstances affect the original resubmission attempt, if the relevant Board of Examiners considers this appropriate. |
| **Throughout** | **Amended** References to the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee have been amended to refer to the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee. |

Taught Assessment Regulations
Academic Year 202019/210

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Purpose of Policy

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, expressing in practical form the academic goals and policies of the University.

Overview

These regulations:
(i) replace the previous undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment regulations;
(ii) set out the rules which must be followed in taught student assessment; and
(iii) provide links to other sources or guidance and related regulations.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide. They apply to assessment of **all** taught full-time and part-time students, studying degrees, diplomas and certificates at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 7 – 12 which are awarded for credit at the University of Edinburgh. They apply to undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates studying taught components. The regulations apply to undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment for courses assessed in the current academic year.

Contact Officer	Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer	Email ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 2830.05.20 2019	Starts: 2116.09.20 19	Equality impact assessment: June 202019	Amendments: 20.09.19	Next Review: 202019/210

Approving authority	Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
Consultation undertaken	Assessment Regulations Working Group, Colleges, Edinburgh University Students' Association, APRC, Student Disability Service, HR, College Academic Misconduct Officers, Records Management, Distance Learning and Student Systems.
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Policies for Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards, Examination Hall Regulations, External Examiner for Taught Programmes Policy , Special Circumstances Policy DRPS Glossary of Terms Student Systems guidance for staff: www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/
UK Quality Code	Consistent with guiding principles outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education November 2018 (assessment). Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning
Policies superseded by this policy	Previous versions of the taught assessment regulations
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.
Keywords	Assessment regulations, examination, examiners, Board of Examiners, common marking scheme, Convener of the Board, progression,

Taught Assessment Regulations
Academic Year 2019/20

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Additional guidance

This document should be read in conjunction with University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study. These are available via: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

The regulations apply to all forms of summative assessment, including examination, take home examination, coursework, electronic and online assessment, oral assessment and peer and self-assessment.

The regulations must be applied, unless a concession has been awarded by the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The boxed "Application of the regulation" below must also be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. These concessions and exemptions are recorded by APRC and Colleges as appropriate.

The regulations operate in accordance with legislation and University policies on Equality and Diversity: www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies

Members of staff who need additional guidance may consult their Head of College or their nominee, their College Office, Academic Services, or Student Administration. Student Administration oversees the procedure relating to the provision of question papers, registration for degree examinations, the receipt and notification of results, examination timetabling and the provision of examination accommodation.

Where reference is made to 'the relevant Dean' this should be taken as being the Dean with responsibility for undergraduate or postgraduate matters, depending on the circumstances. Where reference is made to 'the Head of College' or 'Head of School' this may also in some cases be a designated representative of that individual.

For Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) students on programmes that use the assessment grade scheme, the term "mark" in the regulations also includes "grade".

Definitions of key terms can be found in the glossary of terms:
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2019-20.pdfwww.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf

Contents

Taught Assessment Regulations
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Section A.   Roles and Responsibilities

Regulation 1   Board of Examiners: responsibility for courses and programmes

Every course and degree programme is the responsibility of a Board of Examiners.

Application of the regulation
1.1   Schools assign each course and degree programme to a Board of Examiners. This is done via a Board of Studies or equivalent committee.
1.2   Guidance on Boards of Examiners is available: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners
1.3   In the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of Science and Engineering, Schools are responsible for the award of their General/Ordinary Degrees.

Regulation 2   Examiners: appointment

Examiners are appointed to the Board of Examiners by the relevant College. There are internal examiners, who are staff of the University nominated by the relevant Head of School, and External Examiners.

Application of the regulation
2.1   Policy, principle and operational guidance is available for Boards of Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners
2.2   The list of examiners making up each Board is certified by the Head of the College, or their nominee, and is definitive unless an appeal to the relevant College committee is made by an interested party challenging the composition of the Board.
2.3   Heads of Schools inform the College Office of the names of those internal and External Examiners who it is proposed will constitute the Board. For the December diet of examinations this is by 1 November and for later diets it is by 15 January. Names are made available by the College Office on request. Where there is more than one diet of examination in an academic year the Board need not comprise the same examiners for each diet. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the Head of College or their nominee in good time before the relevant exam diet. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant College Office and are available for inspection by members of staff.

2.4   Internal examiners are teaching and/or honorary staff of the University who teach SCQF level 7 to 12 courses which are awarded for credit and are listed in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study www.drps.ed.ac.uk/index.php

2.5   Honorary staff in this context include:
        Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House School of Education;
        Academic staff from research pooling partners who are appointed as an internal examiner by APRC on the basis of a recommendation from the relevant College; and NHS staff.

2.6   External examiners are appointed by Colleges. Their roles, powers and responsibilities are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

Regulation 3   Markers: appointment

The Head of School has responsibility for appointing markers who contribute to the marking process. Markers are not members of the Board of Examiners.

Application of the regulation

3.1   Markers can be people who are not covered in taught assessment regulation 2. They can also be members of staff who have a very limited input to the teaching of a course or programme who are not members of the Board of Examiners. Examples of markers are graduate tutors marking tutorial, laboratory or examination work, or members of professions or guest speakers who may contribute to student assessment.

3.2   Information regarding the role of Conveners of Boards of Examiners is available in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

Regulation 4   Convener of the Board of Examiners: appointment

The Head of School* that owns the programme or course has responsibility for nominating the Convener of the Board of Examiners, the Convener of the Progression Board and the Convener of the Special Circumstances Committee.

Application of the regulation

4.1 The Head of School* informs the College Office about the nomination for the Convener by 1 November for December diets and 15 January for later diets. The College appoints the Convener.

4.2 *In the following College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) programmes:
MBChB - the Director of UG Learning and Teaching nominates the Convener.~~;~~
~~Oral Health Sciences - the Director of the Postgraduate Dental Institute nominates the Convener.~~

> Commented [BA1]: No longer applies.

4.3 For combined (formerly joint) degrees the "owning" Head of School liaises with other relevant Heads of School. In the case of any disagreement on the appointment of a Convener of a combined Board of Examiners, the Convener is nominated by the relevant Heads of College or their nominee.

4.4 Programme Directors and Course Organisers are not the Convener of the Board of Examiners for their programmes or courses. This is to ensure appropriate separation of roles. If the Convener is also a Course Organiser, formal chairing of the Board of Examiners is delegated to another member of the Board for discussion of that course.

4.5 Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy and Special Circumstances Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Regulation 5   Number of External Examiners

At least one External Examiner is appointed for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses and programmes.

Application of the regulation

5.1 The number of External Examiners is determined by the volume and diversity of the academic work contributing to the course or programme or the award of the degree. More than one External Examiner may be needed where there are a large number of students, the course or programme covers a wide range of studies and/or a large volume of academic work contributing to the course or programme.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

5.2 It is the responsibility of the Head of the College or relevant College Committee to ensure that all elements which contribute to the award of a degree from the University are represented by the appropriate number of External Examiners.

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Regulation 6   External Examiners: responsibilities

External Examiners must be competent and have the requisite experience to examine the course or programme at the level at which it is taught. They must meet the requirements, roles and responsibilities that are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

Application of the regulation

6.1   The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines the purposes and functions of External Examiners; their selection, qualification, appointment and period of service; their participation in assessment and examination procedures; and their discussion of course structure, assessment process and degree schemes.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

6.2   External Examiners need to be given sufficient information and samples of different forms of assessments as evidence on which to base their advice.

6.3   The Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes sets out the responsibilities of Conveners of Boards of Examiners in ensuring External Examiners' contributions to the assessment process. For example, as part of the formal proceedings of the Board, External Examiners are invited to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the courses they examine.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

Regulation 7   Examiners and markers: responsibilities

Examiners and markers need to meet the responsibilities set out in the assessment and degree regulations and comply with quality and standards requirements.
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Application of the regulation

7.1   The Convener of the Board of Examiners will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners and markers (see taught assessment regulation 6). In particular, examiners and markers need to meet deadlines, attend relevant meetings and participate in standard-setting discussions when required.

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Regulation 8   Convener of the Board of Examiners: responsibilities

The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for the assessment process for courses and programmes covered by the Board and for ensuring that the Board operates within university regulations.

Application of the regulation

8.1   The responsibilities of the Convener of the Board of Examiners are outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

These include:
(a)   approving the content of examination papers, taking account of the comments of External Examiners;
(b)   the security of and arrangements for setting papers and assessments, including the robustness of and resources for electronic assessment; examining and marking assessed work; and processing and storing marks and grades;
(c)   the quality and standards of marking;
(d)   ensuring all examiners and markers are aware of their responsibilities;
(e)   effective operation of the meeting of the Board and the Special Circumstances Committee;
(f)   participation of the External Examiners;
(g)   accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Board; and
(h)   meeting relevant deadlines.

8.2   Conveners must act in accordance with these Taught Assessment Regulations; the Degree Regulations and Programme of Study; and the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

8.3   In practice, Conveners may delegate operation of some responsibilities to Course Organisers, Programme Directors and School Teaching Organisations. They are supported by the Regulations Expert. See taught assessment regulation 9.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners

8.4   Definitions of some of the main terms used in assessment are given in the Glossary of Terms   www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2019-20.pdf

Regulation 9   Regulations Experts on Board of Examiners: responsibilities

Schools appoint one or more Regulations Expert whose remit is to be an immediate source of knowledge and advice about the relevant university regulations and guidance and their academic application.

Application of the regulation

9.1   The responsibilities of the Regulations Expert are outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

9.2   A Regulations Expert either attends or is available to all meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the relevant regulations and guidance are available for reference at all meetings.

9.3   The Regulations Expert does not need to be a member of the Board of Examiners. Schools may appoint a Regulations Expert to operate across the School or across a number of Boards of Examiners.

Regulation 10   Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

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

Application of the regulation

10.1   If in doubt as to whether there is a potential conflict of interest, the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the Head of School will be consulted. The Head of School may seek advice from the Head of College.

10.2   The External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy is relevant: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

10.3   The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is also relevant: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/conflict_of_interest_0.pdf www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict_of_Interest.pdf

Field Code Changed

Section B.   Conduct of Assessment

Regulation 11   Principles of Assessment

The University, which engages in a wide diversity of assessment procedures, has established the following general principles of assessment:

  (a) beneficial – actively fostering learning
  (b) fair, reliable and valid
  (c) diverse, varied and representative
  (d) transparent
  (e) effective; and
  (f) secure

Application of the regulation

11.1   Assessment is part of learning and is an integral part of course planning. Assessment planning aligns assessment tasks with the relevant learning outcomes. Assessment should be beneficial in its effect, particularly in motivating students. The purpose of any assessment, especially formative assessment, should be to foster learning. It should assist the processes of teaching and learning, foster the relationship and trust between teachers and learners, and guide learning. It should aim to strengthen morale, encourage initiative and innovation and increase commitment of staff and students.

11.2   The assessment process should operate fairly for all concerned, and be seen to be fair. No individual or group should enjoy privileged status or suffer undue disadvantage in terms of the academic judgements that are made about their performance.

11.3   Moderation assures that an assessment outcome is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed.

11.4.   In order to be valid the assessment objectives must match the objectives of the syllabus.

11.5.   In order to record as full a profile of student strengths and weaknesses as possible, achievement should be measured by a varied and diverse range of methods.

11.6   The purposes, procedures and criteria of the assessment process need to be open, clearly stated and understood by all involved: assessors, teachers and students. All need to understand the expected learning outcomes of each programme of instruction; the assessment~~marking~~ criteria upon which decisions are made; the nature of any grading system; and the nature of any appeals process, etc. Both

Commented [TA2]: LTPG Learn Foundations review requested change as 11.3 talks about assessment criteria but 11.6 refers to marking criteria and we are asked to be consistent

11

staff and students should have access to information about these procedures from the outset of the assessment process.

11.7 Any assessment scheme should achieve its intended purpose and should motivate learning. Assessment can be formative, where the main aim is to provide feedback and guidance on how to improve, or summative, where the aim is to accurately quantify attainment e.g. for degree classification purposes. Summative assessment can provide information that is of formative value.

11.8 Assessment information is used in the quality assurance of courses and programmes. It is used by course teams to enhance course design and understand students' educational needs.

11.9 Any assessment scheme must be adequately resourced, practicable and managed efficiently in terms of staff and student time, or it will not be effective.

11.10 Assessment processes must ensure the security of their operation in terms of the safe recording, transfer, storage and retrieval of information on student achievement. Fairness, effectiveness and the right of redress are all predicated on the assumption of secure operation and the prevention of any loss of information or fraudulent practice.

Regulation 12   Assessment requirements

Course information in the degree programme tables states the learning outcomes, assessment practices and assessment requirements.

Application of the regulation

12.1   The degree programme tables are available online: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 13   Passing assessment

Passing a course or degree programme requires attainment of the learning outcomes and may require a specified level of performance or attendance in some or all components.

Application of the regulation

13.1   The course information that is linked to degree programme tables describe the learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated in assessment. www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

13.2   Some degrees have professional or statutory body requirements which are reflected in the learning outcomes and their assessment. Students are informed about these in the statement of assessment (see taught assessment regulation 14).

13.3   Boards of Studies and the relevant College Committee approve the assessment and satisfactory performance requirements for courses and degree programmes before their delivery. Individual course elements and options available to students can change and there are annual changes to degree programme tables and course availability. However, the approval of the relevant College Committee must be obtained if it is exceptionally necessary to change the weighting of assessment of a course after students have entered it; or to change progression, classification or award requirements for a programme after students have entered their honours years or a postgraduate programme.

(a)   Before approval can be given, written evidence of the results of consultation with the students must be submitted. Every student affected needs to be informed of the changes and given the opportunity to comment. The expectation is that the College will not approve changes in the face of significant student objections, unless changes are compelled by external factors.

(b)   The relevant external examiners must also be informed and consulted.

(c)   Students may be given alternative course options, where this is possible. The expectation is that course assessment requirements will not change after students are registered on it.

Regulation 14   Statement of assessment

Students must be given a clear statement of how and when each of their courses and programmes is to be assessed. The ~~statement~~ required information needs to be issued to students at the relevant point, which may be: at the start of each course; on entry into the honours component of a degree programme; ~~and~~ or, at the start of ~~each~~ a postgraduate programme.

> Commented [BA3]: Sought to clarify wording following CMVM comments.

Application of the regulation

14.1   The statement must include:
(a)   how each piece of assessed work contributes to the final assessment, progression decision or classification, outlining relevant weightings;
(b)   the arrangements for the moderation of the assessed work;
(c)   any methods that the Board of Examiners uses for standard setting;
(d)   assessment deadlines and any penalties for late submission;
(e)   the duration and format of examinations and in which diet they will be held;
(f)   how work will be taken into account by a resit Board of Examiners and the number of permitted resits;

(g)   the standards and criteria for entry into honours or for progression to Masters dissertation, where relevant.

14.2   The required information need not be provided in a single assessment statement, but is included in a course or programme handbooks, or provided by the School in another format, along with other relevant information about assessment, feedback, good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism

Regulation 15   Provision of formative feedback

All students will be given at least one formative feedback or feed-forward event for every course they undertake, provided during the semester in which the course is taken and in time to be useful in the completion of summative work on the course. Such feedback may be at course or programme level, but must include input of relevance to each course in the latter case.

Application of the regulation

15.1   Feedback and feed-forward may be provided in various formats, for example, to include written, oral, video, face-to-face, whole class, individual. Advice on feedback and feed-forward is available on the Enhancing Feedback webpages:
www.enhancingfeedback.ed.ac.uk/

15.2   The regulation applies to formative feedback. The University's Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles apply to formative and summative feedback.

15.3   Further guidance on feedback is available online. Relevant definitions are in the University's Glossary.
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf
www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment

Regulation 16   Feedback deadlines

Feedback on formative and summative in-course assessed work will be provided within 15 working days of submission, or in time to be of use in subsequent assessments within the course, whichever is sooner. At the start of the semester in which the course is taughteach course, Schools will publish their timetable for returning feedback and marks for in-course work.

Application of the regulation

16.1 Feedback and feed-forward may be provided in various formats, including for example written, oral, video, face-to-face, whole class, individual or via virtual learning environments. Advice on feedback and feed-forward is available from the Institute for Academic Development
www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/assessment

16.2 Further guidance and the University's Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles are available online.

Relevant definitions are in the University's glossary:
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2018-19.pdf

16.3 The School's timetable for returning feedback will specify which forms of summative in-course assessed work will not be returned within 15 working days. Schools may choose whether to meet the 15 working day deadline for single items of assessment which are equivalent to 40 credits or more (and which therefore must be double marked). For other summative assessed work, in exceptional circumstances, where the necessary marking and moderation processes cannot be concluded within 15 working days, Schools may request an opt-out from the relevant College committee.

16.4 This requirement to provide feedback within the specified period applies to the provision of marks as well as other types of feedback.

16.5 In-course assessment includes any form of assessment other than examinations scheduled ~~by Student Administration~~during the formal examination diets (excluding take-home examinations), irrespective of the deadline for submission of the assessment (e.g. including the final assessment for a course). There is no requirement for feedback on examinations scheduled by Student Administration to be provided within 15 working days.

16.6 The University closure period during the Christmas and New Year vacation should be discounted when calculating working days for providing feedback.

16.7 See taught assessment regulation 36 for information on the release of provisional marks.

Regulation 17   Assessment deadlines: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to ascertain and meet their assessment deadlines, including examination times and locations.

Application of the regulation

17.1   The examination timetable is based on students' course choices. To avoid examination timetabling clashes, it is students' responsibility to ensure that their record of courses is accurate by the end of week 3 of each semester.

17.2   Students who have a clash in their examination timetable need to contact the Examination Office, Student Administration, through their Personal Tutor or Student Support Team, as soon as possible to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/overview

17.3   As examinations may be scheduled at any time during the semester, it is students' responsibility to be available throughout the semester, including the whole of the revision period, examination diet and the resit diet, if the student has scheduled examinations. Examinations will not be scheduled during winter or spring vacations. Occasionally assessments may need to be rescheduled with very little notice. If special circumstances mean that a student is unavailable for the rescheduled assessment, Boards of Examiners may consider using an alternative method to assess the relevant learning outcomes.

Regulation 18   Selective assessment

The selective use of specific assessment methods to help a Board of Examiners reach a decision about an individual student, e.g. on a borderline, is not permitted, unless required to meet a learning adjustment.

Regulation 19   Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

Application of the regulation

19.1   Reasonable adjustments must be determined in advance by the Student Disability Service (SDS). They are recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments by the SDS, which communicates the Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's Personal Tutor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, Student Administration (if examination adjustments are recommended) and other relevant areas.

19.2   The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments (CoA) has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments. The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School.

19.3   The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the SDS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any

amendments to the Schedule of Adjustments the SDS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.

19.4 The SDS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support: ~~https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/support-we-offer/study-adjustments~~ www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/students/support-we-provide

19.5 Reasonable adjustments can be made for a variety of assessment methods, depending on the needs identified and recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments, e.g. assessed coursework, take-home examinations, online examinations, invigilated examinations. The SDS supports students in the preparation and review of their Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their Schedule of Adjustments covers all types of assessment methods relevant to their courses. For example, if a student discovers that an aspect of their course is likely to have an impact on their support needs, they should contact the SDS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their Schedule of Adjustments.

19.6 Arrangements can be made via the SDS for students with temporary injuries or impairments, e.g. broken arm or leg, on the submission of relevant medical information. Students should contact the SDS as soon as possible to allow the SDS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

Regulation 20   Language of assessment: languages other than English or Gaelic

The English language is the usual medium of teaching and assessment at the University of Edinburgh. All work submitted for assessment must be written in the English language, with the following exceptions: dissertations may be submitted in Gaelic (see regulation 21); dissertations and other assessed work may be submitted in the language which is being studied where the relevant course or programme handbook specifies that this is allowable.

Application of the regulation

20.1 Quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.

20.2 In very exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to submit a dissertation written in a language other than English, where this is not specified by the relevant course or programme handbook. Approval will only be given in cases where the nature of the research is such that presentation of the research results in the language(s) of the materials under analysis confers significant intellectual advantage to the community of scholars who are expected to comprise the primary audience of the research. Approval to do so must be sought either at the time of admission to the University or no later than by the end of the first year of ~~full-time~~ study ~~(or equivalent part-time study)~~, and will not be normally be granted retrospectively. Approval must be given by the appropriate College

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Committee, which must be satisfied that there are sound academic reasons for the request, and that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis or dissertation in the proposed language of submission.

20.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the dissertation should also include a substantial summary written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in a language other than English, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 21   Language of assessment: Gaelic

Dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

Application of the regulation

21.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

21.2 Candidates who wish to submit a dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the dissertation.

21.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 22   Availability of assessment examples

~~Sufficient examples of students' summative assessments need~~A representative sample of students' work for each summative assessment needs to be made available for the scrutiny and use of examiners, including External Examiners, where they are making final decisions regarding students' course results.

Application of the regulation

22.1 If use is made of assessment types which cannot be made available, this should be made explicit to the External Examiner in advance and included in the assessment statement to students.

22.2 The Convener of the Board of Examiners will consider with the External Examiner whether and how to present information on these assessments to the External and the Board of Examiners. It may be appropriate to record some forms of assessment for consultation by the Board, e.g. major pieces of performed work.

Regulation 23   Oral assessment

Oral assessments may only be used to assess all students on a course as part of the assessment of a specific component, such as a dissertation or practical skill.

A minimum of two examiners must be present if 50% or more of a course is assessed orally.

Application of the regulation

23.1 If oral performance is to be assessed the assessment statement (taught assessment regulation 13) must include information on how it is to be assessed.

23.2 Conveners of Boards of Examiners need to make available sufficient information about oral assessments to External Examiners and Boards of Examiners.

23.3 A Bachelor of Nursing with Honours student who fails an honours course, for which a pass is required for professional registration, will be required to resit the examination and/or to resubmit the coursework (see taught assessment regulation 27). If the student does not achieve a pass at resubmission, an oral examination will be scheduled. If the student fails to satisfy the examiners in the oral assessment, professional registration will not be possible and the student will not be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Nursing with Honours but may be eligible for another award.

Regulation 24   Peer and self-assessment

Boards of Examiners may use summative student peer and self-assessment.

Application of the regulation

24.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for ensuring the robustness of student peer and self-assessment. Where peer and self-assessment is used summatively, students need to receive appropriate support and guidance, which should pay specific attention to the avoidance of inappropriate discrimination.

24.2   External Examiners need to receive sufficient information about and samples of the assessments as evidence on which to base their decisions.

24.3   Resources and publications are available from the Institute for Academic Development: www.ed.ac.uk/iad

Regulation 25   Examination timetable

Students are only permitted to sit examinations at the times and in the venues that are detailed on the relevant examination timetable.

Application of the regulation

25.1   Examinations may be scheduled outside normal University teaching hours.

25.2   Students who believe that ~~extenuating circumstances exist which~~religious reasons or participation in elite-level sport prevent them from sitting an examination ~~in~~ at the scheduled time or venue should contact their Personal Tutor and Student Support Team. Their case is considered by the relevant Dean and Student Administration in consultation with the Convener of the Board of Examiners. ~~Examples of extenuating circumstances are: religious reasons; elite participation where students are representing their country at national or international level. Travel arrangements, early departure during the semester, holidays, learning adjustments (under regulation 19 above), etc. do not constitute extenuating circumstances.~~Further information regarding flexibility which may be offered to students taking part in elite-level sport is provided in the Performance Sport Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf

> Commented [BA4]: Removed reference to "extenuating circumstances" to prevent confusion with special circs. Focus is exclusively on religious observance and elite sport.

25.3   A student who is permitted to appear for examination at a time other than that prescribed may have to sit a specially prepared examination paper or alternative method of assessment.

25.4   If examinations are disrupted, for example due to adverse weather conditions, then Boards of Examiners may decide to use an alternative assessment method, rather than rescheduled examinations, to assess the learning outcomes.

25.5   Other than online assessment and assessment opportunities offered via Student Administration, students are not allowed to sit examinations away from Edinburgh.

Regulation 26   Conduct of examinations

Examinations scheduled by Student Administration are conducted in an invigilated environment are conducted in accordance with Examination Hall Regulations, which are publicised to students annually.

Application of the regulation

26.1   Student Administration has responsibility for the effective operation of examinations in accordance with the Examination Hall Regulations.
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf

26.2   All examinations which are in Student Administration's scheduled examination diet will be invigilated by authorised staff appointed by Student Administration. The Invigilator ensures compliance with the Taught Assessment Regulations in accordance with Invigilation Guidance.
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/Invigil_guide.pdf

26.3   Examinations that contain practical, oral or performance elements are invigilated by members of academic staff and may be conducted jointly with an External Examiner.

26.4   Formative assessment and small elements of summative assessment, which are not scheduled in the published examination timetable, are invigilated by academic members of staff, for example, tutorial participation marks and in-course assessment marks.

26.54   Take-home examinations and online examinations are subject to the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations which are related to examinations but are not subject to the Examination Hall Regulations. Take-home examinations are not assessed coursework, and are therefore not subject to extensions, although additional time may be offered to individual students in line with a Schedule of Adjustments.

Commented [BA5]: Removed as unnecessary.

Regulation 27   Resit assessment

The number of assessment attempts students are entitled to for each course depends upon the type of programme the student is taking and the SCQF level of the course.

Honours undergraduate students are entitled to:

- a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 7 and 8;
- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Non-Honours undergraduate students (excluding Visiting Undergraduate Students) are entitled to:

- a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

Visiting undergraduate students are entitled to:

- a maximum of two assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

Taught postgraduate students are entitled to:

- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless specific Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Application of the regulation

27.1 Boards of Examiners must publish the requirements for resits for those courses that they are responsible for. Boards must take the same approach to resits for all students on a particular course, except where a student's previous attempt is a null sit.

27.2 Boards of Examiners must set requirements at resit that are as demanding as those made of students at the first attempt.

27.3 Boards of Examiners will inform students who are required to undertake resit assessment of the format of their resit assessment. Resit methods need not be the same as those used to assess the learning outcomes at the first attempt, but all relevant learning outcomes must be assessed. Resit arrangements must give students a genuine opportunity to pass the course. Boards of Examiners choose between two options to achieve this:

  (a) Carry forward any component of assessment (coursework or examination) that has been passed already and require the student to retake the failed element;

  (b) Set an assessment covering all learning outcomes for the course, and weight this as 100% of the course result.

27.4 Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed, unless the relevant Board of Examiners has permitted this under Special Circumstances by granting a null sit for the attempt that the student has passed unless they have been granted a null sit under Special Circumstances (see 27.9).

27.5 The four assessment attempts are the initial assessment and a maximum of three further assessment opportunities, of full assessment, examination or coursework only basis, at the next available opportunities. There may be PSRB requirements which mean that fewer than four assessment attempts are permitted.

27.6 The first sitting and subsequent attempts must take place over no more than two academic sessions, unless the relevant College grants an exemption.

27.7 Non-attendance or non-submission is considered an assessment attempt.

27.8 Some Honours programmes require students to pass specified courses at the first attempt in the first or second year in order to progress to Junior Honours. Any such requirements will be specified in the Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook for the relevant programme.

27.9 Where an assessment attempt has been affected by special circumstances, a Board of Examiners may declare this attempt a null sit. Null sits do not count towards the maximum number of permitted attempts. Where a student receives a lower mark in a subsequent assessment attempt than that achieved in the attempt declared as a null sit, they may be awarded the higher mark for the relevant assessment.

27.10 Re-assessment attempts are not generally permitted for courses at SQCF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students since Honours and taught postgraduate programmes permit the award of credit on aggregate (see Taught Assessment Regulations 52, 54, 56, 57). Where resits are permitted for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, any classification decision must use the result obtained on the first attempt.

27.11 The Academic Policy and Regulations CommitteeCurriculum and Student Progression Committee decides whether a programme may offer resits which are required for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements for courses at SCQF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students. This decision is based on a case proposed by the relevant College.

27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area "EEA" nationals) have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. Students on a Tier 4 visa can only take a fourth assessment attempt where they have valid special circumstances (in line with the Special Circumstances Policy), and specific additional conditions are met (as outlined below).

If a Tier 4 student does seek a fourth assessment attempt, they should apply for this via the Special Circumstances process. Where the student has valid special circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners will determine what action to take. Where the Board of Examiners decides to award the student a null sit for the affected assessment attempt, this will not count as one of the four assessment

attempts; null sits for any previous attempts are also not counted towards the total permitted attempts. Where the Board does not award a null sit, but wishes to offer the student a fourth assessment attempt, they may only do so where:

i)   the student has provided satisfactory 'greater weight' evidence of their circumstances (in line with para 6.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy);
ii)   the circumstances that had disrupted the student's previous attempt(s) have been mitigated or no longer apply.

The Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations. It is able to support Tier 4 students should permission to undertake a fourth assessment attempt affect their visa status (for example, by requiring an extension), and can also support students to understand their immigration status in the event that they are not granted a fourth assessment attempt.

27.13 If repetition of the in-course assessed work is not possible outwith semester timein the vacation, the student, with the permission of the relevant Head of School, may be allowed to repeat any coursework on its own in the following year. Students who do not receive such permission may be permitted by the relevant Head of School to repeat the course, including examination, in the following year.

27.14 The full range of marks offered by the relevant Common Marking Scheme is available at resit assessment. Resit marks are not capped.

27.15 Where a degree programme's Honours classification is based on the final year only, students are permitted a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses in non-final years.

27.16 In the case of collaborative degrees, where not otherwise stipulated in the collaborative agreement, any permitted resit attempt must be within two years of the first attempt.

Regulation 28   Late submission of coursework

Students need to submit assessed coursework (including research projects and dissertations) by the published deadline. Where the student meets the criteria provides a good reason for late submission, the Extensions and Special Circumstances TeamSchools will consider accepting late submission of up to seven calendar days without applyingexacting a penalty.

Application of the regulation

28.1   If assessed coursework is submitted late without an agreed extension to the deadline for an accepted good reason, it will be recorded as late and a penalty will

be applied by the Schoolexacted. The penalty applied For coursework that is a substantial component of the course and where the submission deadline is more than two weeks after the issue of the work to be assessed, that penalty is a reduction of the mark by 5% of the maximum obtainable mark per calendar day (e.g. a mark of 65% on the common marking scale would be reduced to 60% up to 24 hours later). This applies for up to seven

calendar days (or to the time when feedback is given, if this is sooner), after which a mark of zero will be given. The original unreduced mark will be recorded by the School and the student informed of it.

28.2 Schools may choose not to permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment where the specific assessment and feedback arrangements make it impractical or unfair to other students to do so. If Schools do not permit the submission of late work for particular components of assessment, they must publicise this to students on the relevant course.

28.3 Where Schools accept late submissions of coursework, the Extensions and Special Circumstances Teamy will consider cases for accepting late submissions up to a maximum of seven calendar days without applyingexacting a penalty. Schools will indicate where components of assessment have a maximum permitted extension of less than seven days. This will be in addition to any extensions offered in line with a student's Schedule of Adjustments. Students are responsible for submitting their requests cases and supporting evidence in advance of the published deadline for the coursework, using the relevant online system.standard Coursework Extensions Request form (or a local School online form, where available).

28.4 The Extensions and Special Circumstances Team Course Organiser, Programme Director, or equivalent member of academic or professional services staff assigned this responsibility by the School, decides whether the student has provided an accepted good reason and sufficient supporting evidence to justify an extension., and, if so, determines the length of extension to grant up to a maximum of seven calendar days.

28.5 The requirement for evidence should be proportionate to the weighting of the component of assessment and the length of extension sought, and should also take into account the student's ability to obtain documentary evidence. Self-certification will provide sufficient evidence in all some circumstances. The Extensions and Special Circumstances Team School are is responsible
for ensuring a record is kept of the decision and the information provided by the student with their request.which substantiates
the reason for late acceptance.

28.6 AcceptedGood reasons for coursework extensions are 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. AcceptedGood reasons may include:

- Recent short-term physical illness or injury;
- Recent short-term mental ill-health;
- A long-term or chronic physical health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- A long-term or chronic mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently;
- The recent bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship;
- The recent breakdown in a long-term relationship, such as a marriage;
- Emergencies involving dependents;
- Job or internship interview at short notice that requires significant time, e.g. due to travel;
- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact;
- Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions;
- Experience of sexual harassment or assault;
- Experience of other forms of harassment;
- Exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control;
- Exceptional (i.e. non-routine) caring responsibilities.

28.7 In addition to these unexpected circumstances, the Extensions and Special Circumstances Team Schools will also consider requests for coursework extensions in relation to:

- A student's disability where the student's Schedule of Adjustments includes relevant provisions;
- Representation in performance sport at an international or national championship level, in line with the University's Performance Sport Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf

28.8 The following are examples of circumstances which would notare unlikely to be accepted considered good reasons for coursework extensions:

Commented [BA6]: Reflects wording used in SC policy.

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health or similar ill-health) which has not worsened recently or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment;
- A minor short-term illness or injury (e.g. a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment on time;
- Occasional low mood, stress or anxiety;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;
- Holidays;
- Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health);

- • Poor time-management;
- • Proximity to other assessments;
- • Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission;
- • Failure, loss or theft of data, a computer or other equipment (may be permitted in exceptional circumstances for courses taken online);
- • Commitments to paid or voluntary employment.

28.9 Where a student has a good reason for requiring a coursework extension of more than seven calendar days, the student should submit the coursework when able to do so and apply via the Special Circumstances process through the relevant online system for the Board of Examiners to disregard the penalty for late submission.

Regulation 29   Academic best practice

All work submitted for assessment by students is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort without falsification of any kind.

Application of the regulation

29.1 Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research, even when group exercises are carried out.

29.2 Where students rely on reference sources, they should indicate what these are according to the appropriate convention in their discipline. Students are given advice on appropriate referencing in their course.

29.3 Students may be asked to sign a declaration that the work submitted is their own work.

29.4 Students can get advice on studying effectively from the Institute for Academic Development: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/undergraduate/good-practice

Regulation 30   Academic misconduct

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

Application of the regulation

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Commented [BA7]: Amended to allow for unique circumstances affecting online programmes.

30.1   Marks or grades can only be given for original work by students at the University. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or one's own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, may be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to deceive. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription, or if it involves the use of essays or answers produced by another individual or service. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.

30.2   It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.

30.3   Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation.

30.4   Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.

30.5   Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website.
 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

30.6   Exam hall regulations can be found at:
 www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf

Section C.	Marking of Assessment

Regulation 31	Moderation and standard-setting

The marking of all components of assessment must be subject to moderation in a way that is appropriate to the discipline, the nature of the assessment, and the credit weighting of the component of assessment. Boards of Examiners can apply standard-setting processes to the marks of assessments, provided that the choice of standard-setting methodology is defensible.

Application of the regulation

31.1   Moderation occurs before External Examiners review the operation of the marking and internal moderation process. Forms of moderation include sampled second marking, double-marking, and checking the operation of computer-based assessment. Any single item of assessment which is equivalent to 40 credits or more must be double marked.

31.2   Moderation may result in recommended mark or grade adjustments and associated changes to feedback. No changes can be made to marking without the original marker's knowledge. Where possible, any changes should take place in discussion with the original marker.

31.3   Records of the operation of the occurrence and the outcome of the moderation processes must be kept. Records must show the rationale for decisions taken, including any decision that marks or grades should not be altered.

31.4   Boards of Examiners are responsible for determining the form of moderation for each component of assessment, and for ensuring the appropriate operation of moderation processes. Course Organisers are responsible for the organisation and supervising of the marking and moderation processes for their courses' assessments.

31.5   Boards of Examiners are responsible for reviewing marking and moderation arrangements, and the outcomes of students' assessments, across related courses (for example, Honours level courses in a subject area) in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.

31.6   Standard-setting is the process whereby decisions are made about boundaries or 'cut-points' between the marks or grades of candidates. Any standard-setting process must aim to ensure that students' results reflect the learning outcomes they have achieved and that the assessment is fair. Standards can be relative or norm-referenced (taking account the performance of candidates), absolute (defining minimum levels of competence) or a compromise between these two approaches.

31.7   Schools need to state what practice each course uses for internal moderation, and (where relevant) the methods of standard-setting, in the Statement of Assessment (see Regulation 14).

31.8   Resources and publications are available from the Institute for Academic Development: www.ed.ac.uk/iad

Regulation 32   Anonymous marking

Assessed work must be marked anonymously when possible. Marks and grades must also be anonymised during processing.

Application of the regulation

32.1   Marking work anonymously is an important aspect of fair marking.

32.2   There will be occasions when it is not possible to mark a piece of work anonymously, e.g. a performed piece, an oral presentation, a dissertation or other piece of work where the specialised nature of the topic identifies the student. However, students' identities should be concealed when marks are presented at the Board of Examiners' meeting.

32.3   Use of examination numbers in assessment can help maintain anonymity.

Regulation 33   Security of marks

Assessed work, marks and grades must be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

Application of the regulation

33.1   The Convener of the Board of Examiners has responsibility for the security of arrangements. In practice, the operation of this may be delegated to the Teaching Organisation or equivalent.

33.2   Security arrangements must also include sending assessed work and marks and grades to examiners, including External Examiners; marking arrangements for online assessment; and correspondence about marks, which may be by email.

33.3   Marks or grade information about more than 50 individuals is classified as medium risk information under the University's policy on taking sensitive information and personal data outside the secure computing environment. Under this policy, if exam scripts, marks or grade information leave University premises or University

computing systems then additional security measures, such as encryption or locked cabinets, must be used.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/encrypting-sensitive-data

Regulation 34   Legibility and accessibility of assessed work

It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their submitted assessed work is legible and accessible.

Application of the regulation

34.1   If markers consider a significant proportion of a student's assessed work to be so illegible that they cannot reach a robust mark they must consult the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

(a)   Where the Convener suspects that disability impairs has impaired the student's ability to write legibly, the Convener, in consultation with the relevant Dean and the Student Disability Service, can decide whether the work should be marked normally or whether the disability justifies transcription. If transcription is not justified and the work is completely illegible, a zero will be awarded. If it is partially legible then the legible part will be marked.

(b)   Where there are no issues of disability, the Convener should ensure that the legible part of the work is marked normally. If the work is completely illegible, a zero will be awarded.

All such cases need to be drawn to the attention of the relevant Dean and the External Examiner and feedback needs to be given to the student.

34.2   Schools are responsible for informing students of the format in which assessed work must be submitted, e.g. they may require work to be submitted electronically.

Regulation 35   Common Marking Schemes

The final mark, grade, result and award and classification decision must be expressed using the relevant Common Marking Scheme:
www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

Application of the regulation

35.1   The University operates the following Common Marking Schemes:
CMS1   Undergraduate degree assessment (except BVM&S and MBChB)
CMS2   Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVM&S)
CMS3   Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB)
CMS4   Postgraduate Assessment

> CMS5   Edinburgh College of Art degree programmes which use the Assessment Grade Scheme (ECA degree programmes which do not use the Assessment Grade Scheme use CMS1 and CMS4)
> These are available online: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme
>
> 35.2   In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.
>
> 35.3   Where the relevant Board of Studies has approved the operation of assessment for a course on a Pass/Fail basis, Boards of Examiners may award credit for the course without awarding a mark or grade under the Common Marking Scheme. Courses whose assessment operates on a Pass/Fail basis are permitted during the pre-Honours stage of undergraduate Honours programmes, or on non-Honours undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes. Courses with Pass/Fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption.
>
> 35.34   Boards of Examiners make a statement on how marks are held, and to how many decimal places, during the internal processing of the component marks for a course. Practice within a Board of Examiners needs to be consistent.

Regulation 36   Provisional marks

Students need to be made aware that marks for assessed coursework are provisional and may be modified when considered at the Board of Examiners meeting.

Application of the regulation
36.1   Course handbooks and other sources of advice for students are used to inform students that marks are provisional until agreed by a Board of Examiners.

Regulation 37   Final marks

Boards of Examiners confirm marks as final in the minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting. A Board of Examiners must not revise marks agreed as final by a previous Board of Examiners (except in line with Taught Assessment RegulationAR 64).

Application of the regulation
37.1   For undergraduates and postgraduate students, the Board of Examiners agrees marks as final in the year in which they are obtained.
37.2   The Board of Examiners for final year students is responsible for determining the award of degree. The Board of Examiners, in determining final classifications and awards, may exercise discretion by taking into account special circumstances. See taught assessment regulation 43.
37.3   The Board of Examiners approves a single mark for each component of assessment for which final marks are to be released; marks for components of assessment are not rounded. The final component marks are used by the Board of Examiners when determining the overall result for the course. Rounding is only applied to final course marks (see regulation 63).
37.4   Students are informed of the status of the marks released and are reminded that the Board of Examiners, in determining the final marks or award, may have exercised discretion by taking into account additional relevant information.

Section D.   **Operation of Boards of Examiners**

Regulation 38   **Board of Examiners meetings**

Meetings of Boards of Examiners are held to reach assessment, progression and award decisions.

Application of the regulation
38.1   See taught assessment regulation 8.1 for additional information on responsibilities of the Convener of the Board of Examiners. Further information can also be found in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf 38.2   The minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting needs to be an accurate record of the meeting and the approved results and decisions. Guidance on minuting Board of Examiners meetings is available: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf 38.3   Students are informed in advance about progression and award criteria.

Regulation 39   **Board of Examiners: quorum**

A Board of Examiners meeting is quorate if at least half the internal examiners attend and at least one External Examiner participates in and approves the decisions of the Board. No Board may have fewer than two internal examiners attending. See taught assessment regulation 2.4 for the definition of an internal examiner.

Application of the regulation
39.1   "Attendance" means being physically present at the meeting of the Board of Examiners. "Participation" by an External Examiner does not require physical presence at the meeting of the Board of Examiners, but involves the External Examiner contributing to the meeting, ideally by video, telephone or web-camera and otherwise by email. The External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board's deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect their participation. 39.2   ~~All members of the Board of Examiners should attend meetings of the Board.~~ In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the College and the Convener of the Board, representatives nominated and authorised by them may substitute for internal examiners.

Commented [BA8]: Removed as unclear.

39.3 Each subject discipline must be represented and, whenever practicable, an External Examiner from each subject should participate. Where more than one School is involved, the composition of the Board reflects the contribution of the Schools to the assessment of the courses or programmes.

39.4 The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines External Examiners' participation in Boards of Examiners meetings. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

39.5 ~~If an individual External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, their non-attendance must be approved by the College.~~

> Commented [BA9]: Proposed removal. New requirement articulated in External Examiners Policy.

39.5~~6~~ It is not necessary for the same members of a Board of Examiners to attend all meetings of the Board in an academic year, provided each Board is quorate.

Regulation 40   Undergraduate Progression Board meetings

Meetings of Undergraduate Progression Boards are held to reach progression decisions. Each undergraduate student's progression status needs to be decided and recorded at least once each year by a Progression Board which is the responsibility of the School that has responsibility for the student's degree programme. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf

Application of the regulation

40.1 The status, governance, and decision making and reporting responsibilities, of Undergraduate Progression Boards are provided in the Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards.

40.2 The Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards sets out the role of the External Examiner; the quorum; the role of the Special Circumstances Committee; student anonymity in discussions and the role of the Convener of the Board, for example for ensuring the accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Board.

40.3 College Progression Boards make decisions on the credit obtained by students who have optional periods of study abroad.

Regulation 41   Attendance by non-members at a Board of Examiners meeting

The Convener of the Board may invite any person who is not an internal or external examiner but has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the work under consideration by the Board to be present "in attendance". People "in attendance" at the meeting of the Board are not involved in the decision making process.

Regulation 42   Board of Examiners: anonymity

Anonymity should be retained until, in the opinion of the Convener of the Board of Examiners, the best interests of the students are no longer being served.

Application of the regulation
42.1   When students' marks and grades are presented, considered and agreed by the Board, the Board should not be informed of the identity of the students.   42.2   Where students have to attend oral examinations, perform or otherwise present some of their work, or are on courses or programmes taken by small numbers of students, anonymity may be unachievable during the assessment process. Anonymity should be breached only for those examiners directly involved in the relevant assessment, and students' identities should be concealed when marks are presented at the Board of Examiners' meeting.   42.3   Once decisions have been agreed by the Board of Examiners there should be a final check of the marks and decisions by the Convener of the Board, based on the knowledge of the students' identities.   42.4   The nature of some assessment means that the Board of Examiners establishes that the interests of the students are served best by ceasing anonymity at the start of the assessment process. This requires the prior approval of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) on the basis of a case presented by College.

Regulation 43   Special circumstances

Where a student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control, it is the student's responsibility to submit an account of these special circumstances, along with supporting evidence, to the Special Circumstances Committee for the relevant Board of Examiners (including Progression Boards). The relevant Board of Examiners decides what action to take in the light of a Special Circumstances Committee's decision on a student's submitted special circumstances.

Application of the regulation
43.1   The Special Circumstances Policy sets out the arrangements for students to request consideration of special circumstances, types of circumstances which are and are not likely to be accepted by Special Circumstances Committees, requirements for evidence to support special circumstances, the composition and operation of Special Circumstances Committees, and the actions available to

Boards of Examiners (including Progression Boards) in the light of a Special Circumstances
Committee's decision on a student's special circumstances. The policy is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Regulation 44   Borderlines

Boards of Examiners must consider students whose marks are borderline for progression, award or classification purposes. Boards of Examiners can also consider students whose marks are borderline for passing a course, where special circumstances apply. Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the class or grade boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for an undergraduate 2.1 classification or 38% to 39% for a pass in a course. Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards must use the University borderline definition and must not set and use a different definition.

Application of the regulation

44.1   Boards of Examiners must publish in advance the factors that will be taken into account for borderline progression, award, or classification decisions, which can include:
(a) cases in which a student has performed better in courses at a higher level;
(b) cases where the amount of credited assessed work to be used for classification or award decisions is less than the norm (e.g., where credits have been awarded for progression purposes only in recognition of special circumstances); and
(c) individual student profiles of performance.

44.2   Boards of Examiners cannot selectively use any additional assessment to reach assessment decisions for specific students. See taught assessment regulation 19.

44.3   Examples of borderlines for progression decisions include:
(a) where a student has a final mark of 38% or 39% for a course in first year that they need to pass to progress to second year;
(b) where a student is within two percentage points of a requirement for progression into honours or postgraduate dissertation, for example where the Degree Programme Table specifies the attainment of 50% as an average across a number of courses, the progression borderline is 48.00% to 49.99%;
(c) where a student being considered for progression on a postgraduate taught programme has achieved an average of 50% or more across 120 credits of taught courses, and a mark of 50% or more in 60 or 70 credits, with a further 10 or 20-credit course carrying a mark of 48 or 49%; and
(cd)for the award of credit on aggregate, where a student has an average of 38.00% to 39.99% over their 120 credits.

Commented [BA10]: Added following discussion with CMVM.

44.4   Boards of Examiners may award a pass for a course where a student has a borderline fail mark (i.e.38% to 39%) and has had a request for consideration of special circumstances approved (see the Special Circumstances Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf).

Regulation 45   Confidentiality

All discussion at a Board of Examiners' meeting is confidential.

Application of the regulation

45.1   Boards of Examiners reach a collective decision. The decision does not need to be unanimous.

45.2   No comments or remarks should be reported to any students, whether or not they are unattributed.

45.3   The views of a particular examiner should not be made known to a student. If a student makes a request to see the minutes of a Board of Examiners meeting, the information recorded in the minutes on that particular student will need to be disclosed. In doing so examiners' comments should be anonymised, e.g. assigned to "Examiner1, Examiner2". Further information is available at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

45.4   Students have a right to see information about themselves recorded in minutes of Board of Examiner meetings.

45.5   Other than with the written permission of the student concerned, members of staff should not make available information about marks to persons or bodies outside the University except when necessary in the context of a reference.

45.6   Guidance on disclosing information on students can be found at: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information

Regulation 46   Release of marks

Students are informed of marks or grades for each discretely identified unit of assessment used by the Board in reaching its final mark for the course or its progression or award decision.

Application of the regulation

46.1   Marks and grades are made available to the student, together with guidance on their meaning.

46.2   Boards of Examiners are not obliged to provide this information if the request is made more than one year after the date of the assessment.

46.3   Assessed coursework marks which contribute to the overall result for a course are provided to students at the time that the assessment is marked, as a guide to each student's performance, together with guidance on the meaning of the marks.

46.4   Throughout the year, before consideration by a Board of Examiners, marks for examinations and assessed coursework are provisional and have no status until they are approved or modified by the Board. If such marks are released before confirmation by the Board of Examiners, students must be advised that the marks are provisional and may be modified when considered at the Board of Examiners meeting.

46.5   **Undergraduate non-honours degree examination marks; and professional degree examination marks or grades in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (other than final professional degree examination marks): Overall marks**: The final overall mark agreed by Boards of Examiners for diets of examinations for graduating courses of study will be made available to the student via EUCLID Student View.

46.6   **Undergraduate Honours degree examination marks; and final professional degree examination marks in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine: Overall classification**: The final overall classification of honours degrees will be communicated to students via EUCLID Student View. The professional degrees may be awarded with honours in Medicine, or with distinction in Veterinary Medicine, but are not otherwise classified.

Regulation 47   Publication of results

Students will be notified of their assessment results and their progression status. Students have the right to exclude their name and/or final award results from being publicly announced.

Application of the regulation

47.1 Concessions from the following application of the regulation on Publication of results require the approval of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) based on a case presented by the relevant College.

47.2 Students are officially notified of their results (including course marks, progression and programme outcomes or awards) via EUCLID Student View. This may be supplemented by the communication of assessment component results via virtual learning environments. Results are entered on to students' records by the relevant School.

47.3 The host School of the degree programme is responsible for overseeing the communication of all undergraduate award and final programme results and all taught progression decisions. The host School of the course is responsible for overseeing the communication of all final course results to the students on the course. Students will be notified in advance of the date on which they can expect to hear their results.

47.4 Notification of final postgraduate results and the award of qualification to students, following the final meeting of the Board, is the responsibility of the College Postgraduate Office, except where this has been devolved to the School.

47.5 Students' results (including assessment component and course marks, programme and progression outcomes) may not be released over the telephone or informally via email. Students only receive their results via formal communication channels.

47.6 There should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme.

47.7 The host School will communicate a clear plan of action to each student when the student has failed an assessment that is required. This applies to final course results and some "in course" assessments where a pass is required. The communication is to take account of the student's progression and/or award status.

47.8 Each School will provide a general statement on their website describing their local process, indicating to their students how they should proceed in the event of failure.

47.9 Where a student has failed a summative assessment (either "in course" or "final") and a resubmission or retake is required and permitted, the host School ensures that the student is provided with timely academic feedback, guidance and support prior to their re-assessment.

47.10 The Head of the host School, or their designated representative, has responsibility for ensuring that, where a student has failed their programme of study at the final

stage, the student is supported in a timely and personal manner. If appropriate, an offer of a private consultation may be made.

47.11 Once a final award, final degree programme or final course result and progression decision has been agreed by the Board of Examiners and other relevant bodies, then Schools may contact students who have failed before the decision is published in EUCLID Student View. Schools should not give informal indications about the final award, final degree programme or final course result or progression decision in advance of the decision of the Board of Examiners and/or other relevant bodies. See regulation 46.4 for the release of provisional marks.

47.12 Where there is a requirement to confirm pass lists to a Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the assessment results should not be collated and sent until the results of individual assessments have been made available to the student.

47.13 If students attend the graduation ceremony their names and degrees are included in the graduation programme. The Student Administration team is responsible for the final award listing in the graduation ceremony programme (if the student registers their intention to graduate in person) and the listing in the press (students may opt out of this listing).

Regulation 48   Degree examination scripts

Degree examination scripts are received by the University in confidence. Degree examination scripts, or copies of such scripts, may be returned to students on SCQF Level 7 and 8 (usually Year 1 and 2 pre-honours) courses after the Board of Examiners has published ratified course results. Scripts will not be returned to students on courses at SCQF levels 9-12 (usually Honours and postgraduate taught level).

Application of the regulation

48.1   Students are entitled to see their examination scripts to assist with the provision of feedback and their self-reflective learning.

48.2   Course organisers, or their delegates, may show and discuss students' examination scripts with them for feedback purposes. Local arrangements are made for ways to implement the opportunity for students to see their exam scripts.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/feedback

48.3   Other forms of assessed summative work may be returned to students after the Board of Examiners has published ratified course results, provided that sufficient documentation is retained for the Board of Examiners and External Examiners. This documentation needs to record those types of assessment which cannot be made available to the Board of Examiners.

48.4 The potential return of scripts to students on Year 1 and 2 pre-Hhonours courses does not apply to multiple choice questions which are not defined as degree examination scripts.

48.5 Schools will need to make arrangements to make exam scripts available to students taking Year 1 and 2 pre-Hhonours courses to take away (on individual request) after the retention period is over. Schools may wish to decide to keep the scripts for longer than the minimum required retention period, for example in order to make them available for release to the relevant students returning in the following semester (this is at the discretion of individual Schools).

Regulation 49   Retention and destruction of material

Assessed material must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's student records retention guidance.

Application of the regulation

49.1 Information about the student records retention schedule is online: https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records

49.2 Schools need to maintain an adequate documentary record of assessed work, which is necessary to inform decisions of original, resit and reconvened Boards of Examiners.

49.3 Material which contributes to the assessment of the degree, including any written examinations, dissertations, essays, laboratory or studio work and projects, should be retained in the School for a suitable period after the Board of Examiners meeting which decides the overall classification or award of the degree, diploma or certificate. This enables the Board to respond to any student appeal.

49.4 Assessment material should be destroyed at the end of the retention period, or at the end of the period in which the School has agreed it will retain the information for (see regulation 48.5). For students who submit appeals, the retention period will need to be extended until the end of the appeal process. Other material which contributes to the final assessment of the degree or overall assessment of the course may be returned to the student after the expiry of the retention period. Dissertations and theses may be retained by Schools, who have the responsibility to make them available to any enquirer in response to a freedom of information request (unless an exemption applies). The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 requires the University to make available to any enquirer any information held by the University, including copies of assessments, unless one of the legislation's narrowly defined exemptions applies. While there is an exemption for personal data,

it must be considered on a case-by-case basis. Assessment samples may be retained for specified periods as supporting documentation for accreditation and quality assurance purposes, e.g. Teaching Programme Reviews.

49.5   Where students have consented, assessment material can be retained for longer and be used as exemplars for future students. The material can be kept for as long as the course exists or until the student withdraws consent, whichever happens earlier. All student names must be removed before use.

Section E.   Assessment decisions

Regulation 50   Award of degrees, diplomas and certificates

Degrees, diplomas and certificates are awarded by the Senatus on the basis of Board of Examiners' recommendations. Each honours programme of study, the MBChB and the BVM&S, has a Board of Examiners responsible for recommending the award of the degree and determining the classification of the degree. Each postgraduate degree, diploma or certificate examination has a Board of Examiners responsible both for determining progression to diploma/masters dissertation (on programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a dissertation/research project) and for determining the final award of the qualification.

Application of the regulation

50.1   Information on the criteria for award of degrees, diplomas and certificates is published in advance.

Regulation 51   Undergraduate progression: pre-honours and into honours

To progress to the next year of study and into honours, students must meet the requirements for progression which are specified in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study and degree programme tables. www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Application of the regulation

51.1   The Undergraduate Progression Board has responsibility for ensuring that students have met the requirements for progression, on the basis of information provided by Boards of Examiners.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf

51.2   The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf

Regulation 52   Undergraduate honours assessment progression

The Undergraduate Progression Board has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the next year of honours study. Progressing students must:
(a)   pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
(b)   have an overall average of 40% or more for the 120 credits of study taken in the relevant honours year; and
(c)   must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook.
When all the marks for the taught components of the relevant year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

Application of the regulation

52.1   The Undergraduate Progression Board has responsibility for ensuring that students have met the requirements for progression, on the basis of information provided by Boards of Examiners.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf

52.2   The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf

52.3   In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, in addition to other final course marks.

52.4   PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID", as are EUCLID grades for Credit on aggregate (AA, CA and UA).
www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html

52.5   Where a student studies abroad for a single semester in the junior Honours year, decisions regarding eligibility for credit on aggregate are made separately for the semester spent studying abroad and the semester spent in Edinburgh. Students are eligible for up to 20 credits to be awarded on aggregate in each semester, in line with the criteria above.

Regulation 53   Award of undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees

Students registered for an Ordinary or General (non-Honours) degree may be awarded the degree if they satisfy the requirements in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study.

Application of the regulation

53.1   The Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board may propose the award of an Ordinary or General degree to those students who have met the requirements of one of these degrees but who do not satisfy the honours degree requirements.

53.2   The Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board should take account of the recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee and the student's general academic record when determining the award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification. Boards of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.

Regulation 54   Undergraduate honours degree award

The Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can be awarded a classified honours degree. To graduate students must:
(a)   pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 10 or above in their final honours year; and
(b)   have an overall average of 40% or more for the 120 credits of final honours; and
(c)   must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme.

When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

Application of the regulation

54.1   The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf

54.2   In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, along with other final course marks.

54.3 The Board of Examiners may propose the award of an Ordinary or General degree be made to students who do not achieve the honours classification requirements, on the basis of their honours achievements.

54.4 The Board of Examiners may propose the award of an honours degree to students who do not achieve the requirements for an undergraduate masters, on the basis of their senior honours achievements.

54.5 The Board of Examiners should take account of the recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee and of the student's general academic record, when determining the classification and award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification or classification. Boards of Examiners may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.

54.6 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID".

Regulation 55   Undergraduate degree classification

The Board of Examiners for assessment of students in their final year is responsible for deriving the classification for award of an honours degree. Degree classification is derived by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each course. Exceptions are outlined in the guidance on the regulation.

Application of the regulation

55.1 The assessment weighting of a course within ~~a year~~the classification calculation is proportional to its credit value.

55.2 For degrees with two honours years, including degree programmes with an obligatory period of residence/study abroad, the classification is based on a credit-weighted average of performance ~~in~~ across both honours years, ~~which are equally weighted~~ except for:

    (a) modern language degree programmes with a prescribed period of residence abroad where credit points for language acquisition through residence are aggregated with those associated with the language learning in the final year and where the classification is based on two honours years in line with this aggregation;

    (b) degree programmes where students can opt to spend a period of residence/study abroad, where credits will be allocated for the study abroad but these are weighted zero in the final classification;

Commented [BA13]: As agreed at January 2020 APRC.

(c) the MA in International Business, where the classification for these students is based solely on the final honours year; and

(d) the BSc Honours degrees in the School of Biological Sciences and Deanery of Biomedical Sciences which are weighted 2:1 Senior: Junior Honours; and the BSc degrees in Chemistry which are weighted 2:1 Senior: Junior Honours.

55.3 Integrated Masters degrees have three honours years and their classification is based on all these years, in which the three honours years are weighted respectively 20, 40, 40 (in percentage terms), with the exception of the MChem and MChemPhys degrees "with Industrial Experience" and "with a Year Abroad", and the MPhys degrees "with a Year Abroad" which are weighted 20, 20, 60.

55.4 The relevant Board of Examiners will specify which courses will be used for classification purposes for students who exit with a BSc who were previously on an Integrated Masters degree.

55.5 Intercalated honours degrees have a one-year honours component and their classification is based solely on the honours year. Degree classification is derived

by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each course.

55.6 Honours degree programmes in the Art and Design subject areas (except the MA Fine Art) within Edinburgh College of Art calculate classification based solely on performance the final honours year.

55.7 Classification models for credit for study abroad are contained in the College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf

Regulation 56   Postgraduate assessment progression

For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project or dissertation component, students must pass the assessment requirements of the taught stage at an appropriate level at the first attempt before progression to the dissertation. In order to progress to the masters dissertation students must:
(a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
(b) attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression; and
(c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

For programmes where the taught and project or dissertation components are taken in parallel, or where there are not identifiable taught and research project or dissertation components, the requirements for progression are determined at programme level, stated in the Programme Handbook.

Application of the regulation

56.1 For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project / dissertation component (e.g. 120 credits of taught courses in semesters 1 and 2, followed by a 60 credit project / dissertation component):

(a) Postgraduate Boards of Examiners are normally convened at least twice during the year for full-time students. The initial meeting to decide matters

relating to progression (to masters, or diploma), or failure, is held at the end of the coursework component. A second meeting to consider the dissertation results and the final award of degrees (or diplomas) is held soon after completion of the programme. Both meetings are equally important.

(b) The Postgraduate Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the dissertation required for candidature for the award of a masters degree; or, in the case of other awards, exit either directly or following satisfaction of any outstanding requirement.

(c) Exceptionally, with the permission of the relevant College Committee, a student who has been unable to sit an examination because of illness or other extenuating circumstance may, if that circumstance is certified, be allowed to progress to the dissertation stage prior to completion of the coursework assessment on condition that the dissertation will subsequently be set aside if the student is eventually unsuccessful in the coursework element of the programme.

56.2 For MFA programmes (240 credits) where there is an identifiable taught component, in order to progress to masters dissertation/project the student must pass at least 120 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits, and attain an average of at least 50% for the 180 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression to dissertation/project, and satisfy any other requirements as outlined in 56 (c) above.

56.3   For postgraduate taught programmes involving 360 credits, information regarding progression requirements is included in the relevant programme handbook.

56.4   In general failed course are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, along with other final course marks.

56.5   In Regulation 56(a) above, where some of the 80 credits are pass/fail courses, then where these courses are passed, they can be included in the 80 credit total. However, a mark of 50% is the mark that is to be applied in calculations under Regulation 56 (b).

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

56.6   PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID"
www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html

Regulation 57   Postgraduate degree, diploma and certificate award

In order to be awarded the certificate students must:
(a)   pass at least 40 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
(b)   attain an average of at least 40% for the 60 credits of study examined for the certificate; and
(c)   satisfy any other specific requirements for the named certificate that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded the diploma students must:
(a)   pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
(b)   attain an average of at least 40% for the 120 credits of study examined for the diploma; and
(c)   satisfy any other specific requirements for the named diploma that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded a masters degree students must:
(a)   have satisfied any requirements for progression, as laid out in taught assessment regulation 56 above, and
(b)   attain an additional 60 credits, by achieving a mark of at least 50% for the dissertation or project component (if the programme has a dissertation or project element) and

(c)   satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective Programme Handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme or diploma are available, if the student has achieved ~~PASS~~ a mark of at least 40%~~marks~~ in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses, up to a maximum of 40 credits. For a certificate, a maximum of 20 credits may be awarded on aggregate.

Application of the regulation

57.1   Boards of Examiners, including those involving subjects from two or more of the Schools, are required to establish guidelines in advance on how the results of individual papers or units of assessment are to be aggregated, averaged or profiled to produce the overall final result. These guidelines are an integral part of the disclosure process and must be published to students within one month of the start of the programme.

57.2   In line with the Postgraduate Degree Regulations, postgraduate taught programmes may include some courses at SCQF levels below 11. Where courses at SCQF level 9 or below are included in a programme, marks for these courses are disregarded for the purposes of calculating averages for the award of credit on aggregate, progression, award, and the award of Merit and Distinction.

57.3   In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. Exam Boards must make this distinction clear when reporting course marks.

57.4   The Board of Examiners should take account of any ~~personal circumstances~~relevant special circumstances and of the student's general academic record, when determining the award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification. Boards of Examiners may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.

57.5   The Postgraduate Degree Regulations permit a General Postgraduate Certificate or General Postgraduate Diploma to be attained by students who do not fulfil the requirements for a specific Certificate or Diploma award but who have attained the required volume and level of credits.

57.6   PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID" www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html

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Regulation 58   Resubmission of postgraduate dissertations or research projects

Students may be permitted to resubmit the dissertation or research project in line with the provisions of the Special Circumstances Policy where a student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control (58.1-58.2).

Students are also entitled to one resubmission of the dissertation or research project for postgraduate Masters programmes where the student has achieved a mark of 45 to 49% at the first attempt (58.3-58.9).

Application of the regulation

58.1   Where a student is granted the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project due to special circumstances, the Board of Examiners will be responsible for providing the student with a statement which outlines the deficiencies in their original submission, and agreeing an appropriate deadline and appropriate supervision. The student will be granted a null sit for their first attempt, and the recorded mark for their revised dissertation or project will not be capped. Paragraphs 58.2 3 to 58.8 do not apply to students granted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project due to special circumstances.

58.2   Students who have been granted an opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project due to special circumstances may be permitted one further resubmission under this regulation (with reference to paragraphs 58.3 to 58.89), provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

58.3   Where a student receives 48 or 49% for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt, they may be considered as a borderline candidate for the award of the Master's degree, in line with published information regarding consideration of borderline cases (see Regulation 44).

58.4   Since the concept of borderlines (see Regulation 44) does not apply to the threshold for entitlement to resubmit a dissertation or research project, Boards of Examiners are not able to permit students with marks of 43 or 44% at the first attempt to resubmit their dissertation or project unless special circumstances apply.

58.5   Students who achieve a mark of 45 to 49% for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt as a result of a marking penalty, either for late submission or for academic misconduct, are entitled to one resubmission, in line with this regulation.

58.5 6   The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project with a statement which outlines the

deficiencies in their original submission. The student is also entitled to receive further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one occasion before resubmission. The student must include with their revised dissertation a statement outlining the changes made to the previous submission. This statement will not be marked.

58.6 7   The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their original result. Extension requests and special circumstances submissions in relation to this deadline will be handled in line with provisions outlined within the Taught Assessment Regulations and the Special Circumstances Policy. Where special circumstances affect the resubmission, Boards of Examiners are permitted to offer a further resubmission under the Special Circumstances Policy, if they consider this appropriate. The mark for a dissertation resubmitted under these circumstances will be capped at 50%, in line with Regulation 58.9.

58.7 8   Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the mark they had received for their first attempt will be treated as final and they will be considered for a relevant exit award.

58.8 9   If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at Masters level, the student will be awarded the Masters degree. The recorded mark for the revised dissertation or research project will be capped at 50%.

Regulation 59   Award of postgraduate merit

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with merit. To achieve a merit, a student must be awarded at least 60% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and must achieve an average of at least 60% in the remaining elements. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for merits.

Application of the regulation
59.1   Merit may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates.
59.2   Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project in line with Regulation 58 (except where Special Circumstances apply), merit can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertationthey are not eligible for the award of the degree with merit.

59.3   For degrees which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of merit will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.

59.4   For MFA, the award of merit relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).

59.5   Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below the boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 58.00% to 59.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.

59.6   The average for the courses is derived by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each coursecalculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average, except where the credit was awarded for the certificate or diploma associated with the masters degree.

59.7   The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

Regulation 60   Award of postgraduate distinction

Taught postgraduate degrees may be awarded with distinction. To achieve a distinction, a student must be awarded at least 70% on the University's Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme for the dissertation, if the programme has a dissertation element, and must achieve an average of at least 70% in the remaining elements. Borderlines, for both the dissertation and course average elements, are considered for distinctions.

Application of the regulation

60.1   Distinctions may be awarded for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates.

60.2   Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project in line with Regulation 58 (except where Special Circumstances apply), distinction can only be awarded based on the mark for the originally submitted dissertationthey are not eligible for the award of the degree with distinction.

60.3   For degree programmes which use letter grades in addition to numerical marks, the award of distinction will be made where the student meets the above criteria using the numerical mark.

60.4   For MFA, the award of distinction relates only to grades obtained at stages 3 and 4 (Year 2).

60.5   Borderline marks are defined as marks from two percentage points below boundary up to the boundary itself, e.g. 68.00% to 69.99% for the dissertation and for the average of other courses. See also taught assessment regulation 44 above.

60.6   The average for the courses is derived by calculating the mean of marks of the individual courses, weighted by the number of credit points of each coursecalculated on the basis of credit weighting. Courses where credit has been obtained by recognition of prior learning are excluded from the average, except where the credit was awarded for the certificate or diploma associated with the masters degree.

60.7   The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme can be found at: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

Regulation 61   Award of credit from other universities

Boards of Examiners confirm the award of credit from other universities which is used in the award of a University of Edinburgh degree.

Application of the regulation

61.1   There are two types of credit from external bodies: recognition of prior credit at admission, determined by Colleges against published criteria; and recognition of external learning whilst on programme. In both cases recognition of prior learning is recorded on admission.
www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 62   Minuting of decisions of Boards of Examiners

The internal and External Examiners must concur in the mark and grade to be awarded to each student and in the classification and award of degree to be made. Boards of Examiners must record all decisions in the minutes of the meeting.

Application of the regulation

62.1   Once the Board of Examiners has decided on the final marks, grades and if appropriate, class of degree and award for each student, the students' names must then made visible to the Board of Examiners. There must then be a final check of the results before the list is agreed and recorded in the minutes. Only in the event of detection of an error, which was not detectable when examination numbers were used, can changes be made to the marks, grades or class of degree at this stage. Any such change should be recorded in the minutes.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners

62.2   The Convener receives and is responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meetings are an accurate record of the meeting and of the approved results.

62.3   Minutes should include:
(a)   a record of the names of the examiners and those in attendance at the meeting;
(b)   relevant information considered at the meeting or by the Special Circumstances Committee, and outcomes from this;
(c)   discussion and outcomes of borderline cases;
(d)   details of any modification of marks, grades or classification, and the reasons for these; and

(e)   comments by the External Examiner(s) about the examination of the
course, the performance of the students in general, and their approval of
results agreed by the Board of Examiners.

62.4   The minute is a confidential document, although information on a particular student
may need to be disclosed to that student under the Data Protection Act and generic
information may need to be disclosed under Freedom of Information. Further
information is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

62.5   If agreement cannot be reached on concurrence of decisions then the issue is
referred to the Head of College.

Regulation 63   Board of Examiners: return of marks

Assessment and course results, degree classification and awards agreed by the Board of
Examiners and confirmed by the External Examiner(s) must be recorded on the student
record system as the final official results of the University.

Application of the regulation

63.1   Schools have responsibility for ensuring that final results are displayed accurately in
the student record system. More than one person should be involved in checking
their accuracy.

63.2   When marks for courses are finalised (and not before then), they must be rounded
to an integer, i.e. with no decimal places. Any mark which is xx.50 or above is
rounded up and any mark which is xx.49 or below is rounded down, e.g. 59.50% is
rounded to 60%, 59.49% is rounded to 59%. Individual course marks must be
rounded before they are released to students and the rounded marks must be used
in calculating the overall mean mark. The overall mean mark is to be used in
Honours classification, progression, and award decisions. The overall mean mark
is not rounded.

63.3   Schools have responsibility for uploading course results and final award outcomes
in line with the deadlines published each year by Student Systems.
www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Support/awards.htm

63.4   In the case of autumn (August) undergraduate examinations, results should be
submitted as soon as possible and not later than 10 days before the start of the
next semester.

63.5   Provisional marks for components of assessment may also be released to students
via the student record system (see regulation 36)

Regulation 64   Status of decisions

Decisions by a Board of Examiners, once certified in writing, are final. In exceptional circumstances a Convener of the Board of Examiners can reconvene the Board to review a decision.

Application of the regulation

64.1   A Board of Examiners may, at the request of any of its members or member of the Special Circumstances Committee, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light, or if any error having a material bearing on that decision, or an error in the written certification of that decision, has been made. A member of the Board may request a review but it is the Convener who must review the decision in the light of any new significant information or error. Therefore it is the Convener, and not a member of the Board, who decides whether to reconvene the Board. Where the significant information presented would constitute special circumstances under the Special Circumstances Policy, the Board of Examiners should only consider this information where it believes that there is a good reason why the student did not make the information available in advance of the Board's original decision.

64.2   If the Board is satisfied that there are grounds for varying the decision, the Board shall report its decision to Student Systems

64.3   Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an examination or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any examination or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and that whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Where such an error affects degree award or classification, the School should contact the relevant College and Academic Services for approval before notifying the student of any change. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.

64.4   In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.

64.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning examinations.

Regulation 65 Convener's Action

The Convener of the Board of Examiners, Progression Board, or Special Circumstances Committee may take decisions by Convener's Action.

Application of the regulation

65.1 This may occur when the Board of Examiners takes a decision in principle but needs confirmation or further information, or when the Board, or Special Circumstances Committee considers the possible outcomes and authorises the Convener, once relevant information is known, to apply the appropriate option. Convener's Action may also be appropriate when the decision to be made follows an existing precedent.

65.2 Decisions made by Convener's Action should be recorded and reported to the relevant Board or Committee.

Regulation 66 Failure to complete all the assessment requirements of a degree programme

When a student fails to complete all the assessment requirements of a degree programme the Board of Examiners or Undergraduate Progression Board will investigate the case. If there is no satisfactory reason then taught assessment regulation 64 on unsatisfactory progress applies. If the Special Circumstances Committee for the relevant Board of Examiners (including Progression Boards) is given sufficient evidence that the performance of a student has been affected for reasons of illness, accident or other circumstances beyond the student's control, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

66.1 The University's Special Circumstances Policy is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Regulation 67   Unsatisfactory academic progress

The University may exclude students who do not meet the criteria for progression on their programme.

Application of the regulation

67.1   Degree regulations, Degree Programme Tables, programme handbooks and/or course handbooks must contain details of the progress which students are expected to achieve within given periods. They must also include warnings that students are liable to be considered for exclusion if these expectations are not met.

67.2   Where a student fails to meet the published progression criteria, the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies will be used. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

67.3   Some degree programmes leading to a professional qualification include Fitness to Practise considerations. Any issues of unsatisfactory progress in relation to fitness to practise are dealt with according to the relevant College's published Fitness to Practise procedures.

67.4   A student declared to have made unsatisfactory progress under professional Fitness to Practise requirements is normally excluded from all further attendance at classes and examinations leading to the professional qualification, but is entitled to apply to the College for permission to re-enter for assessment in a suitable alternative programme which does not lead to a professional qualification.

Regulation 68   Academic Appeal

Students have the right of academic appeal against the decisions of Boards of Examiners or Progression Boards on specific grounds, which are set out in the University's Student Appeal Regulations
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals

Section F.   Interpretation and Significant Disruption

Regulation 69   Interpretation of regulations

The Academic Policy and Regulations~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Committee has authority to resolve any dispute arising from these regulations. The University Secretary and their nominees have authority to make urgent decisions relating to assessment issues.

Application of the regulation

69.1   Staff who need guidance on the taught assessment regulations, beyond that provided in the regulations and associated guidance, should contact the relevant College Office, Dean and/or the Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for the

~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Academic Policy and Regulations Committee:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-
student-progression

Regulation 70   Significant disruption: concessions and standards

When the University's assessment practices are subject to significant disruption then the
Academic Policy and Regulations~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Committee may
approve temporary concessions to mitigate the impact of assessment disruption on
students, without compromising academic standards. Board of Examiners take decisions
that ensure the consistency of treatment of students and the maintenance of academic
standards. The overriding principles are that:

(a)   the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners remains paramount;
(b)   the University's academic standards will be maintained; and
(c)   the provisions of the University's Taught Assessment Regulations remain in
         force except where a concession has been approved by the Academic Policy
         and Regulations ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Committee.

These concessions will only be used where necessary: if a Board of Examiners is able to
operate without a concession then the Board will do so.

Application of the regulation

70.1   Significant disruption can be extremes of weather, loss of facilities, and factors
           beyond the University's control which have an impact on the assessment of
           students. This may result in Boards of Examiners only having partial results
           available.

70.2   In response to individual significant disruptions that may have a widespread impact
           on assessment, the University will adopt a communication strategy for students,
           staff and key external stakeholders, e.g. External Examiners, to ensure that they
           are aware of the measures that are adopted.

70.3   All forms of assessment, such as examination scripts and course assignments, are
           the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or
           markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required.

70.4   Drawing on previous experience [APRC 14/15 2 C], the issues and regulations
           where APRC may consider concessions include, but are not limited to:
           (a)   External Examiners: number appointed; commenting on examination papers;
                    participation in Boards: confirmation of results [Taught Assessment
                    Regulations 5, 8.1(a), 38, 39.1, 39.2, 39.6, 62.3(e), 63]
           (b)   Ensuring that there is appropriate external input for relevant decisions, for
                    example, External Examiners provide an important quality assurance

function in the assessment process. If an External Examiner is unable to act then that quality assurance function still needs to be carried out;

(c)   Board of Examiners' quorum [TAR 39, 39.1];

(d)   Progression requirements and timing of progression decisions [TAR 51, 52, 56, 56.1(a) and Degree regulations on *Progression and Permissible Load*];

(e)   Feedback schedules [TAR 16].

Regulation 71   Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards

The Academic Policy and Regulations ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Committee must confirm that significant disruption has occurred before the provisions of the significant disruption regulations come into effect. In periods of significant disruption, Boards may need to take decisions on the basis of partial or unreliable information. Boards must maintain the principle that students may only be awarded a pass and a mark / grade for a course, or a progression or award decision, where there is sufficient evidence of performance against relevant learning outcomes. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of a student should proceed to determine marks and grades for courses, and progression and award decisions, as usual. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of only some students should proceed to determine marks and grades, and progression and award decisions, for those students.

The below Application to the regulation provides information about the principles which Boards will apply when dealing with missing or unreliable results, and some of the actions they may take to address this. In line with TAR 70, Academic Policy and Regulations ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~ Committee may approve additional concessions to the regulations to enable Boards to take decisions regarding students with incomplete or unreliable profiles of assessment marks or course results due to disruption.

Application of the regulation

71.1   Where Boards have sufficient evidence to make decisions then the decision will be made and will stand, unless subsequent information becomes available which it would be in the student's academic interest for the Board to consider.

71.2   Situations may arise in which assessment results are unavailable for particular elements of assessment for all students or for only some students. Such elements of assessment may become available after the disruption is over.

71.3   Within the limits described below, Boards are empowered to make decisions in the absence of assessment results which are expected to become available at a later date.

71.4   At the start of the meeting to determine course outcomes, the Board of Examiners must agree on any specific elements of assessment without whose marks they cannot proceed to determine a student's result for the course. Before making such a decision, the Board should consider carefully whether there is sufficient other information already available to allow it to take a view on such elements of assessment. If it is not possible to determine a result or decision then the Board will reconvene when information is available.

71.5   Where a very high proportion of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is possible that the Board may decide it is able to determine a student's marks and grades for the course. The Board must be satisfied that, in its academic judgement, the mark and grade assigned is correct, and that the outcome will not need to be changed when further assessment results become available.

71.6   As a guide, where results for less than four-fifths (by weighting) of the assessment for a course are available for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will be able to determine a mark or grade for the course for that individual. However, if at least half of the assessment results are available, then the Board may decide it is able to confirm a pass for the student. If unable to reach a decision, even on a pass, the Board should record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.

71.7   Where less than half of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will have sufficient information to reach any decision, even on a pass, and the Board may need to record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.

71.8   No Board should return a fail decision in a situation where any unavailable assessment results will become available at a later date, unless it is absolutely clear that even passes at 100% in the unavailable assessments would not be sufficient to turn a fail into a pass.

71.9   Boards of Examiners responsible for progression and award decisions may be required to make decisions on these matters where students have incomplete or unreliable profiles of course results. This may occur where students have yet to receive final results for some courses; or where students have been awarded a pass but not a mark or grade for some courses; or where marks for some courses are not regarded as a reliable indicator of students' ability due to disruption. In some circumstances, Boards may be in a position to address this using existing provisions of these regulations, such as the award of credit on aggregate for Honours and postgraduate taught students. Boards may also consider excluding missing or adversely affected course results when making calculations regarding

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credit on aggregate, progression, award, Honours degree classification, and the award of Merit and Distinction on postgraduate taught degrees. Boards may also wish to take account of the impact of disruption for students who are in the borderline for progression or award purposes.

71.10 Once all assessment results are available, Boards should reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to determine outstanding marks, grades, and progression and award decisions and to review the status of any decisions where significant information is now available.

~~30 May 2019~~28 May 2020

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

**Postgraduate Assessment Regulations
for Research Degrees 2020/21**

Description of paper
1. Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21. The key changes are included in the paper at the beginning.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For discussion and approval.

Background and context
3. Academic Services conduct an annual review of the assessment regulations to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Colleges are asked to provide comments regarding any regulations which require necessary amendment or clarification. Academic Services then draft amendments, with further consultation carried out where appropriate.

Discussion
4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for academic year 2020/21. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments.

Resource implications
5. There are no potential resource implications indicated by the proposed amendments.

Risk management
6. The proposed amendments do not introduce any new risks.

Equality & diversity
7. Any equality and diversity implications of the proposed changes are discussed in the Key Changes document.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. Academic Services will communicate approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies. Academic Services will also cover any changes to regulations in Boards of Examiners briefings and other relevant briefing events for staff in Schools and Colleges.

Author

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer and Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services.

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni

Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21

Regulation	What has changed
Throughout	Hyperlinks updated as necessary. References to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee amended to Academic Policy and Regulations Committee.
15 Repeat progression review	Amended to state that, "Where a student is offered a repeat progression review under 14(b), the repeat review must be undertaken within three months of the initial annual progression review." This change clarifies that a repeat progression review is not required for other annual progression review recommendations (for example when recommending exclusion or registration for a different degree).
22-24 Examiner recommendations (PhD, PhD by Research Publications, MPhil)	(b) deleted "without further supervision". This change clarifies that supervisors often provide a great deal of support in the final stages thesis completion.
25 Thesis Resubmission	25.3 Amended to state that examiners may hold a second oral examination if they consider it appropriate. This change clarifies that, in line with the regulations on examiner recommendations, a second oral examination is not always required.
26 Academic misconduct	Deleted reference to Students' Association peer proof-reading service as this service is not currently being offered.
44 Final version of the thesis	Amended to remove reference to hard copy submission, pending Library move to electronic only submission mid-2020. The move to electronic only submission was brought forward in March 2020 to address Covid-19 issues. The move to electronic only submission of the final thesis will promote equality of opportunity for students who may have left Edinburgh, and particularly international students who may have left the UK, and would incur additional costs in submitting a hard copy.

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees
Academic Year 202019/210

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Purpose of Policy

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, articulating the academic goals and policies of the University.

Overview

These regulations:
(i)   replace the previous Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
(ii)   set out the rules which must be followed in research assessment for Research Degrees; and
(iii) provide links to other sources of guidance or related regulations.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide and apply to all postgraduate research degrees at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework levels 11 and 12. The regulations apply to work submitted for assessment during the current academic year. They relate to all research degrees listed in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk .

 More detail is given in the document.

Contact Officer	Susan Hunter	Academic Policy Officer	Susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 2830.05.2019	Starts: 16.09.19	Equality impact assessment:	Amendments: N/A	Next Review: 2019/20/21

Approving authority	~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Consultation undertaken	Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations Working Group, Colleges, Students' Association, ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, Researcher Experience Committee, Student Disability Service, College Academic Misconduct Officers, Records Management, Distance Learning, Student Administration and Edinburgh Research and Innovation
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, DRPS Glossary of Terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms202019-201.pdf
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees, Assessment, External Expertise
Policies superseded by this policy	Previous versions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.
Keywords	Assessment, assessment regulations, degree award, examination, examiners, progression, research assessment, oral examination, viva

Field Code Changed

Additional guidance

For research degree programmes that contain a significant proportion of taught courses, taught elements are governed by the University's Taught Assessment Regulations: https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf. The regulations must be applied, unless a concession has been awarded by the ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (~~CSPC~~APRC) on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The "Application of the regulation" must also be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. Concessions and exemptions are recorded by ~~CSPC~~ APRC and Colleges as appropriate. The regulations operate in accordance with legislation and University policies on Equality and Diversity: https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies. Members of staff who need additional guidance may consult their Head of College or their nominee, their College Postgraduate Office, Academic Services, Student Administration or Student Systems.

Where reference is made to "the relevant Dean" this should be taken as being the Dean with responsibility for postgraduate research matters and "the Committee" is the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, or the Committee of each College which is formally identified as exercising the functions of a College Postgraduate Committee for the purposes of postgraduate research academic decisions. Where reference is made to 'the Head of College' or 'Head of School' this may also in some cases be a designated representative of that individual. The term MSc by Research includes Masters by Research, MTh by Research and LLM by Research.

For Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) students on courses that use the assessment grade scheme, the term 'mark' in the regulations also includes 'grade'.

Definitions of some of the key terms in the regulations can be found in the Glossary of Terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms202019-201.pdf

Field Code Changed

These research assessment regulations, and related University practices, are consistent with the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code of Higher Education, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

This document should be read in conjunction with University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study; the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students; the External Examining Code of Practice; and Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees. These are available via: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/a-to-z

Contents

Section A   Roles and Responsibilities

Regulation 1   Scope of regulations

All relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees apply to all Doctoral and MPhil degree programmes except where stated.

The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees also apply to MSc by Research degree programmes where relevant. Information regarding how these regulations apply to MSc by Research degree programmes is provided in Section E of these regulations.

Regulation 2   College Postgraduate Committee: responsibility for research degree programmes

Research degree programmes are the responsibility of the relevant College Postgraduate Committee.

Application of the regulation

2.1   The College Postgraduate Committee will consider and ratify the recommendation of the Internal and External Examiners appointed to examine a student for the award of a research degree.

2.2   The responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee include:
(a)   approving the format of assessments;
(b)   the security of and arrangements for assessments; examining and marking assessed work; and processing and storing marks and grades;
(c)   the quality and standards of marking;
(d)   ensuring all examiners are aware of their responsibilities;
(e)   accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Committee.

2.3   Committees may, where appropriate, delegate operation of some responsibilities to Schools. Such delegation decisions are recorded by the College.

2.4   Colleges produce information on postgraduate research assessment:
CHSS: www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/research-students
 CMVM: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=174612428
~~www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/CMVMPGMarketing/CMVM+Postgraduate~~
CSE:
        https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/CSCE/AcademicAffairs/SitePages/Assessment.aspx ~~www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=118719348~~

Regulation 3   Examiners: appointment

Examiners are appointed by the relevant College. There are Internal Examiners, who are staff of the University nominated by the relevant Head of School, and External Examiners.

Application of the regulation

3.1   Where appropriate, upon receipt of a student's Notice of Intention to Submit form, the College Office will contact the Head of the student's School to request that examiners are nominated for the assessment of the thesis or submitted assessment.

3.2   Before submitting nominations to the College, the Head of School should consult the student's supervisors over the choice of examiners. Supervisors inform students of the names of possible examiners, and students must inform their supervisor if any problems are likely to arise if particular examiners are appointed. Any comments will be taken into account but students have no right to determine the Head of School's eventual recommendation, and therefore have no right to veto any particular appointment.

3.3   The External Examiner will be approached informally by the Head of School to establish their willingness to act. However, the College Postgraduate Committee has responsibility for the approval of all examiners. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the College committee in good time before the relevant assessment. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant College Office.

3.4   Internal Examiners are academic and/or honorary staff of the University. Honorary staff, in this context include:

Staff from Associated Institutions: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/associated-institutions ;

Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House School of Education;

Academic staff from partner higher education institutions as part of specific collaborative agreements;

and NHS staff who are honorary staff members of the University of Edinburgh.

3.5   Internal Examiners are appointed by the student's School with approval by the relevant College. Staff who are or who have been a supervisor of the student at any time cannot be an Internal Examiner for that student.

3.6   No person who has held an appointment on the teaching or research staff or has been a student of the University, or who has been granted honorary status in the University, is eligible to act as an External Examiner until a period of four years has elapsed since the termination of the appointment or the status. In exceptional circumstances this rule may be waived by the ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee. Members of affiliated or associated institutions may be Internal but not External Examiners.

3.7   The School must inform the student of the names of their examiners when the examiners have been approved by the College committee.

3.8   If more than three months have elapsed between the examiners being appointed and the student submitting the thesis, the College Office has responsibility for checking whether the commitments of any examiner have changed significantly so that consideration may be given to appointing an alternative examiner.

Regulation 4   Non-Examining Chair: appointment

The College must appoint a Non-Examining Chair if the Internal Examiner is acting for the first time, or is a member of honorary staff.

Application of the regulation

4.1   The appropriate process for appointing a Non-Examining Chair is the same as for appointing Internal Examiners (see regulation 3).

4.2   The role of the Non-Examining Chair is to ensure that due process is carried out and to attend for the duration of the oral examination. The non-examining chair needs to be a person with appropriate experience of postgraduate research examining from within the University. The Non-Examining Chair need not be from the same School as the student. The Non-Examining Chair must ensure that all parties to the examination process fully understand the expectations of them and should offer assistance and facilitation where necessary. The Non-Examining Chair must not express an opinion on the merits of the thesis.

Regulation 5   Number of examiners

Each student is assessed by at least one External Examiner and one Internal Examiner.

Application of the regulation

5.1   In particular cases, such as the assessment of an interdisciplinary topic, a second External Examiner may be appointed.

5.2   When the student is or has been a member of staff of the University during their research degree there must be two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner. "Member of staff" will be defined by the student's School with approval by College. There is no requirement for students who are or have only been tutors or demonstrators (or have undertaken similar roles) to have two external examiners.

5.3   See also Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

Regulation 6   Examiners: responsibilities

Examiners must have the requisite experience to examine the degree programme at the level at which it is offered. They need to meet the responsibilities set out by the College Postgraduate Committee and comply with quality and standards requirements.

Application of the regulation

6.1   The College Postgraduate Committee will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners, and ensure they are aware of these regulations and the recommendations available to them.

6.2   It is the responsibility of the College Postgraduate Committee to ensure that the External Examiner is competent to assess the degree. The External Examiner is appointed for their specialist knowledge, whereas the Internal Examiner may be a generalist or an expert in only part of the subject matter of the thesis.

6.3   Internal Examiners must be fully conversant with the procedures and regulations for oral examinations within the University. Heads of School must ensure that Internal Examiners are aware of all their duties in the examination process.

6.4   During the assessment the examiners must hold the thesis and the abstract in strict confidence.

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Policy

Regulation 7   Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No member of University of Edinburgh staff, Internal Examiner, External Examiner, or Non-Examining Chair shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.

Application of the regulation

7.1   If there is a potential conflict of interest the College Postgraduate Committee will be consulted.

7.2   The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is relevant:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/conflict_of_interest_0.pdf
~~www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Conflict_of_Interest.pdf~~

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Section B   Conduct of Assessment

Regulation 8   Assessment requirements: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to be aware of the assessment practices and requirements for the degree programme, including the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis.

Application of the regulation

8.1   The grounds for the award of specified research degrees are provided in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

8.2   The student must read the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf

8.3   It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment practice and requirements, including *The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.*

8.4   There are flow charts showing the thesis assessment process and the responsibilities of the student, College, School and Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/doctoralthesisassessment.pdf

8.5   The Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis can be found online at: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf

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Regulation 9   Assessment deadlines: student responsibilities

It is a student's responsibility to meet their assessment deadlines, including thesis submission deadlines and oral examination times and location.

Application of the regulation

9.1   It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is informed of all assessment requirements.

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Regulation 10   Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

Application of the regulation

10.1   Reasonable adjustments must be determined in advance by the Student Disability Service (SDS). They are recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments by the SDS, which communicates the Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's supervisor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, and other relevant areas.

10.2   The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments. The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School. In the case of oral examinations, the supervisor is responsible for communicating relevant adjustments to the chair of the oral examination.

10.3   The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the SDS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the Schedule of Adjustments, the SDS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.

10.4   The SDS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support: www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support/support-we-offer/study-adjustmentshttps://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/students/support-we-provide

10.5   The SDS supports students in the preparation and review of their Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their Schedule of Adjustments covers all types of assessment methods relevant to the programme. For example if a student discovers that an aspect of their programme is likely to impact on their support needs, they should contact the SDS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their Schedule of Adjustments.

10.6   Arrangements can be made via the SDS for students with temporary injuries or impairment, on the submission of relevant medical information. Students should contact the SDS as soon as possible to allow the SDS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

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Field Code Changed

Regulation 11   Language of assessment: languages other than English or Gaelic

The English language is the usual medium of teaching and assessment at the University
of Edinburgh. All work submitted for assessment must be written in the English language,
with the following exceptions: theses, dissertations or research projects may be submitted
in Gaelic (see regulation 12); theses, dissertations or research projects, and other
assessed work may be submitted in the language which is being studied where the
relevant course or programme handbook specifies that this is allowable.

Application of the regulation

11.1   Quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.

11.2   In very exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to
submit a thesis, research project or dissertation written in a language other than
English, where this is not specified by the relevant course or programme handbook.
Approval will only be given in cases where the nature of the research is such that
presentation of the research results in the language(s) of the materials under
analysis confers significant intellectual advantage to the community of scholars who
are expected to comprise the primary audience of the research. Approval to do so
must be sought either at the time of admission to the University or no later than by
the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study), and will not
be normally be granted retrospectively. Approval must be given by the appropriate
College Committee, which must be satisfied that there are sound academic reasons
for the request, and that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision
and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners
suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation in
the proposed language of submission.

11.3   Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis,
research project or dissertation should also include a substantial summary (of
approximately 10,000 words in the case of theses) written in English, summarising
the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where
Examiners' reports are completed in a language other than English, these must be
translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs
associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 12   Language of assessment: Gaelic

Theses, research projects and dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

Application of the regulation

12.1   The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

12.2   Candidates who wish to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible, and certainly not later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) in the case of Doctoral and MPhil students. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation.

12.3   Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 13   Progression review

The first progression review will take place for all students within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. The student must participate in a meeting and may be required to make a written submission and/or prepare an oral presentation. Progress in the subsequent years (at 9 to 12 months) is assessed until the thesis is submitted. The online progression report form must be completed.

Application of the regulation

13.1   Guidance on the procedure for the progression review is included in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf

13.2   It is expected that progression reviews are normally held early within the 9 – 12 month period, to allow time for a repeat review if this is required.

13.3   There are similar procedures for full-time and part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. Part-time students will not be expected to have made as much progress as full-time students within this time. Exceptionally, the first progression review may be postponed, with permission from the College. The postponement must be no longer than six months.

13.4   Colleges/Schools may also have additional requirements, for example 10 week review.

13.5   Schools must ensure that students are aware of how the progression review will be conducted.

Regulation 14   Annual progression review recommendation

The Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors will make one of the following recommendations after the annual review
   (a) confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;
   (b) a repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;
   (c) for part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;
   (d) registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;
   (e) registration for a postgraduate taught degree (for example MSc) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;
   (f) exclusion from study.

The College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for making the progression decision, having considered the recommendation of the Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School.

Application of the regulation

14.1   If the outcome of the annual review is 14(b) then the three month period starts from the date of issue of the progression decision to the student.

14.2   If there are doubts about a student's ability to complete a PhD successfully then option (d) must be considered. If there are serious doubts as to the student's research capability, then options (e) or (f) must be considered.

14.3   The Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study can be found at:
          www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

Regulation 15   Repeat progression review

Where a student is offered a repeat progression review under 14(b), the repeat review must be undertaken within three months of the initial annual progression review.If the annual progression review indicates some concerns about a student's progress then a repeat review must be undertaken within three months.

Application of the regulation

15.1   The repeat review can contain any or all of the components of the progression review (see regulation 13).

15.2   The options for recommendations from the repeat progression review are those listed in regulation 14, with the exception of Regulation 14(b). Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.

15.3   The College has responsibility for providing the student with a statement on expectations for progress.

Regulation 16   Notification of intention to submit a thesis for assessment

Students must notify their supervisor and the College Postgraduate Committee of their intention to submit their work for assessment.

Application of the regulation

16.1   The student must complete the suite of submission forms at least two months before the thesis is submitted:
            Notification of Intention to Submit,
            Thesis Abstract,
            Access to a Thesis and Publication of Abstract.

        www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms

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Regulation 17   Deadlines for the submission of a thesis for assessment

A student must submit their thesis for assessment, to the relevant College, within 12 months of the completion of their prescribed period of study, except:

- For the degree of **PhD by Research Publications** a student must submit their thesis within three to twelve months of registration.

Application of the regulation
17.1   At least two, soft-bound copies of each thesis containing an abstract and lay summary, and one electronic copy of each thesis, abstract and lay summary must be submitted to the relevant College Office. If more than two examiners are appointed then additional copies of the thesis will be required. Only the submission sent by the College Office is assessed by the examiners.
17.2   All theses must conform to regulations and guidance in Section C.
17.3   Once a student has submitted a thesis they cannot retract it.
17.4   The relevant College Office is responsible for transmitting the thesis and the examiners' report forms to the examiners.

Regulation 18   Early submission

Any student wishing to submit their thesis earlier than three months prior to the end of the prescribed period of study must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee.

Application of the regulation
18.1   The student must discuss early submission with their supervisor. Colleges are unlikely to approve early submission without the agreement of the Principal Supervisor.

Regulation 19   Examiners' reports

The College will send the thesis to the examiners who must each submit an initial, independent written report in advance of the oral examination. The examiners must not consult with each other in completing their initial report. Examiners will not send any comments or decision to the student prior to the oral examination. After the oral examination the examiners will submit a joint report.

Application of the regulation

19.1   At the University of Edinburgh, doctoral and MPhil degrees are assessed through a two-stage process in which each examiner, acting independently, submits an initial ('Part I') report on the thesis before the oral examination is held. Following the oral, the examiners are asked to submit a joint ('Part II') report on the thesis. Examiners submit their own Part I reports and the Internal Examiner is responsible for sending the Part II report to the relevant College Postgraduate Committee. The forms are available online:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms

19.2   Exceptionally, if the examiners do find it necessary to consult before writing their Part I reports, this fact and the reason(s) for it must be noted in their reports.

19.3   The reports must be sufficiently detailed to enable members of the College Postgraduate Committee (after the oral examination) to assess the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. They must be expressed in terms that are intelligible to those who are not specialists in the particular field of the thesis.

19.4   Examiners must complete their initial reports (Part I) prior to the oral examination, in the time frame advised by the School or College. The joint report (Part II) should be completed directly after the oral examination and sent to the College Postgraduate Committee within two weeks of the oral.

19.5   The chair of the oral examination should ensure that the Part II report gives a full account of the examiners' views. In the unlikely event of examiners failing to reach agreement, separate recommendations may be made and will be subject to arbitration by the College Postgraduate Committee.

Regulation 20   Preparation for oral assessment

All examiners must participate in any oral assessment of the student. The College has responsibility for overseeing the oral assessment of the student.

Application of the regulation

20.1   Oral assessment may be conducted using technology such as video conferencing, enabling the student or an examiner to participate but not be physically present at the University. Such remote assessment must have the permission of the College Postgraduate Committee, the student, all examiners and any Non-Examining Chair. The College has responsibility for approving and overseeing this process. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked_phd_oral.pdf

20.2   The Internal Examiner is responsible for consulting with the relevant Graduate School and ensuring that all the necessary arrangements for the oral assessment are made. The arrangements, including the date and place of the oral, the chairing of it, and the names of all those participating in it, must be provided in advance to all those who are to be present (i.e. the student, all examiners, any Non-Examining Chair and any observer). Where a Non-Examining Chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 4.)

20.3   If an examiner is unable to participate in the oral assessment, it may be postponed to a later date. If postponement would be a serious hardship to the student, the College Postgraduate Committee will consider appointing an alternative examiner.

20.4   The examiners complete and submit the relevant forms by the specified deadline: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/school-college-forms

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Regulation 21   Oral examination

The examiners will hold an oral examination to assess a student's doctoral or MPhil thesis. Oral examination may be used as part of the assessment process for other research degrees.

Application of the regulation

21.1   The expectation is that the oral examination will be held within three months of submission of the thesis.

21.2   The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the examiners are

assessing jointly whether the thesis and the student's defence of it satisfy the requirements and regulations for the award of the degree.

21.3 Where there is a non-examining chair, they will chair and attend for the duration of the oral. Where a non-examining chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 3.)

21.4 Supervisors may attend the oral examination, with consent of the student and examiners, but will not participate in or comment during the oral examination. Supervisors must leave the examination room with the student and do not participate in the examiners' discussion and decision on recommendations.

21.5 The (oral) examination procedure of practice-led PhDs can include exhibitions, performances and other events, elements and processes.

21.6 The professional doctorate oral examination may cover any part of the degree programme.

21.7 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation to make to the College Postgraduate Committee, indicate their recommendation to the student. The examiners must stress, however, that their recommendation is not final but will form the basis of the Part II report (see regulations 22-24). Receipt of the Part II report by the student from the College constitutes formal notification of the decision and beginning of any additional period of study set by the examiners.

Regulation 22   **PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation**

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

(a)   **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or

(b)   **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses, as identified by the examiners, must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without ~~further supervision and without~~ undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(c)   **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or

(d)   **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis needs work above and beyond editorial corrections or minor weaknesses in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, and this work may require further supervision. However, the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner(s) (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(e)   **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The student ought therefore to

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be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or

(f) **Award MPhil.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements; but the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil; or

(g) **Award MPhil following Minor Corrections.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil except for stated minor corrections in the thesis. The student should be invited to carry out the specified minor corrections as indicated by the examiners. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(h) **Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis may satisfy the requirements for the degree of MPhil if stated deficiencies in the thesis are remedied. Accordingly, the student should be invited to resubmit the thesis in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners for the degree of MPhil. The revisions should be completed within a further period which must not exceed 12 months; or

(i) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements or the requirements of the MPhil. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or

(j) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree requirements.

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Application of the regulation

22.1   Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 22 (d), (e) and (h).

22.2   If the student does not meet the requirements set under 22(b) to (h) then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.

22.3   A student presenting a thesis under Regulation 22 (h) may not subsequently be permitted to resubmit the thesis under Regulation 24 (e).

22.4   The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

22.5   Where a student is offered the award of a different degree under (f), (g) or (i) above then the original word limits for the offered degree are set aside.

22.6   Where the examiners' recommendation is (j), the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

22.7   Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d), (e) or (h) may be considered for an exit award.

Regulation 23   PhD by Research Publications: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

(a)   **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or

(b)   **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without ~~further supervision and without~~ undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal

Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or

(d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or

(f) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation

23.1   Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 23 (d) and (e).

23.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 23 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.

23.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

Regulation 24   MPhil: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

(a) **Award MPhil.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree of MPhil as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or

(b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without ~~supervision and without~~ undertaking any further original research. These corrections to the thesis must be completed within a specified period of not more than three months and are, subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or

(d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College.

In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

(e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or

(f) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the MPhil and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or

(g) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation

24.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 24 (d) and (e).

24.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 24 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.

24.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

24.4 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d) or (e) may be considered for an exit award.

24.5 Where the student is offered the award of an MPhil as an exit degree, having originally submitted for a doctorate, the MPhil word count will be set aside.

Regulation 25   Thesis resubmissions

Where the examiners decide that resubmission of a thesis is required, they must write a detailed statement of the aspects which require revision. The resubmitted thesis is judged only against this written statement. A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis.

Application of the regulation
25.1   No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis passed as satisfactory at the first assessment can be introduced at a later stage. The written statement and the aspects of the thesis which require revision must be approved by the College Postgraduate Committee and cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that Committee.
25.2   A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis. Thereafter, at most, they may make only minor corrections.
25.3   In the event of resubmission, the examiners will re-assess the thesis and may hold a second oral examination, if they consider it appropriate.
25.4   If resubmission is recommended, only one copy of the original thesis should be returned to the student. The other should be retained by the Internal Examiner to facilitate checking of revisions when the thesis is resubmitted.

Regulation 26   Academic misconduct

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

Application of the regulation
26.1   Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or your own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to cheat. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it

consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.

26.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.

26.3 A student who has submitted work for one course at this or another University must not submit the same work or part of the work to attempt to achieve academic credit through another course. See also the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations at: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

26.4 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/peerproofreading/

26.5 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.

26.6 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website. www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

Regulation 27   Security of marks

Assessed work, marks and grades must be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

Application of the regulation

27.1 The College has responsibility for the security of arrangements. In practice, the operation of this may be delegated to the College Office, Graduate School or equivalent.

27.2　Security arrangements must also include sending assessed work, marks and grades to examiners, including External Examiners; marking arrangements for online assessment; and correspondence about marks, which may be by email.

Section C   Thesis Regulations

Regulation 28   Format of thesis

Students are responsible for ensuring that the submitted thesis is presented in a clear, accessible and consistent format.

Application of the regulation

28.1   Guidance regarding the Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf

28.2   If the School or the examiners have concerns regarding the presentation of a thesis they should seek advice from the College. If the College considers the presentation of a thesis to make it unreasonable for the examiners to conduct the examination, it may require the student to represent and resubmit the thesis.

Regulation 29   Copyright

The student holds copyright as author of all work submitted for assessment.

Doctoral and MPhil students must grant the University the right to publish the thesis, abstract or list of works, and/or to authorise its publication for any scholarly purpose with proper acknowledgement of authorship.

Application of the regulations

29.1   The student reserves the copyright on both the thesis and the abstract.

29.2   Students must complete the Access to a Thesis and Publication Abstract form available to download from:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms

29.3   Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, the provisions of this regulation apply.

Regulation 30   Thesis title

The student must provide a thesis title with the Notice of Intention to Submit Form (where this form is used).

Application of the regulation

30.1   The Notification of Intention to Submit Form is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms

30.2   The expectation is that the student's thesis title on the Notification of Intention to Submit Form will be the final title for the thesis.

Regulation 31   Thesis length

Research degree theses, research projects and dissertations must not exceed the length specifications set out in the regulations for the degree.

Application of the regulation

31.1   Word count specifications are provided in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) or programme documentation: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 32   Previously published material

Where material to be included in a thesis, research project or dissertation has been published before the thesis, research project or dissertation is submitted, the student must acknowledge the fact of such publication.

Application of the regulation

32.1   The signed declaration must contain a clear statement on the inclusion of any previously published material. See also regulation 34.

32.2   A student cannot include in a thesis material that has been accepted for publication prior to the start of their programme of study, unless registered for a PhD by Research Publications degree. Guidance on including publications in a thesis is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/publications_in_thesis.pdf

32.3   See also regulation 26.

Regulation 33   PhD by Research Publications: submission

The portfolio of published work submitted for the PhD by Research Publications must be accompanied by an abstract and also by a general critical review by the student of all the submitted work.

Application of the regulation
33.1   The critical review must summarise the aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the work submitted in the portfolio. It must also critically assess how the work contributes significantly to the expansion of knowledge, and indicate how the publications form a coherent body of work and what contribution the student has made to this work.
33.2   The specifications for submission of PhD by Research Publications are listed in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS): www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Regulation 34   Signed declaration

Every student must incorporate a signed declaration in the thesis, research project or dissertation submitted for assessment, stating:

(a)   that the thesis, research project or dissertation has been composed by the student, and

(b)   either that the work is the student's own, or, if the student has been a member of a research group, that the student has made a substantial contribution to the work, such contribution being clearly indicated, or

(c)   that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified, and

(d)   that any included publications are the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised and clearly identified on the declarations page of the thesis.

Application of the regulation
34.1   Guidance on completing the signed declaration is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesis_signed_declaration.pdf

Section D   Assessment Decisions

Regulation 35   College Postgraduate Committee: approval of assessment decisions

The College Postgraduate Committee discusses the examiners' reports and decides whether or not to approve the recommendations made by the examiners.

Application of the regulation

35.1   Prior to the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee, examiners' recommendations are provisional until approved or modified by the Committee.

35.2   The examiners for individual students do not participate in any assessment decisions regarding these students in the relevant meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.

35.3   The Secretary to the College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for giving reasonable notice of meetings: ensuring that the recommendations of the Committee are approved in writing and made available to Student Administration at the required time; and ensuring that a minute of the meeting is produced.

35.4   The minute is a confidential document although information on a particular student may need to be disclosed to that student under the Data Protection Act and generic information may need to be disclosed under Freedom of Information legislation.

Regulation 36   Committee recommendation

The College Postgraduate Committee must *either* confirm the examiners' recommendation and transmit it to the Senatus without further comment *or* for stated reasons make a different recommendation to the Senatus, including, where appropriate, assessment by different examiners.

Application of the regulation

36.1   The Committee, on receipt of a recommendation by the examiners, must consider whether it appears to be adequately justified in the light of the full reports by the examiners, and may make further inquiry of the examiners and the student's supervisor(s).

36.2   If the Committee receives reports by the examiners indicating disagreement as to the appropriate recommendation, it may recommend to Senatus that the recommendation of one of the examiners be accepted in preference to that of the

other. The Committee may require that a further report on the thesis be obtained from some other examiner or examiners, *or* that the assessment of the thesis be conducted from the beginning by different examiners.

36.3   If the Committee is offering an alternative award to that for which a student had originally submitted (for example MPhil as an exit award for PhD submission), the student must either agree or decline to accept the alternative award.

36.4   If the Committee varies the recommendation of the examiners for the degree, the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

Regulation 37   College Postgraduate Committee: quorum for assessment decisions

Provided reasonable notice of a meeting has been given, a meeting is properly constituted and empowered to act if at least three academic members (including the Convenor) are present.

Application of the regulation

37.1   The Convener of the Committee may, at their discretion, invite any person who has been involved in the assessment of the work under consideration by the Committee to be present 'in attendance' but without voting rights.

Regulation 38   Confidentiality

All discussion about the assessment of an individual student at a College Postgraduate Committee meeting is confidential.

Application of the regulation

38.1   The College Postgraduate Committee reaches a collective decision. The decision does not need to be unanimous.

38.2   The views of a particular committee member should not be made known to a student. If a student makes a request under the Data Protection Act, information recorded in the minutes on that particular student will need to be disclosed. In doing so, comments should be anonymised, e.g. assigned to Member 1, Member 2. Further information is available at:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

38.3 Students have a right to see information about themselves recorded in minutes of the College Postgraduate Committee meeting.

38.4 Other than with the written permission of the student concerned, members of staff should not make available information about marks to persons or bodies outside the University except when necessary in the context of a reference.

38.5 Guidance on disclosing information on students can be found at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/enquiry ~~www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information~~

Regulation 39   Retention and destruction of material

Assessed material must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's student records retention guidance.

Application of the regulation

39.1 Information about the student records retention schedule is online: www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records

39.2 Material which contributes to the assessment of the degree will be retained in the School, College Office~~,~~ or Library for a suitable period after the College Postgraduate Committee meeting which decides the overall classification or award of the degree, diploma or certificate. This enables the University to respond to any student appeal.

39.3 Assessment material should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. For students who submit appeals, the retention period will need to be extended until the end of the appeal process. Other material which contributes to the final assessment of the degree may be returned to the student after the expiry of the retention period providing they do not make known the views of a particular examiner (see regulation 38). Theses, research projects and dissertations may be retained by Schools, who have the responsibility to make them available to any enquirer in response to a Freedom of Information request (unless an exemption applies). Assessment samples may be retained for specified periods as supporting documentation for accreditation and quality assurance purposes, e.g. Postgraduate Programme Reviews. Material which is not retained or returned should be destroyed at the end of the retention period.

Regulation 40   Award of degrees

Degrees are awarded by the Senatus on the basis of recommendations of the College, or Board of Examiners.

Regulation 41   College Postgraduate Committee: return of decision

Decisions and awards recommended by the examiners and confirmed by the College Postgraduate Committee must be recorded on the Student Records System as the final official results of the University.

Application of the regulation

41.1   Doctoral and MPhil students receive Part II reports, which constitute formal notification of the Committee decision, after the meeting of the College Postgraduate Committee.

41.2   The decisions of the Committee must be notified to Student Administration as soon as possible and certainly no later than 21 days before the date of graduation.

41.3   Notification of final results and recommendation of the award of qualification to students, following the meeting of the Committee, is the responsibility of the College Office.

41.4   Because of the nature of research degrees, transcripts for such degrees are not issued by the University. Colleges may instead provide students with an explanation of the specific degree awarded and confirmation that the student has been awarded (or is eligible to be awarded) this degree.

Regulation 42   Status of Decisions

Decisions by a College Postgraduate Committee, once certified in writing are final. In exceptional cases the College Postgraduate Committee can review its decision.

Application of the regulation

42.1   A College Postgraduate Committee may, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light or if any error having a material bearing on that decision or an error in the written certification of that decision has been made.

42.2   If the Committee is satisfied that there are grounds for changing its decision it will report its decision to Student Systems.

42.3 Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an assessment or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any assessment or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall forthwith correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.

42.4 In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.

42.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning assessment.

Regulation 43   Convener's Action

The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee or Progression Board may take decisions by Convener's Action.

Application of the regulation

43.1 This may occur when the College Postgraduate Committee takes a decision in principle but needs confirmation or further information, or when the Committee considers the possible outcomes and authorises the Convener, once relevant information is known, to apply the appropriate option. Convener's Action may also be appropriate when the decision to be made follows an existing precedent.

43.2 Decisions made by Convener's Action should be recorded and reported to the relevant Board or Committee.

Regulation 44   Final version of the thesis

The student is required to submit the final version of the thesis to the College Postgraduate Office.

Application of the regulation

44.1   Degrees are conferred upon receipt of the final version of the thesis and following approval by the Senate at graduation.

44.2   The final version of the thesis must be submitted within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their thesis to the College Postgraduate Office. See:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/graduations.

44.3   Final submission must be notified by the College Office to Student Systems as soon as possible. Graduation deadline information is available online:
www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates

44.4   Students are responsible for submitting their final version of their thesis in electronic form. in addition to one hard bound copy. Hard bound copies should conform to standards for the format and binding of theses: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/thesisbinding.pdf

44.5   Further details on the submission of theses are available in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students* and from the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA) at www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk.

Regulation 45   Academic Appeal

Students have the right of academic appeal against the decisions of the College Postgraduate Committee on specific grounds, which are set out in the University's Student Appeal Regulations:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/appeals

Section E   MSc by Research Degrees

Regulation 46   MSc by Research degrees: examination

There are two types of MSc by Research degrees:

1.   MSc by Research degrees which are examined by the relevant College Postgraduate Committee, and are subject to all relevant provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees except for those regulations listed below.

2.   MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School. For these programmes, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners apply instead of the following regulations in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 2 to 7; 35-38; 41 to 43.

Both types of MSc by Research degrees are exempt from the following provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: 13-19; 22-25; 33; 44.

Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme which examination arrangements apply to their programme.

Regulation 47   MSc by Research degrees: submission of research project or dissertation

Students on MSc by Research degrees must submit their research project or dissertation on or prior to the completion of the prescribed period of study.

Application of the regulation
47.1   Once a student has submitted a research project or dissertation, they cannot retract it.
47.2   Students on some MSc by Research programmes may be required to complete Notification of Intention to Submit forms prior to submission of their research project or dissertation. The relevant School or College will inform students where they are required to submit the form.

Regulation 48   MSc by Research degrees: markers

For MSc by Research programmes, staff who are or have been a supervisor of the student may not act as a marker or Internal Examiner for the research project or dissertation, where the research project or dissertation is worth more than 60 credits.

Regulation 49   MSc by Research degrees: oral assessment

Oral assessment may be used as part of the examination process for MSc by Research degrees. Schools will inform students at the start of an MSc by Research programme whether oral assessment is to be used as part of the examination process for their degree. Where oral assessment is used on an MSc by Research programme, the relevant College Postgraduate Committee or Board of Examiners will determine whether regulations 20 and 21 of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, or the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to Oral assessment will apply. Schools will inform students which regulations apply to their programme.

Regulation 50   MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award

In order to be awarded the degree of MSc by Research, students must pass at least 180 credits' worth of courses. This may include the award of credits on aggregate for up to 40 credits. Where credit on aggregate is offered, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations (under "Postgraduate assessment progression") apply.

Where marks are awarded for assessment on MSc by Research degrees, these must be expressed using the postgraduate common marking scheme:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

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Application of the regulation

50.1   In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.

50.2   For some MSc by Research programmes the examiners may award a mark or grade, merit or distinction.

50.3   There will be no progression hurdle to proceed to the research project or dissertation.

50.4   Where a mark is awarded for the research project or dissertation, this must be passed at a minimum of 50%. Failure to achieve this standard will automatically result in no award at MSc level being made.

Regulation 51   MSc by Research degrees: examiner recommendation

The examiners may recommend:

(a)   Award Pass with Distinction in MSc by Research. See Regulation 52; or

(b)   Award Pass with Merit in MSc by Research. See Regulation 53; or

(c)   Award MSc by Research. The research project or dissertation satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study as appropriate and that the degree should be awarded; or

(d)   Offer resubmission for MSc by Research. The dissertation or research project satisfies the requirements for the degree except that minor corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these with minimal supervision and without undertaking any further original research; or

(e)   Award exit award. The research project or dissertation is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the MSc by Research. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of postgraduate diploma or certificate; or

(f)   Fail. The research project or dissertation is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and does not meet the requirements for any award.

Application of the regulation

51.1   For those MSc by Research degrees assessed by a Board of Examiners within a School, the Board makes a single recommendation for each student directly to the Senatus.

Regulation 52   MSc by Research degrees: distinction

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with distinction. Different criteria for the award of distinction may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

   (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
   (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
   (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Distinction.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

   (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with distinction, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation

52.1   Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of distinction.

52.2   The postgraduate common marking scheme can be found at:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme   www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

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Regulation 53   MSc by Research degrees: merit

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with merit. Different criteria for the award of merit may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

(a)   Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or

(b)   Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or

(c)   Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Merit.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

(d)   Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with merit, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation
53.1   Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of merit.

**Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for
Research Degrees
Academic Year 20~~2019~~/21~~0~~**

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Policy

**Regulation 54   MSc by Research degrees: resubmission of the research project
                              or dissertation**

Where the Board of Examiners has offered resubmission in line with Regulation 51 (d),
students are entitled to one resubmission of the research project or dissertation. Students
may also be offered the opportunity to resubmit the research project or dissertation where
a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the
College.

Application of the regulation

54.1   The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a
        revised dissertation or research project with a statement, which outlines the
        deficiencies in their original submission. The student is also entitled to receive
        further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one
        occasion before resubmission.

54.2   The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of
        their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the
        date of the student receiving notification of their original result.

54.3   Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research
        project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the Board of Examiners will treat
        the mark the student received for their first attempt as final and the Board of
        Examiners will consider the student for a relevant exit award.

54.4   If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project
        meets the requirements for a pass at MSc by Research level, the student will be
        awarded the MSc by Research degree. Where a mark is recorded for the
        dissertation or research project, the recorded mark for the revised dissertation or
        research project will be capped at 50%. Where no mark is recorded for the
        dissertation or research project, the revised dissertation may be awarded a pass or
        fail only, and will not be eligible for merit or distinction.

54.5   Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their
        research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to
        submit a revised version within one month of recommendation of award, but the
        revised version will not be subject to reassessment. A student cannot graduate until
        they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the
        College Postgraduate Office.

Section F   Interpretation and significant disruption

Regulation 55   Interpretation of the regulations

The ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has authority to resolve any dispute arising from these regulations. The University Secretary and their nominees have authority to make urgent decisions relating to assessment issues.

Application of the regulation
55.1   Staff who need guidance on the postgraduate assessment regulations for research degrees, beyond that provided in the regulations and associated guidance, should contact the relevant Dean and/or the Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for the ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/academic-policy-regulations~~www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression~~
55.2   The University uses questions on the regulations as a source of information for training and development of the regulations.

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Regulation 56   Significant disruption: concessions and standards

When the University's assessment practices are vulnerable to significant disruption then the ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee may approve temporary concessions to mitigate the impact of assessment disruption on students, without compromising academic standards. The College takes decisions that ensure the consistency of treatment of students and the maintenance of academic standards. The overriding principles are that:

(a)   the academic judgement of the examiners remains paramount;
(b)   the University's academic standards will be maintained; and
(c)   the provisions of the University's Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees remain in force except where a concession has been approved by the ~~Curriculum and Student Progression~~Academic Policy and Regulations Committee.

These concessions will only be used where necessary: if a College Postgraduate Committee is able to operate without a concession then the Committee will do so.

Application of the regulation

56.1 Significant disruption can be extremes of weather, loss of facilities, and factors beyond the University's control which have an impact on the assessment of students. This may result in College Postgraduate Committees only having partial results available.

56.2 In response to individual significant disruptions that may have a widespread impact on assessment, the University will adopt a communication strategy for students, staff and key external stakeholders, e.g. External Examiners, to ensure that they are aware of the measures that are adopted.

56.3 All forms of assessment, such as theses submitted for assessment, examination scripts and course assignments, are the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required.

56.4 Drawing on previous experience [CSPC 14/15 2 C], the issues and regulations where CSPC APRC may consider concessions include, but are not limited to:
(a)   participation of External Examiners;
(b)   College Postgraduate Committee quorum;
(c)   annual progression decisions.

1 June 201928 May 2020XX June 2020

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Student Appeal Regulations Review

Description of paper

1. This paper discusses the outcome of the scheduled review of the Student Appeal Regulations, undertaken following five years of operation of the current regulations, in line with the University's cyclical review of policies to ensure continued effectiveness. It presents an analysis of the review, and asks APRC to consider three amendments to the Student Appeal Regulations as a result.

Action requested / recommendation

2. APRC are asked to consider the content of the paper, and determine appropriate further action. For approval.

Background and context

3. At its meeting of 14 November 2019, APRC approved the proposed approach to the cyclical review of the Student Appeal Regulations. Academic Services completed a benchmarking exercise against all other Scottish HEI's and Russell Group institutions' appeal provision, created a list of questions for stakeholders, and provided stakeholders with the outcome of the benchmarking exercise, the current Student Appeal Regulations, and the past 4 years of Annual Reports on appeal submissions

Information and consultation

4. The full list of questions posed to stakeholders is provided in the documentation in appendix 1 of this document. These questions took into account the breadth of the appeal procedures and were designed to examine the views on the effectiveness of the procedures overall, and the accompanying guidance currently available. Specific questions were asked of specific groups, but there were no restrictions on respondents being able to answer all questions should they have wished.

5. The questions addressed the current grounds for appeal, the current time allowed for appeal submissions, the advice and guidance on offer, the overall process itself, and specifically asked whether the University should introduce a word limit on appeal statements

6. Per APRC's approval for consultation with stakeholders, Academic Services consulted with the Student Appeal Committee, Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

(CAHSS), the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM).

7. Stakeholders were provided with the above noted sets of documentation and questions, and were provided with a deadline in which to provide written responses. Academic Services also held face to face meetings with members of the Appeal Committee and the Students' Association. The face to face meetings that had been scheduled with College representatives were unavoidably cancelled as a result of the University's move to remote working in light of the Covid-19 pandemic on 17 March 2020. Nevertheless Colleges were able to provide responses, and confirmed that they had sufficient opportunity to respond.

Responses

8. Members from all stakeholder groups (Students' Association, Colleges, Student Appeal Committee) were able to provide responses.

9. Below, the question responses have been grouped thematically and summarised.

Grounds
All respondents felt that the current grounds for appeal were appropriate in their scope. Most agreed that, in practice, the provisions of Ground B ("alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners") would adequately cover the current provisions of Ground C ("evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners"), should Ground C be removed as a separate appeal ground. Should Ground C cease to be a separate appeal ground, there would be benefit in the expansion of written guidance around the appeal grounds more generally, perhaps by offering working examples of the grounds applying in practice, or a non-exhaustive list of scenarios that might be covered by each ground. A number of responses indicated that there would be benefit in expanding on the available guidance specifically related to what is and is not a 'valid' appeal, by demonstrating further how the grounds for appeal work in practice. This is expanded upon in the 'Guidance' section below.

Submission deadlines
Responses indicated that the current deadlines for appeal submissions were felt to be broadly appropriate, with one College indicating that they felt that 30 working days (for final year undergraduate students and all postgraduate students) was too long, and one School indicating that the 10 working days afforded to non-final year Undergraduates, Exclusion appeals, Fitness to

Practise appeals, Conduct appeals and Support for Study appeals should be increased to 15 working days.

Advice & Guidance
Responses indicated that the current material available online is sufficient and concise in explaining the appeal procedures, although a number of respondents suggested it might be beneficial to create new pieces of information for prospective appellants, such as guidance on what is and is not appropriate evidence to support an appeal submission, and working examples or non-exhaustive lists of the grounds of appeal working in practice, in order to further increase understanding and help to manage student expectations. In a separate but related matter, the University engaged in dialogue with the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) in Autumn 2019 to address questions from QAAS arising from an individual appeal case via its Scottish Concerns Scheme. Although the case was closed by QAAS, the University did commit to considering enhancements to our guidance for appellants in a few areas: • Ground C appeals: what type of evidence may be required to demonstrate prejudice or lack of due diligence on the part of the examiners, and how this relates to the exercise of academic judgement; • Preliminary screening of appeals: what happens where a case does not proceed beyond preliminary screening; • An explanation of the operation of Appeals Sub-Committees (e.g. that they do not generally meet in person).

Word Limits
Most members of the Student Appeal Committee supported the introduction of a word limit for appeals, whilst colleagues in Schools and Colleges were less supportive of this. Of those who opposed the introduction of a word limit, some suggested that the introduction of a more structured appeal form, which provided students with focused questions specifically relating to why they feel the ground or grounds of appeal apply to them, might help in avoiding repetition and unnecessarily lengthy appeal statements.

Process
All respondents who answered this question agreed that the Student Appeal Regulations provided a clear process through which students could submit appeals.

Analysis

10. In viewing the received responses, the indication is that the current appeal procedures are appropriate, and provide a clear process through which students can submit appeals.

11. The creation of further guidance in relation to both the grounds for appeal and appropriate supporting evidence would be beneficial in increasing student understanding of what is required to demonstrate grounds for appeal and present

an appropriate case. Responses also indicated that it would be of use to examine what more could be done to manage student expectations of the appeal process itself, although the existing guidance does seek to explain this.

12. Following from this, there was broad agreement that the current provision of Ground C ("evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners") could be appropriately addressed by the current provisions of Ground B ("alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners"). The majority of respondents who answered this question agreed that Ground C could be subsumed by Ground B.

13. There was no broad support either way for adjusting submission times of appeals. Of those that did support an adjustment, there was not a consensus as to what this might look like, with suggestion in equal parts that the current deadlines were either too long, or too short, or these respondents being satisfied with one of the deadlines, but suggesting an adjustment to another.

14. Similarly to above, there cannot be said to be broad support either way in relation to the introduction of a word limit for appeal submissions. It should be noted that the majority of support for the introduction of a word limit for appeal submissions came from the Appeal Committee membership.

Proposals

15. In light of the responses received, and what the analysis of these responses indicate, APRC are asked to consider the following proposals.

16. **Whether to remove Ground C of the current Appeal Regulations ("evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners") as a separate appeal ground, or allow it to remain in place.** Section 17 of the attached regulations (Appendix 2) shows what the regulations will look like should APRC approve the removal of Ground C. Academic Services will proceed to amend and enhance the web guidance around appeals, taking account of some of the suggestions received during this consultation. Should Ground C be removed, the guidance will include more information about appeals relating to prejudice or lack of due diligence on the part of Examiners, explaining that these are encompassed by ground B.

17. Due to the forthcoming changes to the way that the University operates its Special Circumstances procedures, including the introduction of a new centralised Extensions and Special Circumstances Team (ESC), the Regulations need to be amended to indicate that decisions taken on Special Circumstances applications by this team will fall under the remit of the Student Appeal

Regulations. The wording of point 4 of the regulations has been updated to reflect this.

18. **APRC are asked to approve the changes to wording contained in Section 4 of the Student Appeal Regulations (Appendix 2), so that decisions taken by the new ESC fall under the remit of the Regulations.**

19. **APRC are asked to approve the changes to wording contained in Section 38 of the Student Appeal Regulations (Appendix 2), which provides further detail on preliminary screening of appeal submissions.** This seeks to address the feedback received from QAAS, and to provide a level of additional oversight regarding the very small number of appeals which are not accepted annually via the preliminary screening process.

Resource implications
20. The proposed changes do not carry any ongoing resource implications.

Risk management

21. Evidence indicates that the existing ground C of the Student Appeal Regulations is not well understood by students, and the University receives very small numbers of appeals using this ground. Its removal should therefore not pose any risk that students should feel unable to appeal regarding prejudice or due diligence on the part of examiners. Bolstering the guidance regarding ground B should instead provide potential appellants with a clearer understanding of what the Appeal Committee would expect to see as evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence, and how this differs from a challenge to academic judgement.

Equality & diversity

22. The proposed changes do not represent a material change in the scope or practice of the regulations. The current Equality Impact Assessment for the Student Appeal Regulations remains appropriate.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
23. Academic Services will take steps to produce further guidance in relation to the grounds for appeal, evidence requirements, and duplicate detail about the appeal procedures contained within the Student Appeal Regulations on to the Student Appeal webpages using less formalised language. Academic Services will also communicate any changes to regulation in the annual New Policies communication and in briefings to staff. In relation to evaluation, Academic Services will examine appeals submitted under Ground B specifically in order to ascertain whether these submissions have incorporated situations that would previously have been submitted under Ground C.

Author

Stuart Fitzpatrick

7 May 2020

Presenter

Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1 – Benchmarking documentation, considerations, and question sent to stakeholders in January 2020.

Appendix 2 – Track Changed Appeal Regulations, showing the current regulations as they would appear incorporating proposed changes

Scheduled Review of the Student Appeal Regulations following five years of operation

1. **Grounds**

Questions

- *Do you feel the current grounds for appeal are appropriate in their scope?*
- *Would it be beneficial to remove ground C, and incorporate this into ground B?*

 (Appeal Committee, Students Association, Colleges)

Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.

Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners

Ground C (Open to Postgraduate Research Students only): Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners.

Further information

Ground A - The University is in line with other institutions in that it allows appeals based on mitigating/extenuating/special circumstances. Of the 35 institutions benchmarked against, only 3 did not.

Ground B - The University is also in line with other institutions in that it allows appeals based on allegations of procedural irregularity or improper conduct of examination. All 35 institutions benchmarked against did so.

Ground C - Benchmarking indicates that the University is in the minority by offering Ground C as a separate appeal ground. The majority (24) of the 35 institutions benchmarked against did not have standalone provision for the consideration of prejudice or lack of due diligence, where 11 did.

It may be that the provisions contained in Ground C, which is only open to Postgraduate Research Students, could be encapsulated in the existing Ground B (irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination) as prejudice or lack of due diligence in an examination are, in themselves, irregular and improper. This would mean that all grounds were open to all appellants without restriction.

We have not encountered a situation where the available grounds were restrictive (in that an appeal that should have been upheld could not have been upheld, as it was not covered specifically by one or more grounds). This differs from situations where appellants appeal under a specific ground, but provide no evidence to support the stated ground for appeal (for example, an appellant submitting an appeal under Ground A, in which they outline a number of adverse circumstances, but fail to provide good reason for having not brought these to the attention of the Board of Examiners).

Some Russell Group institutions in England have appeal grounds that allow for consideration of reasonableness of decisions. This may be due to the fact that the Office of the

Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) in England, which serves a similar function to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) in Scotland, have power to consider the reasonableness of a decision taken by a HEI during OIAHE investigation of a complaint.

There have been instances where appeal submissions have highlighted decisions that were manifestly unreasonable. In such cases, this tends to amount to improper conduct. Where this has occurred, these appeals have been upheld, as highlighted above in the context of the current appeal grounds not being restrictive and allowing the University to address legitimate issues.

The inherent subjectivity of the concept of 'reasonableness', and how any introduction of this concept might interact with the appeal procedures, could potentially lead to unrealistic expectations for students about the University's willingness to consider appeals which amount simply to challenges to academic judgement. A number of appeal submissions each year openly question whether decisions or marks were 'reasonable', even if all policies and procedures have been followed, and all extenuating circumstances were known, in arriving at the decision in question.

2. Submission Times

Question –

Do you feel the current deadlines for submission of appeals are appropriate?
(Students Association, Colleges)

Further information

The University's current submission deadlines for appeals are as follows –

- 10 working days (two weeks) – for submissions of academic appeals by non-final year students, appeals against decisions taken under the Code of Student Conduct, appeals against exclusion decisions, appeals against Fitness to Practise decisions, and appeals against Support for Study panel decisions;

- 30 working days (six weeks) – for submissions of academic appeals by final year Undergraduate students, and all Postgraduate students.

The submission deadlines for appeals across Scotland and within the Russell Group are, for the most part, shorter than the deadlines that the University affords final year Undergraduate students and all Postgraduate students for appeal submission. The 30 working day deadline for submission of appeals by final year Undergraduate and all Postgraduate students is the longest amongst comparators, with the exception of the University of Oxford, who allow three months (approximately 60 working days) for appeal submissions.

The deadlines that the University affords non-final year Undergraduate students (10 working days from having received the result) is more in line with the rest of the sector, the majority of whom allow 10 (7 Russell Group, 5 Scottish, 12 in total) or 20 (8 Russell Group including Glasgow, 4 Scottish, 12 in total)) working days respectively.

The University operates the current submission deadlines due to the shorter of the two deadlines allowing for cases to be resolved sooner and in most instances prior to the subsequent academic year. This is relevant for continuing study and helps to prevent any

adverse knock on effects for appellants should action be required following completion of the appeal procedures.

3. Advice and Guidance

Questions

- ***Do you feel there are particular issues which students or staff might benefit from more guidance on?***
- ***Do you feel there are different forms of guidance which students or staff might benefit from?*** *(Students Association, Colleges)*
- ***Do you feel that, if you are asked to respond to an appeal, you have access to appropriate support and guidance about the process?*** *(Colleges)*
- ***Are you content with the level of guidance and support that you receive, or are there other forms of guidance and support you feel might be beneficial?*** *(Appeal Committee)*

Further information

Information relating to the appeal procedures is available on the [Appeals section of the Academic Services website](#), covering 'What is an appeal?', 'Submitting an appeal', 'Timescales', and 'Where to get advice', and includes information on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The content of the webpages was taken and updated from a previously stand-alone document that provided advice for students submitting appeals.

The Student Appeal Regulations themselves provide an operational overview of the Appeal process itself and detail stages of case consideration, along with possible outcomes. Prior to submitting an appeal, appellants are asked to confirm via the Student Appeal form that they have read and understood the Student Appeal Regulations.

There is benefit in the current structure of the information, in that it is held in such a way that students wishing to submit appeals must visit the webpages that contain information about the process in order to obtain a Student Appeal Form.

Between 1 May and 31 October 2019 (approximately from the main examination diet to the publication of MSc Classifications), the Student Appeal webpages were viewed 10,856 times by 8,448 unique visitors. In mid-June, following the release of Undergraduate degree classifications, the Student Appeal webpages were accessed almost 600 times within 24 hours. Between 1 May and 31 October 2019, the Student Appeal Regulations were downloaded 843 times, and the Student Appeal Form was downloaded 345 times. Within those times, and allowing for the maximum deadline of 30 working days from receipt of results, the University received 222 appeals, indicating that students are reading and considering the available information and using it to judge whether they feel they have valid grounds for appeal.

It may be that there is benefit in expanding on the information available online in relation to the grounds for appeal. Providing a non-exhaustive list of examples of the grounds working in practice, or examples of what would, and what would not, be eligible under each ground, may aid in students understanding and help to manage expectations. There may also be benefit in providing further details of the sub-committee stage of the appeal process, which takes place electronically by correspondence.

4. Student appeal submissions

Question

- ***Should the University introduce a word limit for student appeal statements?***
  (Students' Association, Colleges, Appeal Committee)

Formatting of submissions and the supply of supporting evidence

As noted above under 'Advice and Guidance', there might be benefit on expanding on the information available on the Appeal webpages in relation to the appropriate format and content of an appeal submission (for example, it is not necessary for an appellant to submit a copy of their dissertation, as the Appeal Committee do not re-mark or otherwise moderate work). Consideration might also be given to the introduction of a word limit for appeal statements (as is the case with submissions made to the University's Complaints Handling Procedure), although the University would not wish for appellants to feel that they could not fully outline their case for appeal. The introduction of a word limit might provide students with guidance regarding how comprehensive they are expected to be, and prevent students from feeling that there is benefit in making an appeal longer for its own sake.

5. General

- ***Do the Student Appeal Regulations and procedures provide a clear process through which Students can submit appeals?*** *(Students Association, Colleges)*

Further information

The UK Quality Code (published by the Quality Assurance Agency) states that institutions should provide appeals procedures that are clear, accessible, inclusive, flexible, and reviewed regularly.

Benchmarking

Appeal Grounds across Scottish HEI's (within jurisdiction of SPSO)

Institution	Grounds	UoE Equivalent Grounds	Timescales for submission of appeal
Aberdeen	It is believed that the University's procedures were not followed It is believed that the person/body making the decision did not have the authority to do so It is believed that the person/body making the decision did not act impartially A student considers they have suffered material disadvantage	A and B	10 working days
Glasgow	Unfair or defective procedure Failure to take account of medical or other adverse personal circumstances Relevant medical or other adverse personal circumstances which for good reason have not previously been presented	A and B	10 working days to notify intention to appeal, a further 10 working days to submit appeal following notification of intention (20 working days total)
Dundee	Extenuating circumstances affecting the candidates performance and of which the examiners were unaware when their decision was taken Procedural irregularities (including administrative error) in the conduct of an	A, B and C	Within four weeks from receipt of decision (20 working days)

	examination of such a nature as to give rise to reasonable doubt whether the examiners would have reached the same conclusion had they not occurred Prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners		
St. Andrews	Extenuating personal circumstances materially affecting academic performance of which the University was not aware when the academic decision was taken, and which could not reasonably have been disclosed by the student Improper conduct of an assessment or examination, or irregular application of academic regulations that has materially impacted on the result awarded In the case of appeal against academic misconduct **only**, defective or irregular procedure that has materially affected the academic decision of the relevant Board of Adjudication	A and B	10 working days to notify intention to appeal, 10 working days to submit appeal following notification of intention (20 working days total)
Edinburgh Napier	There is evidence to suggest that the programme Board of Examiners or School Research and Innovation Committee did not act in accordance with the relevant regulations and procedures	A and B	5 working days

| | There was an apparent error in the recording, transcription or reporting of assessment results, the conduct of the programme or the assessment process

There is evidence to indicate that information submitted could not reasonably have been considered by the Programme Board of Examiners or School Research and Innovation Committee in accordance with published deadlines | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Heriot Watt** | That the student's performance was affected by mitigating circumstances that he or she could not report at the time for valid reasons, and that mitigating circumstances have not been taken into account in making the relevant academic decision or before the deliberations of the Board of Examiners

That staff or bodies have not followed approved regulations and procedures

There has been a material lack of clarify on the part of the University which has affected the performance of the student

Staff or bodies have not acted fairly towards a student by showing bias in the way they have made the | A, B and C | 10 working days |

	relevant academic decision		
Abertay Dundee	There is evidence that a Student Progress Panel did not reach a decision in accordance with the Academic Regulations There is evidence that there was an error in recording or reporting results, or the award decision of a Student Progress Panel There is evidence of factors affecting the student's performance that could not reasonably have been submitted earlier	A and B	Within 1 month (20 working days)
Robert Gordon	That there is exceptional and compelling justification, which can be evidence, that the student was experiencing such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student from notifying [their circumstances to] the School That there is exceptional and compelling justification, which can be evidence, that the student was experiencing such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student from undertaking the assessment That there had been a material procedural, administrative or computational error	A and B	10 working days

	That the assessment was no conducted in according with the current regulations governing the course		
University of Highlands and Islands	That a student's performance was adversely affected by illness or other factors which they were unable or, with valid reason, unwilling to divulge, prior to the meeting of the academic assessment body Evidence of material administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the University's procedures and regulations Evidence or prejudice or bias or improper/inadequate assessment on the part of any of the examiners (PGR students only)	A, B and C	10 working days for informal procedure. 15 working days for formal procedure.
Strathclyde	There were procedural irregularities in the assessment process There was inadequate assessment, prejudice or bias on the part of the examiners That there were medical, personal or other circumstances which affected your performance of which the examiners were unaware at the time of assessment	A, B and C	Three weeks (15 working days)
Stirling	The decision was unreasonable because it did not adequately	A and B	Within one calendar month (20 working days approx.)

| | take into account all the factors affecting the student's performance

The decision was procedurally incorrect

The decision was taken in the absence of all the relevant information | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **University of the West of Scotland** | Defect in procedures

New Evidence | A and B | 10 working days |
| **Glasgow Caledonian** | Material administrative error, regulatory irregularity or other material irregularity | B | Two calendar weeks (10 working days) |

Timescales for submission of appeals within Scottish HEI's

The 30 working day (six week) deadline for submission of appeals that the University of Edinburgh affords final year undergraduates and all postgraduate students is the longest in Scotland. 5 of 13 institutions have a 20 working day (four week) deadline, 2 have a 15 working day (three week) deadline, 5 have a 10 working day (two week) deadline, and one has a 5 working day (1 week) deadline.

30 working days (six weeks)	**University of Edinburgh Final Year Undergraduates and all Postgraduates (1)**
25 working days (five weeks)	None (0)
20 working days (four weeks)	Glasgow, Dundee, St. Andrews, Abertay, Stirling (5)
15 working days (three weeks)	Strathclyde, University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) (2)
10 working days (two weeks)	**University of Edinburgh continuing Undergraduates**, Aberdeen, Heriot Watt, Robert Gordon University (RGU), University of West of Scotland (UWS), Glasgow Caledonian (5)
5 working days (one week)	Edinburgh Napier (1)

General points

Stirling do not allow appeals against marks, only about entitlement to undertake a further assessment, to progress, or to remain registered as a student

Abertay do not allow appeals once an individual has graduated

Glasgow Caledonian do not allow appeals on the grounds of personal or medical factors

Four of 13 (Five of 14 if including University of Edinburgh) have appeal grounds which allow for consideration of allegations of bias or prejudice. Glasgow (the other Russell Group institution in Scotland) does not feature allegations of bias or prejudice as grounds for appeal.

Appeal Grounds (Russell Group) (excluding Glasgow noted above, and within jurisdiction of OIAHE)

Institution	Grounds	UoE Equivalent Grounds	Timescales for submission of appeal
Birmingham	There were circumstances unknown to the Board of Examiners that affected your performance and you can present good reason for these circumstances not being made known prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners There was an administrative irregularity or failure in procedure of the relevant assessment(s)	A and B	10 working days
Bristol	That there has been a material irregularity in the decision making process A students performance in assessment has been affected by illness or other factors which the student was unable, for good reason, to divulge before the meeting of the Board of Examiners A penalty for cheating or	A and B	15 working days

	plagiarism, imposed under the examination regulations, is wrong or disproportionate		
Cambridge	That there existed material circumstances relating to the conduct of outcome of the examinations of which the examiners were unaware That procedural irregularities occurred in the conduct of the examination, which were of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred That there is *demonstrable* evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment	A, B and C	28 days
Cardiff	An arithmetical or other error of fact in the results issued An irregularity in the conduct of assessment where this can be shown to have an adverse effect on the outcome, which was not known to the Examining Board at the time, or which was known to the Board and where the Board made an unreasonable decision	A and B	28 days

	Any extenuating circumstances which can be shown to have had an adverse effect on your academic performance, which were unknown by the Examining Board and could not have been made known to the Examining Board before the deadline		
Durham	That you were adversely affected by illness or other relevant factors, of which you were previously unaware of which for good cause you were unable to disclose to the Examiners

That you have evidence that parts of the relevant documented procedure were not applied correctly or your marks were not calculated correctly, and this procedural defect was significant enough to have materially affected the decision, making it unsound

That the Board of Examiners took a decision which was not reasonable in all the circumstances | A and B | Within 21 days |
| **Exeter** | Material circumstances affecting performance which the Board of Examiners had not been aware of before reaching its | A, B and C | 10 working days |

| | decision, only if you can present reasonable grounds as to why such circumstances had not been presented to the Board in advance of its meeting

Procedural irregularities in parts of the assessment procedures, and this irregularity was significant enough to have materially affected the decision made

That prejudice or bias on the part of one or more Examiners took place, and can be proven | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Imperial** | That there has been a material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the assessment or the consideration of the academic profile

That there has been a material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the mitigating circumstances procedure

That there is evidence of procedural unfairness in the conduct of the assessment or mitigating circumstances procedure | B | 20 working days |
| **Kings** | There is evidence that the assessment | A and B | Within 21 days |

	may have been adversely affected by mitigating circumstances which you were unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to make known before the original decision was reached

That there is clear evidence that assessments may have been adversely affected by significant administrative error or in the conduct of assessment | | |
| **Leeds** | There were relevant mitigating circumstances, and you have good reason for failing to notify the examiners of these sooner

You believe the assessment was conducted unfairly or improperly

A material procedural irregularity occurred in the processing of your assessment or results | A and B | 20 working days |
| **Liverpool** | That there was an administrative error in the recording or calculating the mark or result

That assessments were not conducted in accordance with current regulations

That there was a procedure error in determining a decision of copying, plagiarism, collusion | A and B | 10 working days |

	or dishonest use of data		
	That the student has a complaint regarding academic provision that could not be made known prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners		
	That some other material irregularity has occurred		
	The student is presenting new or additional material evidence which , for valid reason, they were unable to provide at the time of submitting an extenuating circumstances claim		
LSE	That the examination board did not follow correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the board had followed correct procedure That there is new information about exceptional (mitigating) circumstances that affected the examination outcome. If you are appeal against a final degree classification for this reason you must also be able to show – that your mark profile is no more than three marks below the next higher classification,	A and B	10 working days

	and/or that your mark profile is no more than five marks aware from the next higher classification on aggregate		
Manchester	That there existed or existed circumstances affecting the students performance of which, for a credible and compelling reason, the Examiners Board were not aware of when their decision was taken and which might have had a material affect on the decision That there had been a material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process That there is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners	A, B and C	20 working days
Newcastle	Personal Extenuating Circumstances that the appellant was unable to disclose in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting, or was unable to provide evidence for at that time, or of which the appellant was previously unaware Procedural irregularity on the	A, B and C	21 calendar days

	part of the examiners Bias or prejudice on the part of the examiner or examiners That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person or body could have reached on the available evidence		
Nottingham	Procedural irregularity Prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the Examiners took place and can be proven That the decision making body took a decision which no reasonable person would find comprehensible (disagreement with a decision does not make it manifestly unreasonable. To apply this ground you must provide substantive argument as to why no reasonable person could have arrived at the decision) The student's performance was materially affected by circumstances and there is new evidence of these which was not, and could not have been, made available to the	A, B and C	Within one calendar month

	Board of Examiners at the time of its original decision		
Oxford	That there was an error in the decision making process or a procedural irregularity That there was bias or perception of bias in the decision making process	B and C	Within three months
QMUL	Procedural error Exceptional circumstances, illness, or other relevant factors not made known at the time for good reason	A and B	Within 14 days
QUB	New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the Board of Examiners meeting. Evidence that a student chooses to withhold from the Board of Examiners will not constitute new evidence That there has been procedural irregularity which has had a demonstrable impact on the academic outcome (For PGT Students only) – There was inadequate supervision of the thesis/dissertation element of the programme. An appeal will not be considered on this ground unless there is good reason to show why such	A and B	10 working days

	issues were not raised by the student promptly at the time they first arose.		
Sheffield	Procedural error Mitigating circumstances that were not available to the examiners and that could not have been produced at an earlier stage	A and B	15 working days
Southampton	New substantive information supported by evidence which was not known by the student and/or the evidence could not reasonably have been obtained by the student in time to present to the Board of Panel Significant failure of due process in the making of the original decision Performance adversely affected by illness which in exceptional circumstances they were unable or for valid reason unwilling to disclose to the University before its original decision	A and B	5 working days
UCL	Procedural irregularity or administrative error Prejudice or bias by one or more of the examiners Alleged deficiency in the supervision	A and B	7 working days

	received (with good reason as to why this was not brought to the attention of the School at the time the alleged insufficiency occurred)		
Warwick	Evidence in relation to assessment performance that was not available when the assessment decision was reached, with good reason for not having made the Board of Examiners aware of these circumstances prior to their decision Evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination process Evidence or prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners	A, B and C	10 working days
York	I have exceptional circumstances which I could not have disclosed at the time of the affected assessments A procedural irregularity occurred which means the decision I am appealing against should be changed	A and B	28 days

Timescales for submission within Russell Group institutions

(working days equivalent approximated)

Three months (60 working days approx.)	Oxford (1)
One month (20 working days approx.)	Nottingham (1)
20 working days	Imperial, Leeds, Manchester (3)
28 days (20 working days approx.)	Cardiff, Cambridge, York (3)
15 working days	Bristol, Sheffield (2)
21 calendar days (15 working days approx.)	Newcastle, Kings, Durham (3)
10 working days	Birmingham, Exeter, Liverpool, LSE, QUB, Warwick (6)
14 days (10 working days approx.)	QMUL (1)
7 working days	UCL (1)
5 working days	Southampton (1)

Across both Scottish and Russell Group institutions, the University's 30 working day deadline for submission of appeals is the longest amongst comparators, with the exception of the University of Oxford.

In both Scotland and within the Russell Group, deadlines of 10 working days (12 institutions in total) and 20 working days (12 institutions in total) for submission of appeals are the most common.

General Points

With the exception of Oxford, Imperial, and (in relation to the Scottish sector benchmarking) Glasgow Caledonian, all institutions allow appeals to be submitted in which individuals can report extenuating/mitigating/special circumstances which had adversely affected their performance in examination which they had, for demonstrable good reason, not reported prior to the decision under appeal being taken.

All institutions allow appeals on the basis of alleged procedural irregularity.

7 (8 if including Edinburgh) of 22 Russell Group institutions above (excluding Edinburgh and Glasgow) have appeal grounds which allow for consideration of allegations of bias or prejudice.

Student Appeal Regulations

Purpose of Policy

These are the University's Student Appeal Regulations and govern the University's student appeal procedures. The Regulations set the framework within which student appeals are handled.

Overview

The Student Appeal Regulations apply to student appeals against academic decisions; appeals against exclusion; appeals against decision of Fitness to Practise Panels; appeals against decisions under the Code of Student Conduct; and appeals against a decision taken by a University Support for Study Panel under the Support for Study Policy. The Student Appeal Regulations set out the specific grounds under which an appeal may be submitted. Students may not use an appeal to challenge academic judgment. The fact that a student believes that they deserve a different outcome cannot constitute a ground for appeal.

Scope: Mandatory Regulations

These regulations apply to all students or recent students of the University who wish to submit an appeal as outlined in the overview above, and to all staff who deal with or respond to student appeals.

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Document control

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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review		Academic Services			
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations		Special Circumstances Policy, Boards of Examiners Guidance, Code of Student Conduct https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances Special Circumstances Policy, Boards of Examiners Guidance, Fitness to Practise Guidance, Code of Student Conduct www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline College Fitness to Practise guidance: http://www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/taught-students/student-conduct/fitness-to-practise www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/staffstudents/students/overview			
UK Quality Code		UK Quality Code – Concerns, Complaints and Appeals https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/concerns-complaints-and-appealsUK Quality Code Chapter B9 www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality			

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Student Appeal Regulations

Introduction

1. The Student Appeal Regulations apply to student appeals against academic decisions; appeals against exclusion; appeals against decision of Fitness to Practise Panels; appeals against decisions under the Code of Student Conduct; and appeals against a decision taken by a University Support for Study Panel under the Support for Study Policy.

2. Students may not use an appeal to challenge academic judgment. The fact that a student believes that they deserve a different outcome cannot constitute a ground for appeal.

3. An academic appeal cannot be lodged until the mark or result in question has been ratified by the relevant Board of Examiners.

4. Academic appeals are appeals against the decision of a Board of Examiners, Progression Board or Special Circumstances Committee, and decisions by the Extensions and Special Circumstances Team (ESC) taken under the Special Circumstances Policy www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf
   4. ~~.~~
   ~~www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners~~
   ~~www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf~~

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5. Appeals against exclusion are appeals against the decisions of the Head of College, or his or her delegate, or other authorised officer acting under the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies.
   www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

6. Fitness to Practise Appeals are appeals against the decision of a College Fitness to Practise Committee. Fitness to practice is relevant for the following University of Edinburgh provision:
   - Clinical Psychology
   - Law (Diploma in Professional Legal Practice~~Legal Studies~~)
   - Medicine
   - Nursing
   - Social Work
   - Teaching
   - Veterinary Medicine
   - Oral Health Sciences

7. Conduct appeals are appeals against the decision of a Student Discipline Officer or the Student Discipline Committee.
   www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf

   8. Support for Study appeals are appeals against a decision of the University Support for Study Panel to require a student to take an authorised interruption of study under Stage 3 of the Support for Study Policy.

9. For the purposes of these regulations the term 'examination' will be taken to include any written, practical or oral examination, continuously assessed coursework or dissertation which counts towards the final assessment.

10. For academic decisions relating to postgraduate research students the relevant Board of Examiners will be deemed to be the College committee which is responsible for overseeing postgraduate research studies within the relevant college.

The Student Appeal Committee and Sub-committees

11. Appeals are considered by the Student Appeal Committee and its sub-committees. Membership of the Student Appeal Committee is approved annually by the Senate Academic Policy and RegulationsCurriculum and Student Progression Committee on behalf of University Senate and includes members with undergraduate and postgraduate expertise. Conveners of Student Appeal Committees may serve for a term of five academic years. Membership of the Student Appeal Committee itself does not carry a maximum term of service.

12. A Sub-committee will be quorate with two members of the relevant Student Appeal Committee and an administrative caseworker, appointed by Academic Services, acting as the University Secretary's Representative.

13. A full hearing of the Student Appeal Committee will be quorate with the Convener, three members of the relevant Student Appeal Committee (who will not be from the same discipline as the appellant), a representative of the University Secretary, and the Secretary to the Student Appeal Committee.

The Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee and sub-committees

14. Fitness to Practise Appeals are considered by staff who are members of the relevant professional discipline. These staff form the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, the membership of which is approved annually by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on behalf of University Senate. Conveners of Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committees may serve for a term of five academic years. Membership of the Student Appeal Committee itself does not carry a maximum term of service. Members of Fitness to Practise sub-committees for specific cases will never be the same individuals as those involved in the Fitness to Practise proceedings at the College stage.

15. A sub-committee of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee will be quorate with two academic members of staff from the same professional discipline as the appellant, and the Secretary to the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, appointed by Academic Services, acting as the representative of the University Secretary. There is no Convener at sub-committee stage.

16. A full hearing of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee will have an academic Vice Principal, or Head of College as Convener. It will be quorate with a Convener, two members of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, the Secretary to the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, the University Secretary or his/her nominated representative, and three eligible staff drawn from professional disciplines taught in the University. A full hearing of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee will ensure that the committee contains a professional majority and at least one member of staff from the same discipline as the appellant.

Grounds for Appeal

Academic Appeals

17. There are ~~two~~three grounds under which an academic appeal can be lodged. These are:

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.

- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners, Progression Board or Special Circumstances Committee.

- ~~Ground C (open to Postgraduate Research students only): Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners.~~

18. Ignorance of the requirement set out in the Special Circumstances Policy to report timeously any special circumstances adversely affecting performance, or failure to report special circumstances because the student did not anticipate an unsatisfactory result in the examination, can never by themselves constitute the good reason to fulfil the requirement described in Ground A.

Appeals against Exclusion

19. For appeals against exclusion, there are two grounds of appeal:

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the decision to exclude the student which for good reason was not available to the Head of College, or his or her delegate, or other authorised officer when their decision was taken.

- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies.

Fitness to Practise Appeals

20. For Fitness to Practise Appeals, there are two grounds of appeal:

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the students case which for good reason was not available to the College Fitness to Practise Committee when its decision was taken.

- Ground B: Alleged incorrect procedure or conduct of the College procedure for assessing Fitness to Practise. This involves review of the way the student case was handled, not re-investigation of the case itself.

Conduct Appeals

21. For conduct appeals, there are two grounds of appeal:

- Ground A: <u>Substantial information</u> <u>directly relevant</u> to the investigation of a student discipline case which for <u>good reason</u> was not available to the Student Discipline Officer or Student Discipline Committee when their decision was taken.

- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an investigation and disciplinary action. This includes conduct of a meeting of the Student Discipline Committee.

22. Failure to attend any meeting with or hearing of the Conduct Investigator, Student Discipline Officer or Student Discipline Committee, or to provide written representations when invited to do so, or to make available a statement in explanation or extenuation of misconduct, or in mitigation of any possible penalty at the appropriate stage in the process, either during interview or before the Student Discipline Committee, will not constitute the good reason to fulfil the requirement described in Ground A.

Support for Study Appeals

23. For Support for Study appeals, there are two grounds of appeal:

- Ground A: <u>Substantial information</u> <u>directly relevant</u> to the Support for Study case which for <u>good reason</u> was not available to the Support for Study Panel when their decision was taken.

- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of a case under the Support for Study Policy. This includes conduct of a hearing of the Support for Study Panel.

24. Failure to attend a Support for Study Panel hearing, or to provide written representations when invited to do so, will not constitute the good reason to fulfil the requirement described in Ground A.

Student Responsibility

25. It is the student's responsibility to have read and be familiar with the content of any relevant University policies, procedures, regulations, codes of practice, and course and programme handbooks, including all sections relating to marking schemes, assessment and moderation of work. For Postgraduate students, this includes the University's *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students*, which students are directed to upon acceptance or registration. Ignorance of the content of this information cannot constitute a ground for appeal.

26. It is the student's responsibility to submit a piece of work which is capable of satisfying the relevant Examiners. Students should be aware that they are ultimately solely responsible for the academic quality of their dissertation or thesis. Students should be aware that approval by a Dissertation, Project or PhD supervisor, and following the supervisor's advice and guidance, carries no guarantee of success at examination. Any such approving or guiding comments cannot constitute a ground for appeal.

Deadlines

27. There are strict deadlines governing the submission of academic appeals. These are as follows:

    For undergraduate students:
    Final Year: within 30 working days of being informed of the decision.
    All others: within 10 working days of being informed of the decision.

    For postgraduate students:
    All: within 30 working days of being informed of the decision.

28. Appeals against exclusion must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being issued.

29. Appeals against Fitness to Practise Panel decisions must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being issued.

30. Student conduct appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being issued.

31. Support for Study appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being issued.

32. Appeals which are received outside of the timescales stated above are regarded as late and will only be accepted for consideration in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether or not exceptional circumstances exist will be taken by a sub-committee of either the Appeal Committee or the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee. Appeals which are two or more years late will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Submission of an Appeal

33. Appeals must be written and submitted electronically to the Secretary of the University's Appeal Committee and Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee using academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk. Students must ensure that in submitting an appeal, they have completed and attached the relevant appeal forms; and will be deemed to have read and understood all accompanying guidance. Appeal forms and relevant guidance are available from the Academic Services website. https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals/submitting www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/academic-appeals

34. Appellants must specify the ground or grounds under which they wish to have their appeal considered. They must also specify the reasons as to why they believe the ground or grounds apply.

35. The written submission must contain all relevant arguments on the basis of which the appeal is being made, together with all supporting documentation the appellant wishes to be taken into account. It will not be possible to introduce new circumstances, evidence or documentation into the appeal at a later date.

36. Academic Services, Sub-committees, the Student Appeal Committee and the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee may request further information, if this is required. This can be in the form of further information from the student, or further information from members of University staff.

37. Any recent student appealing against exclusion remains excluded until the outcome of any decision on appeal. In relation to Fitness to Practise appeals, any decision of the College Fitness to Practise Committee remains in force until the outcome of any decision on appeal. In relation to conduct appeals, any penalties imposed by the Student Discipline Officer or the Student Discipline Committee will remain in force until the outcome of any decision on appeal.

Consideration of an Appeal

Preliminary Screening

38. ~~When an appeal is received, it is screened by staff in Academic Services to establish whether or not the documentation has been submitted correctly, and whether the appeal is eligible for consideration under these regulations. If Academic Services staff decide that the appeal passes this preliminary screening, then the appeal is submitted to a sub-committee of the Appeal Committee or the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee for consideration.~~ When an appeal is received, it is screened by staff in Academic Services to establish whether or not the documentation has been submitted correctly, and whether the appeal is eligible for consideration under these regulations. If Academic Services judge that the appeal is eligible for consideration under these regulations, and the submission is complete, then the appeal is submitted to a sub-committee of the Appeal Committee or the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee for consideration. A summary report of appeal submissions which were not accepted at preliminary screening is presented to the Appeals Committee annually. This will not include cases where an appellant was advised that their appeal was premature, e.g. because a result being appealed had not yet been ratified by the relevant Board of Examiners

Sub-Committee Consideration

39. A member of staff from Academic Services, acting as the University Secretary's nominee, and two members of the Student Appeal Committee (who must not be from the same School as the appellant, or a member of his or her supervisory team) are empowered as a sub-committee of the Student Appeal Committee to decide whether sufficient grounds have been established for there to be further consideration of the case. In cases of fitness to practise appeals, a member of staff from Academic Services, acting in the same capacity as described above, and two members of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, are empowered as a sub-committee to decide whether sufficient grounds have been established for there to be further consideration of the case. Sub-committee considerations can take ~~plaa~~lce electronically by correspondence. A sub-committee of the Student Appeal Committee may make one of three decisions [(i), (ii) or (iii)]. A sub-committee of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee are limited to options (i) and (iii):

    (i)   No grounds have been established for further consideration of the appeal, in which case, appeal proceedings are concluded; or

(ii) Clear grounds have been established and the sub-committee concludes the appeal by upholding it; and instructing the relevant decision making body to reconvene and re-consider the original decision; or

(iii) Refer the case to the Student Appeal Committee or the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee.

Student Appeal Committee or Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee Consideration

40. If an appeal is to be heard by the Student Appeal Committee, the Secretary of the Student Appeal Committee or Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee will write to the appellant, providing at least five working days' notice of the date of the hearing. This written communication will also contain all documentation from which the relevant sub-committee judged that the appeal should be referred to a full hearing of the Student Appeal Committee or Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee. At this stage, the appellant will be asked to provide any additional comments they might wish to make on the documentation in advance of the hearing. These comments will be incorporated into the documentation that the Committee will consider. The appellant will be entitled to attend and to be accompanied by one other member of the University community (for example, an Edinburgh University Students' Association advisor). The appellant may present their case in person, or may nominate the member of the University community to do so on their behalf.

41. A hearing of the Student Appeal Committee Student or the Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee will operate in the following way:

- The Convener will welcome all parties in attendance, and invite the appellant to make an opening statement;

- Following this statement, the Committee will question the appellant;

- Following questioning of the appellant, the Committee will question any other relevant individuals it has called to appear before the committee. For fitness to practise appeals, this will include the Convener of the College Fitness to Practise Committee;

- After questioning has concluded, the Convener will invite any relevant individuals who have been called to appear before the committee to make any closing statements they might wish to make, each in turn;

- Following hearing closing statements from relevant individuals, the Convener will invite the appellant to make a closing statement, should the appellant wish to do so;

- At this point, the hearing will conclude and the Committee will begin its deliberations. The outcome of the deliberations will be one of the options described in paragraph 4337;

- Following the end of the hearing, the appellant will be informed electronically via email of the outcome of their appeal within 1 working day of the close of proceedings. A detailed report of proceedings which outlines the Committee's reasoning behind its decision will be provided to the appellant no later than five working days following the conclusion of the hearing.

42.   The Student Appeal Committee or Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee may hold physical hearings or, in exceptional circumstances, virtual hearings. Whilst it is in appellants' interests to ensure that they are available to attend a hearing in person, this will not always be possible. Decisions about the nature of the hearings will be made by the relevant Convener and Secretary of the Committee with due consideration of fairness, accessibility and the ability of all involved to participate fully. The Committee may adjourn, continue, or postpone a hearing at its discretion. If the appellant does not appear on the date appointed and the Convener of the Committee is satisfied that the appellant has been given due notice to appear, the Committee may hear the appeal in the appellant's absence. However, the Committee may not draw any adverse inference from the appellant's failure to appear.

43.   On hearing an appeal, there are three options available to the Student Appeal Committee [(i), (ii) or (iii)]. The options available to the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee are limited to options (i) and (ii). has the authority to:

(i)   Instruct the relevant decision making body to re-convene in order to reconsider the appellants result(s) or outcome or fitness to practise decision, adopting any requirements or conditions specified by the Committee; or

(ii)   confirm the original decision of the decision making body. In which case, no further action is taken in respect of the appeal and the case is concluded; or

(iii)   vary the original decision of the decision making body. This is not an option in the case of joint academic and professional qualifications or for courses where a professional qualification is awarded as an outcome of the examination process. Where an appeal hearing relates to the professional (as opposed to the academic) aspect of a qualification, or to a conduct appeal, the authority of the Student Appeal Committee is limited to those options set out at (i) and (ii) above.

44.   The decisions of the Student Appeal Committee, the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee and any decisions of their sub-committees, are final. There will be no further opportunity for appeal against the decision within the University.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

45.   Students who are dissatisfied with the way their appeal has been handled have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO will consider the case and make a decision on whether to investigate. It is important to note that the SPSO can only investigate whether an appeal has been handled appropriately by the University; it does not look again at the substance of the original appeal case. The SPSO can only consider cases when consideration is complete at University level. Information on how to complain to the SPSO will be provided to the student on completion of the appeal. Full information on the SPSO and on how it handles complaints can be found at the SPSO website: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

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Reporting

46. The Student Appeal Committee reports annually to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, detailing the volume and nature of the appeals dealt with in the previous academic session, and highlighting any issues of concern or significance.

528 May 202026 June 2019

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

**Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:
Review 2020**

Description of paper
1. Minor amendments to the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students (the Code of Practice) for publication in July 2020.

Action requested / recommendation
2. The Committee to approve the attached amendments for publication.

Background and context
3. Academic Services reviews the Code of Practice annually to ensure consistency with the UK Quality Code and University policy and regulations.

Discussion
4. The last major review of the Code of Practice was in 2018/19 and this year's review was light-touch. Therefore, Academic Services has reviewed the Code of Practice to update any broken links, correct typographical errors and ensure consistency with revised regulations and policy. Comments were also sought from the Students' Association and University student support services on the content relevant to their services. The Postgraduate Research Steering Group were consulted on and supported the approach to this year's Code of Practice review. The changes highlighted in section 4.7 Final thesis submission of the attached draft (see appendix 1) are subject to approval of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for 2020/21.

Resource implications
5. There are no resources associated with updating the Code of Practice as this is part of Academic Services core business.

Risk management
6. Updating broken links mitigates the risks of directing readers to missing or out of date information. As no material changes are proposed, no other risks are associated with the amendments to the Code of Practice.

Equality & diversity
7. Academic Services does not anticipate any equality and diversity implications from the amendments to the Code of Practice.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. Academic Services communicates updates to the Code of Practice in the annual update on regulations and policies.

Author   **Presenter**

Susan Hunter
19 May 2020

Dr Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information
The paper is open.

The University of Edinburgh

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

Introduction

The University aims to give research students an exceptional and distinctive experience that prepares them to make significant contributions to knowledge during and beyond their period of study. This Code provides guidance and practical advice for research students to assist them in maximising their potential. It also provides guidance and practical advice to support supervisors in undertaking their crucial roles.

Since the University has a diverse research community with a variety of practices, this Code highlights common features and should be read along with School and programme-specific information.

Most aspects of the Code are relevant to distance programmes, however where different arrangements apply these will be highlighted in the relevant programme handbooks. The Code focuses primarily on students and supervisors of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programmes and many aspects are also relevant to MSc by Research programmes. However some MSc by Research programmes may have different arrangements for supervision and assessment and these will be highlighted in the relevant programme handbook. Where students are studying on jointly delivered research degree programmes (for example through Doctoral Training Centres), some of the arrangements for supervision, assessment and support may differ from those described in the Code.

The Code is not part of the University's formal regulatory framework. It should be read in conjunction with the formal requirements set out in the University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations, Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, and other relevant University policies and regulations, many of which are referenced in the Code.

1 Roles and responsibilities

At the University of Edinburgh, each student is supervised by a team of at least two supervisors; a Principal (or "Lead") Supervisor, and either a Co-Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor, who are appointed by the College. The nature of the research project and the best interests of the student will determine the makeup of the supervisory team and the key responsibilities of each member of the supervision team must be agreed by the team at the beginning of the student's programme.

However the responsibilities are distributed, all supervisors are expected to take an active role in supervision and all have a responsibility towards the student.

1.1 Students' responsibilities

All students are expected to comply with the University's policies, regulations and procedures which along with their programme handbook, other programme information and the terms and conditions of admission, form the contract between the student and University during their studies.
University Student Contract
https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/contract

Research students have particular responsibilities for:

The research project
- Fulfilling the requirements of their degree programme (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research or taught professional doctorate) including any requirements for annual progression review.
- Taking advantage of the facilities and supervision offered by the University.
- Working as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of their own research.
- Maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research.
- Working diligently and effectively throughout their studies.
- Following the rules of any other university, Associated Institution (see 1.2.4), company or other organisation that they are studying with as part of their programme.

The thesis

The thesis may take various different formats, such as a portfolio (see 4.1). Throughout this document the term "thesis" is used to represent the assessment submission.

- Submitting a thesis, or portfolio representing the student's research and findings. The programme handbook will give details on what is expected to be submitted for assessment.
- Producing, on time, a thesis that meets the criteria set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.
- Taking full responsibility for the quality of the thesis submitted for assessment (while the supervisor may advise on whether they think work is ready for submission, their opinion carries no guarantee of success in the assessment).

Supervision

- Making themselves available at times agreed and maintaining regular contact with their supervisors.
- Producing a record of each key supervision meeting and forwarding it to their supervisor for agreement.
- Discussing any proposed employment with their supervisor to ensure it does not impede the successful completion of the students' programme of study.

Training and development

- Taking advantage of available research skills training.
- Reflecting on their broader transferable skills and professional development, and engaging with appropriate training opportunities.
- Participating in any training that is a required part of the programme.

Resolving problems

- Actively seeking advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.
- Notifying their Principal Supervisor or other relevant staff of any special circumstances affecting their studies or assessment (see 5.4).

1.2   Supervisors' responsibilities

1.2.1 Principal/Lead Supervisor

Role

The Principal Supervisor, sometimes referred to as Lead Supervisor in a Co-Supervisory team (see 1. 2.2 below), has the main responsibility for supervision arrangements and guidance for the student throughout their programme of study.

This includes taking overall responsibility for:

- The administrative aspects of supervision, for example submitting requests for leave of absence or interruption of studies and ensuring minimum contact requirements are met.
- Ensuring appropriate approval for any co-supervision arrangements is obtained from College.
- Ensuring the student's progress is reviewed for each year of study.
- Providing advice on pastoral support as well as academic matters.
- Ensuring the student's intellectual property is respected.
- Leading on initial and ongoing discussions with the supervisory team to negotiate and agree on roles and responsibilities for each team member.
- Ensuring the student is aware of the responsibilities of individual supervisory team members.
- Communication within the supervisory team.

1.2.2 Co-Supervisor

Role

A co-supervision model may be chosen when it is clear that the student's work involves interdisciplinary research. When this model is chosen, the Co-Supervisor will play a major role in supervising the research project. The division of responsibilities between the Principal or Lead Supervisor and the Co-Supervisor must be agreed upon at the outset of the co-supervisory arrangement.

1.2.3 Assistant Supervisor

Role

The Assistant Supervisor's role involves fewer responsibilities than the Principal Supervisor, but in some cases may include closer day-to-day involvement in the student's research. Assistant Supervisors may also provide complementary expertise, such as specialised knowledge of a particular technique, or depending on the work context, day-to-day supervision in some cases.

1.2.4 Supervisors in Associated Institutions

The University recognises as "Associated Institutions" a range of non-commercial and non-degree-awarding organisations with which it collaborates on teaching, research and services to the community. Staff working in Associated Institutions acting as supervisors for the University's students have the same responsibilities as University of Edinburgh supervisors, and the same requirement to attend the University's supervisor briefing sessions.

If the Principal Supervisor is from an Associated Institution, then the University Supervisor and School Postgraduate Director are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Associated Institution Principal Supervisor has read the University's regulations and policies.
- Ensuring student progress is monitored in line with the University's regulations and policies.

1.2.5 Responsibilities of the supervisory team

The supervisory team should meet as soon as possible once supervisory arrangements are confirmed. At the first meeting, the team should discuss the following responsibilities and decide how to ensure that all of them are covered.

- Introducing the student to the subject area, its facilities and procedures, and to other research students and relevant staff in the School. For distance PhD students these introductions may be virtual.
- Advising the student on the key milestones of the degree, drawing up a research plan and timetable for producing the thesis.
- Advising the student on research ethics and integrity, including obtaining ethical approval.
- Advising the student on facilities required for the research and supporting the student in accessing these.
- Advising the student on how to prepare for annual progression review and the viva voce examination.
- Agreeing the frequency of supervision meetings and the means of recording meetings (see 2.1).
- Organising regular meetings to discuss all matters relating to the student's research, including feedback on written work.
- Advising on the student's professional development needs at the start of the programme and reviewing these throughout the student's studies.
- Encouraging students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses where possible.
- Advising the student on where to find appropriate sources of additional support and signposting University student support services details included in section 6.3.
- Ensuring the student is aware of relevant health and safety policies and procedures.

- Encouraging the student to become an active member of the research community, for example by advising on attendance at relevant conferences and supporting the student in seeking funding for such events.

The supervisors should revisit the distribution of supervisory responsibilities again at the student's annual progression review and at other times as necessary.

1.3 The College Committee

Each College has a specific committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters. The committee's name may vary by College, but it will have overall responsibility for postgraduate research supervision, annual progression review decisions (based on recommendations from Schools) and authorising periods of leave or changes to study periods. In practice, Colleges may delegate some of these decision-making responsibilities to Schools (for example the Postgraduate Director). The College Committee also acts as the Board of Examiners for postgraduate research degree awards. Throughout this document the term "College Committee" is used to refer to all these roles.

2 Student-Supervisor relationship

The student-supervisor relationship is vital to all research degrees. Therefore close contact between supervisors and students is essential.

Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements of the student-supervisor relationship. Most interpersonal problems between students and supervisors can be avoided if students and supervisors contribute responsibly and professionally to their working relationship by being respectful, courteous, punctual and conscientious.

The University's Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive working and studying culture which every student and member of staff contributes to and within which they can fulfil their potential.

Dignity and Respect Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/dignity_and_respect_policy.pdf

2.1 Contact and supervisory meetings

Students rely on contact with their supervisors for guidance and intellectual input to their research. Supervision meetings provide time for discussing all matters relating to the student's research and development, including feedback on written work. Meetings and regular contact may take place face-to-face or online.

If the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, the College will ensure alternative supervision arrangements are in place.

Agreeing the purpose and frequency of supervisory meetings

Students must maintain contact with their supervisor as required and at least twice in every three month period. It is important that both student and supervisory team agree, at the start of the programme, how often meetings will be held and the purpose of meetings. It is important that students can easily contact their supervisors for advice, so supervisors may also be available for additional non-scheduled meetings. Students can initiate meetings but supervisors need to ensure that the minimum contact requirements are met.

The amount of contact between student and supervisors will vary depending on the length of the programme, how the research is being done and how much support the student needs. For example, there may be more meetings in the first few months when the research project is being defined.

Sometimes supervision will be at distance, for example if the student is working away from Edinburgh or is on a recognised distance learning programme. The supervisory team and the student will need to make sure arrangements are in place to support distance supervision, for example internet access and consider any time differences at the student's location.

Keeping records of supervisory meetings

Recording supervisory meetings helps the student and supervisory team keep track of actions and decisions. Therefore, students should provide their Principal Supervisor with a written note including:

- The date and purpose of the meeting.
- Any problems identified.
- Action points.

2.2   What happens if the supervisory relationship breaks down

If the supervisory relationship seems to have broken down, students or supervisors can contact their School Postgraduate Director. If they cannot resolve the problem then the School Postgraduate Director or the student can contact the Secretary or Chair of the College Committee. If there are problems with the supervisory relationship then University staff will respect confidentially and limit disclosures to as few colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem.

If there appears to be a breakdown in the student-supervisor relationship and problems are not able to be resolved locally, both the supervisor and the student should consider mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process, however the University will always try to resolve conflict in a positive way. That means that the parties who are in conflict should give

informed consideration to mediation as a way of resolving the conflict. Schools can request mediation from the College which can contact the University's accredited mediator in Human Resources for advice.

Support for students experiencing problems with the supervisory relationship is available from the [Students' Association's Advice Place](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place).

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place

3   Annual progression review

Keeping on track with research can be challenging for students. Annual progression review meetings provide an opportunity to monitor and support students in maximising their chance of successfully completing on time. For students to benefit fully from annual progression reviews it is important that supervisors provide constructive criticism about the student's work.

Annual progression reviews provide a formal record of how the research project and thesis are going and recognition of student achievements. They also offer a structured opportunity to discuss students' professional development and career aims, and identify any training needs.

3.1   Annual progression review process

Timescale

The first review takes place within nine to 12 months of matriculation. By then students will have independently produced an identifiable body of work that can be assessed.

Progress is then assessed annually until thesis submission (or more frequently if recommended by the Postgraduate Director for an individual student - see below). The timescales are the same for full and part-time students.

Process
- The annual review process is supported by an online system which students can access via the MyEd portal and staff via the EUCLID system.
- The process begins when the student is notified by a system-generated email that their annual review form report is ready to complete. Once the student has completed their part, the supervisors complete their sections.
- The student prepares a presentation or report, including a forward plan of their work, before the meeting, with help from the supervisor(s) if needed.
- The review will be conducted by a panel which includes all the supervisory team and may include one or more people appointed by the School.
- The student attends a review meeting where they may need to give an oral presentation and the panel will review the student's presentation or report.

(Students studying at distance may choose to attend annual progression review meetings in person. If this is not possible meetings may take place online.)

- The panel will decide whether they think the student can progress to their next year, and will provide the student with feedback.
- The supervisors will advise the School Postgraduate Director (or Head of the Graduate School) regarding the formal progression recommendation for submission to the College Committee for its approval. The student, supervisors, reviewer and School Postgraduate Director, or Head of Graduate School, then sign-off the online report before the supervisors' and Directors' progression recommendation is submitted to the College Committee for its approval (students cannot participate in the progression decision-making process).
- If the panel identifies concerns about a student's progress following any review, then it can recommend several different ways forward (see 3.2).

What is reviewed

Programme handbooks will give information on annual progression review arrangements. In addition to reviewing the student's report or presentation and discussing progress on the student's thesis, some of the things that reviews may include are:

- A timetable for progress agreed by the student and supervisory team.
- A record of whether deadlines have been met.
- The results of any taught elements of the programme.
- The student's report on any programme of skills training they have undertaken to support their research and any transferable skills development they have undertaken.

Reviewing supervision arrangements

Sometimes a student's research changes direction and may move away from the supervisors' expertise. The annual progression review lets supervisors consider their own competence to deal with any new research area. It also provides an opportunity for the supervisory team to revisit the distribution of supervisory responsibilities. If different expertise is needed to support the student, the School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Committee.

Guidance and regulations

Guidance for students on completing their online annual progression review is available on Student Systems' website.

[Guidance on postgraduate research annual progression review form](#)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/students/postgraduate-research-annual-review-form

Guidance for supervisors on the annual progression review system and their role is available on Student Systems' website.

[Principal and lead supervisor role summary and annual progression review guidance](http://www.studentsystems.is.ed.ac.uk/staff/user_guides/pgr_annual_review/pgr_supervisor_staff.htm)

http://www.studentsystems.is.ed.ac.uk/staff/user_guides/pgr_annual_review/pgr_supervisor_staff.htm

[Additional supervisor role summary and annual progression review guidance](http://www.studentsystems.is.ed.ac.uk/staff/user_guides/pgr_annual_review/additional_supervisor_staff.htm)

http://www.studentsystems.is.ed.ac.uk/staff/user_guides/pgr_annual_review/additional_supervisor_staff.htm

The regulations on annual progression review, including the recommendations that can be made following a review, are in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

[Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf

3.2   Problems with progress

Postgraduate research study is challenging and sometimes students may experience problems making progress. To help support students, it is important for supervisors to be open about any difficulties they foresee with successful completion. There are various options available to support students experiencing problems with progress and University student support services may be able to help with non-academic problems.

A supervisor who thinks that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory should discuss the problem with the student and follow this up with a written record of the discussion for the student. Unsatisfactory progress will also be noted in annual reports, and flagged for remedial action.

If a student is having difficulties making progress with their programme of study, this should be identified during the annual progression review. If the annual progression review panel identifies that a student is not making satisfactory progress, then the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors may recommend one of the following:

- Deferment of a decision (part-time students' first year review only).
- That a further (repeat) review takes place within three months.
- Registration for a different postgraduate research or taught degree.
- Exclusion from study (this option is rarely used).

Supervisors will provide students with a written explanation of their assessment in these cases.

If the supervisors and Director are recommending exclusion, the College will consider the recommendations in line with the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study (see Section 5.6).

[Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf

[University Procedure for withdrawal and exclusion from study](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

4   Thesis preparation and assessment

Writing up and submitting the thesis in line with the timescales set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations or programme handbook should be the priority in a student's final year.

4.1   The thesis

Students must submit a thesis representing their research and findings. Some submissions will be in alternative formats to the traditional thesis. The Postgraduate Degree Regulations and programme handbook specify any further requirements for designs, composition, artworks or performances and their display, presentation and documentation.

4.2   Thesis preparation

In preparation for thesis submission, student and supervisor should agree a timetable for completing the thesis.

The maximum thesis length is set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. While the University's regulations do not stipulate a minimum length, Schools or Colleges may have additional guidance on expectations which supervisors will be able to advise on.

Thesis regulations including notice of intention to submit, format, previously published material and the signed declaration are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

Additional guidance on some specific aspects of the thesis format and presentation, such as the requirement for a lay summary, completing the signed declaration, including publications in the thesis and thesis binding requirements and electronic formats is available on the University website.

[Academic policies and regulations for research students](https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/research-students)
https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/research-students

More information on typical milestones and support in preparing the thesis is available on the Institute for Academic Development website.

[Writing up your PhD]

https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/advice-support/writing-up

Thesis requirements

The criteria for the award of research degrees as set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations or otherwise agreed by the Senate Researcher Experience Committee are that the thesis must:

- Be the student's own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page of the thesis, and must not have been presented for any other degree except as specified on the declarations page.
- Present a coherent body of work.
- Make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field of study.
- Relate particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field and show adequate knowledge of relevant literature.
- Demonstrate critical judgement of the student's own work and that of other scholars in the field.
- Present the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way.
- Contain material worthy of publication.
- Demonstrate that any publications included in the thesis are the students own work, except where indicated throughout the thesis and summarised clearly on the declarations page.
- Be presented in a clear, consistent and accessible format.

The Institute for Academic Development provides more information and advice on writing up your thesis.
- Writing up your PhD
https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/advice-support/writing-up

Additional information

More information on thesis submission, including thesis submission forms, is available on the University website.

Doctoral thesis submission

https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/thesis-submission

The University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations

http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/regulations/PGDRPS2019-20.pdf

4.3   Thesis submission

Students should complete a Notice of Intention to Submit form, along with a thesis abstract and Access to Thesis and Publication of Abstract form at least two months prior to

submission. Pre-submission forms are submitted to the College Office. Once the thesis is ready for submission, the student presents it to the College Office including the abstract and lay summary. Supervisors and Graduate Schools will be able to advise students where to submit their thesis. Thesis submission forms are also available online.

[Doctoral thesis submission](https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/thesis-submission)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/thesis-submission

4.4   Thesis assessment

Assessment regulations, including examiner roles and responsibilities, conduct of assessment, thesis regulations and assessment decisions are set out in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

The University's [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf) https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf

All research degrees (apart from MSc by Research) are assessed in two stages; the initial report by the examiners followed by an oral exam or viva voca, often referred to as the "viva".

Each thesis is assessed by at least one External and one Internal Examiner, who are appointed by the College. Internal Examiners are members of University staff. External Examiners are from outside the University and have specialist knowledge relevant to the thesis.

Examiners' initial report

Before the viva, the examiners are asked to assess the thesis on the grounds set out in the regulations and as part of their report to consider:

- Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study?
- Does the thesis contain material worthy of publication?
- Does the thesis demonstrate adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature?
- Does the thesis show the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field?
- Is the presentation and style of the thesis satisfactory?

The viva

The viva, is normally held within three months of thesis submission, however the exact date will depend on:

- When the Notice of Intention to Submit form is submitted by the student.

- When the thesis is submitted by the student.
- How long it takes to select and appoint examiners.
- How long the examiners require to examine the thesis.
- When everyone involved is available to meet for the oral examination, including any visa restrictions on the student's availability.

The examiners and the student attend the viva. The Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring the arrangements for the exam are made and for chairing the exam. Sometimes a non-examining chair will be appointed and the Internal Examiner will notify the student if this is the case. The role of the non-examining chair is included in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. The examiners may use the viva to establish a student's knowledge of their field of research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own.

The viva is usually held in Edinburgh, but where necessary the College Committee may approve a remote viva by video link.

University guidance on [PhD by Research oral examinations by video link](#)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked_phd_oral.pdf

Examiner recommendations

At the end of the viva, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation, indicate their recommendation to the student. It is important to note that this recommendation is not final and is subject to approval by the College Committee, and examiners will make this clear to the student. Possible examiner recommendations after the viva:

- Award PhD/Doctorate
- Minor corrections needed (see 4.5)
- Additional oral examination needed – no further work on the thesis required, or stated minor corrections (see 4.5)
- Additional work on the thesis – no oral re-examination needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate (see 4.5)
- Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate (see 4.6)
- Award MPhil
- Award MPhil following Minor Corrections (see 4.6)
- Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil (see 4.6)
- Award MSc by Research
- Fail

4.5   Thesis corrections

The Internal Examiner will certify corrections and the External Examiner may also ask to see corrections before the degree is awarded.

Minor corrections

After the viva, the examiners may ask students to make minor corrections to the thesis. These may be editorial corrections or to address minor weaknesses before the award is confirmed. Corrections will need to be submitted within three months (or four if a further oral exam is recommended).

Additional work

After the viva, the examiners may ask students to carry out additional work on the thesis, which may require further supervision. These corrections, which will be stipulated by the examiners, will entail more work than is required for minor corrections. The examiners will set the period within which this work must be submitted, but submission will normally be within six months.

4.6   Thesis resubmission

Following the viva, the examiners may ask students to carry out further work on the thesis and to resubmit it for the same or a different degree. If resubmission for a different degree is recommended, the examiners may require minor corrections (see 4.5) or more substantial work on the thesis. Where more substantial work is required the examiners will stipulate what is needed and set a period for resubmission. Supervisors will guide students through the necessary steps to meet the examiners' requirements and continue to provide supervision as needed.

Students will get a clear written statement from the examiners, approved by the College Committee, of what revisions are required.

The examiners will assess the resubmitted thesis against the written statement on re-examination, and will not introduce any new criticisms of previously examined material.

The College Office will be able to advise on the resubmission process.

4.7   Final thesis submission

After students have successfully completed their thesis assessment, they must submit a the final electronic copy of their thesis to the College Office. An electronic copy must also be deposited with the Library. More information on final thesis submission is available from the College Office. Information on electronic submission is available from the Library.

University Library's theses website

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/scholarly-communications/how-to-deposit-theses

5 Absences and concessions

Sometimes students may need to have time away from the University or from their studies. This section gives advice on ways the University can support students through a variety of situations that may impact on their study.

5.1 Leave of absence

Students studying on campus in Edinburgh sometimes need to conduct part of their research away from Edinburgh. This is referred to as a leave of absence. Students who want a leave of absence of 30 calendar days or more should talk to their Principal Supervisor, who will be able to advise on obtaining permission.

A leave of absence should:

- Benefit the research programme.
- Not be detrimental to the research and the student's development and participation in the University's academic community.
- Not conflict with any other requirement of the student's programme of study.
- Not conflict with any obligations for the student to be available for on-campus activity.
- Have a working timetable agreed by supervisors and student.
- Be accompanied by an agreed method for submitting written work and receiving feedback, and for supervisory meetings, established by the supervisors and student.
- Be consistent with any funder requirements.

Further information on how leave of absence is approved, and student support arrangements during leave, is available from the College Office. Leave of absence does not apply to students on recognised distance learning programmes.

Leave of absence for international students

Tier 4 students are normally expected to carry out all of their study on campus in Edinburgh. However, in some cases they may need to study at another location for compulsory and optional activities related to their programme. In these cases, students should apply for a leave of absence. The University will continue to sponsor student visas during the leave of absence, providing it can maintain Tier 4 sponsor duties, and student Tier 4 visas will remain valid. Advice is available from visahelp@ed.ac.uk.

5.2 Interruptions of study

Authorised interruption of study, usually referred to as "interruption", is available for students who are unable to study for a while. This may be because of health or family problems for example, and students should notify their supervisor as soon as the need for an interruption arises. Following discussion with their supervisor, students are responsible for completing and submitting a form to request the interruption. Interruptions will be authorised when there is good reason and examples of what is considered good reason are given in the University policy on authorised interruptions of study.

Information on how to request an interruption, important considerations and where to find further advice are available in the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy.

[University policy on Authorised Interruption of Study](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/authorisedinterruption.pdf)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/authorisedinterruption.pdf

5.3   Extensions of study

The University expects that the thesis will be submitted for assessment within the period stated in the programme handbook. Extensions to this period are available in exceptional circumstances and must be agreed by the Postgraduate Director and approved by the College Committee. For example, an extension may be available if unforeseen difficulties have held up the research or completion of the thesis. A strong case is required and must be supported by the Principal Supervisor.

To request an extension:

- The Principal Supervisor submits the request.
- The academic reasons for the extension are stated in the request.
- A plan of work towards submitting the thesis, with milestones and specific dates agreed with the Principal Supervisor is included in the request.

Important things to consider when requesting an extension:

- It must be made before the end of the student's maximum submission date (for example, within four years for a full-time PhD).
- It may have an impact on a student's Tier 4 visa.
- It may have an impact on student funding.
- It may have an impact on council tax (for example discounts and exemptions).
- There are restrictions to the amount of time that can be requested for extension – these are set out in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.
- Additional fees will be incurred if an extension of study request is approved – see the University's tuition fees policy.

    https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/tuition-fees/postgraduate/fee-policy

For further information and advice:

For Tier 4 students – Edinburgh Global

http://global.ed.ac.uk/

The Advice Place – free, impartial advice for students

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/

University Postgraduate Degree Regulations

5.4   ~~Special c~~Adverse circumstances affecting studies and assessment

~~Special~~ Sometimes students will experience ~~circumstances are~~ exceptional circumstances beyond ~~their~~a ~~student's~~ control that significantly impact on their research performance, attendance or assessment submissions. The University has a Special Circumstances Policy which applies to taught components of a programme. However, for most postgraduate research students, the University offers other support mechanisms if they are experiencing circumstances that affect their ability to engage with their studies.

Students should discuss any circumstances affecting their ability to engage with their studies with their Principal Supervisor first.

Support for students with ~~special~~ adverse circumstances that are disrupting their studies can be offered through authorised interruption or extension of study (see sections 5.2 and 5.3). However, there may be times when personal circumstances affect a student's ability to participate in an assessment, for example annual progression review or viva. If these are affected, it may be possible to reschedule or change the format of the meeting or exam.

The College Committee may also take into account any ~~special~~ exceptional circumstances when considering recommendations from an annual progression review or oral exam. Therefore, it is important that students notify their Principal Supervisor, Postgraduate Director or Postgraduate Adviser in writing of any ~~special~~ exceptional circumstance before the relevant assessment (for example annual progression review or viva) or the College Committee meeting.

Examples of circumstances that might have a significant impact include:

- Significant short-term physical illness or injury.
- Significant short-term mental ill-health.
- A long-term or chronic physical health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently.
- A long-term or chronic mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently.
- Bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship.
- A long-term relationship breakdown, such as a marriage.
- Exceptional (non-routine) caring responsibilities.
- Experience of sexual harassment or assault.
- Experience of other types of harassment.
- Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact.
- Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions.

Examples of circumstances that are unlikely to be accepted include:

- A long-term or chronic health condition (including mental ill-health) which has not worsened recently, or for which the University has already made a reasonable adjustment.
- A minor short-term illness or injury (for example, a common cold), which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on assessment.
- Occasional low mood, stress or anxiety.
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable.
- Holidays.
- Financial issues.
- Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health).
- Poor time-management.
- Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission or examination.
- ~~Failure, loss or theft of data, a computer or other equipment.~~
- Commitments to paid or voluntary employment.
- ~~Death of a pet.~~

For taught courses taken by postgraduate research students, the University's Special Circumstances Policy applies.

University's Special Circumstances Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

5.5 Withdrawal from studies

Withdrawal from studies is a voluntary decision by the student. Any student may withdraw permanently from the University at any point in the year. However, before applying to withdraw, students are strongly advised to consult their Principal Supervisor and to consider the implications of withdrawal. More information is available in:

The University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/withdrawal_exclusion_from_study.pdf

5.6 Exclusion from studies

While it is very rare for students to be excluded from study, there are some circumstances in which the University will consider this option. These include:

- Where a student has not demonstrated academic progress at an annual progression review.
- Where a student has not submitted a thesis by the end of their maximum period of study.
- Where a student has not met any engagement requirements as set out in their programme handbook.

More information about all the potential grounds for exclusion is available in:

The University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

5.7   Vacation leave

Students can take up to ~~six~~ eight weeks' vacation time in a year, with agreement from their supervisor. There is no need to apply for an interruption of study when taking vacation leave.

5.8   Student maternity and parental leave

Students who are pregnant, about to become a parent or guardian, or adopt a child during their study should let their supervisor know so they can provide academic advice. Flexible arrangements, such as time off, modifications to attendance or interruption of study, can be put in place to support students who are to become parents and more information is available in the University student maternity policy.

The University's Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentmaternitypolicy.pdf

6   Other support and information

The University offers a wide range of support services, resources and information, including academic support, wellbeing services and skills training.

6.1   Resolving problems

Supervisors are the first point of contact for students if any problems arise and will either be able to offer advice themselves or direct the student to other sources of advice.

There may be times when students feel unable to confide in their supervisors. If so, they can get in touch with the Postgraduate Adviser if their subject area has one, or the School's Postgraduate Director. Contact details of key School staff are available in the programme handbook. If the problem cannot be resolved by them, the student may then consult with the Secretary or Chair of the College Committee.

Supervisors can also seek help in resolving problems by the same routes.

6.2   Programme handbooks

The School Office will provide students with their programme handbook. Programme handbooks are an important source of information for students. They are part of the University's academic governance framework and include programme-specific information on:

- Supervision arrangements.
- Thesis requirements.

- Research skills training.
- Professional development.
- Teaching opportunities.
- Research culture.

Handbooks also include information on programme organisation, assessment and feedback, key contacts and locations, student support services, opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experiences, attendance requirements, student representation structure, data protection and health and safety information.

6.3   Student support services

The University, Colleges, Schools and Students' Association provide a comprehensive range of support services to enable students to make the most of their time as part of the University community. Many student support units offer online as well as face to face services, although the range accessible to distance students may differ from those for on-campus students.

6.3.1   Students' Association

All students, including Postgraduate Research (PGR) students, automatically become members of the Students' Association when they join the University. As members, PGR students have access to a wide range of activities and services including student representation, student-led societies and peer support groups, and our free and impartial Advice Place.

For more information, visit www.eusa.ed.ac.uk, email reception@eusa.ed.ac.uk, or visit our Welcome Desk at Potterrow~~Research students are automatically members of Edinburgh University Students' Association. The Students' Association provides a range of services, including advice and representation, peer learning and support, events and entertainment. Over 300 student-run societies are supported by the Students' Association. For more details, see the association's website: eusa.ed.ac.uk/postgrad or visit one of the Students' Association buildings at Teviot Row House, Potterrow, Pleasance, or King's Buildings House~~.

The Advice Place

The Advice Place is a free, impartial and confidential advice service open to all students and run by the Students' Association. Their professional advisors can offer advice and support on a range of topics including funding, accommodation, access to healthcare, and academic life.

For more information on the advice available and how to access the service, visit www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice or email advice@eusa.ed.ac.uk~~The Advice Place is home to the Students' Association's professional advice team. They offer free, impartial and confidential information for students on everything and anything including funding, accommodation, student welfare, and academic matters. For full details on the range of advice on offer, visit:~~

Student representation

The Students' Association supports over 1500 student representatives who ensure that students have a voice at the University and create positive change on the issues that matter to students.

Each year, student representatives are elected or volunteer, and after receiving training from the Students' Association, they work with staff across the University to enhance their student experience.

PGR students are encouraged to engage with student representation – whether by volunteering as a representative, engaging in Elections, or providing feedback to their representatives – to ensure that the Students' Association and the University are responding effectively to the concerns of PGR students~~At the beginning of each academic year, Schools elect Postgraduate Student Representatives ('Reps') who are trained and supported by the Students' Association and work closely with their Postgraduate Director. Postgraduate research students also elect a University-wide Postgraduate Research Rep. Research students are encouraged to engage with student representation processes and elections so that Postgraduate Research Reps can work with them to improve their University experience and the Students' Association can adequately represent postgraduate research students~~.

6.3.2   Career development

Research graduates enter many different careers both within and out of higher education. To ensure students make satisfying, well-informed career decisions the University encourages research students to explore their career options, and to consider their career priorities throughout their study.

Considering career development from the start of the programme will ensure students both develop as researchers and prepare for professional success, whatever employment sector they enter. Throughout their studies, students should take advantage of the many opportunities they will have to gain experience, develop skills, access relevant training, engage with employers, and build professional networks to prepare for their future career. Students are encouraged to reflect on and record their experiences so they can consider areas of strength and interest, which will help them to identify suitable professional development opportunities and to make a successful career transition.

Research students can get support from the Careers Service to explore career options, consider what is important to them in a career, and to implement career decisions through job search and application support. The Careers Service runs career management workshops for research students, organises employer networking events and careers fairs,

and offers individual career development consultations. The service also has online career management resources for research students.

[Careers Services: Information for postgraduate students](https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad

6.3.3 English language tuition

English Language Education (ELE) provides English for Academic Purposes development to international students before they begin and during their studies at the University. Research students can benefit from a range of courses to support writing up their thesis and help with understanding disciplinary-specific conventions and expectations for academic writing. Supervisors can refer students to these courses, and can access support themselves through the seminars for supervisors provided by ELE in collaboration with IAD. ELE also offers bookable slots in the Graduate Writing Centre.

General information on ELE: https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching

Courses for PGR students: https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/elsis

Graduate Writing Centre: https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/graduate-writing-centre~~English Language Education (ELE) provides classes, workshops, and materials for international students who would benefit from English language support whilst studying for their degree. Supervisors can refer a student who needs help with English to ELE directly, even if the student has not taken the Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM). The student will then be offered English language tuition, or independent study materials and advice.~~

~~English Language Education~~

~~https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching~~

6.3.4 Library collections and services

A wide range of library services, collections and study spaces are provided to support both taught and research elements of students' work. Collections include print and digital books and journals, rare books and special collections, artworks, images, museum items and archives. Digital and print library resources are available for students based in Edinburgh. In addition to electronic resources, printed library materials are digitised where possible for students undertaking online or distance learning.

[Library services](http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library)

http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library

[Library resources for online distance learning students](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/using-library/library-services-odl)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/using-library/library-services-odl

Academic Support Librarians

There is an Academic Support Librarian allocated to each School. Their role is to:

- Provide advice and assistance on using library services and collections.
- Demonstrate the use of information resources by arranging subject-specific information skills sessions.
- Help students' with research by arranging one-to-one advice sessions.
- Advise on research data management.

Academic Support Librarians

http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/academic-support-librarians-a-z

Centre for Research Collections

The Centre for Research Collections (CRC) is the only place in the UK where researchers can access material from across collection types, from medieval manuscripts to contemporary art.

6.3.5   Computing resources

Information Services (IS) provides a wide range of advice on all aspects of computing and IT.

IS information for students

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/students

IS information for researchers and teaching staff
https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-teaching-staff

Email

All students are provided with a University email account and this is used as the official means of communication.

University policy on the use of email for contacting students
http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/contacting_students_by_email.pdf

Computing facilities

Schools will ensure that students have access to specialised computing facilities where required, and receive appropriate training. Training will cover how to access and use computing facilities relevant to particular degree programmes and research projects.

The Research Data Service offers tools, support and training to students working with research data. Solutions for research data management and all of their data-related requirements.

Research Data Service

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/research-data-service

Research Support in the Information Services Group (ISG) offers everything students need to know about managing and publishing their research.

[Research support](#)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support

6.3.6   Student Disability Service

The Student Disability Service provides information and advice to disabled students and staff. The Service:

- Provides a range of student support assistants who can proofread texts, assist in the library and act as notetakers.
- Supports students to apply for statutory or University funding, if they are entitled to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or equivalent funding for international and EU students.
- Determines a range of reasonable adjustments based on assessment of student needs.
- Advises supervisors and professional services staff on supporting disabled students and specific support adjustments to study, examination and assessment procedures.

Students with impairments (including dyslexia, long term mental health problems, students on the autistic spectrum, as well as physical and sensory impairments) that will impact on study should contact the Student Disability Service as soon as possible.

[Student Disability Service](#)
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service

Regulations on "Reasonable Adjustments" to assessments for disabled students are included in the University's assessment regulations.

[Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

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

6.4   Wellbeing support services

Postgraduate research study can be stressful at times. To support students to manage their wellbeing, the University provides a variety of services. The University has a dedicated health and wellbeing hub for students. The fully accessible Health and Wellbeing Centre is based in Bristo Square and houses the Counselling and Disability Services, the University Medical Centre and the University Pharmacy. It offers professional one-to-one consultation rooms and a wellbeing lounge for students and staff to relax in. The Centre also hosts various wellbeing pop-ups throughout the year.

6.4.1 Student Counselling Service

The Student Counselling Service offers one-to-one counselling, workshops and consultation, and training for staff. The service aims to help students work through their difficulty, understand themselves better and find ways of managing their situation.

[Student Counselling Service](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling

6.4.2 Health and wellbeing

Details of a range of services provided for students by the University and throughout Edinburgh for physical and mental wellbeing are available on the University's Student website.

[Health and wellbeing](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing

6.5 Research and skills training and support for students

The University provides information, support and training for research, digital and transferable skills. These skills are vital for development as an independent researcher and important for life and career after the degree.

Research, digital and transferable skills are often developed as an integral part of supervision and engagement with the research community. Some students may also be able to access credit-bearing research methods courses and in some cases these are a required part of a student's programme of study.

Digital, transferable and professional skills development training is provided by Colleges, Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), the Careers Service, the Students' Association and Information Services Group. Students whose programmes of studies are delivered in partnership with other universities (for example via Doctoral Training Centres) may also have access to training opportunities delivered through those partnerships. Students also have access to online and University Library skills development resources, and digital skills development resources through Lynda.com, an online skills development service.

[University Lynda.com information pages](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/is-skills/lynda)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/is-skills/lynda

Students are encouraged to take the initiative in their own development and record their portfolio of skills, including:

- Attendance on regular training and development opportunities in accordance with their personal development needs and the demands of their research.

- Use of online training to develop research, digital and transferable skills.
- Use of the library and online resources.
- Engagement with the research community including presenting at seminars, tutoring and demonstrating, producing publications and attending conferences.

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) website also provides some useful information on doctoral skills development, including a training needs assessment.

IAD Doctoral researchers website
https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral

Annual progression reviews take account of what training and development opportunities students have undertaken and offer an opportunity to discuss future needs.

6.6   Training and support for supervisors

The University provides training and events to support supervisors in maintaining expertise needed to perform their supervisory role. Supervisors are required to attend a College or School supervisor briefing every five years.

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) runs regular Postgraduate Research Supervisor Network events which focus on specific elements of supervision. ~~The IAD also hosts informal, drop-in supervisor coffee discussion sessions to which all supervisors are welcome.~~ Network events and informal discussions are advertised in the supervisor newsletter and on the IAD website.

Contact the Institute for Academic Development for more information on briefings, events and supervisor support. Email: iad.phdsupervisors@ed.ac.uk

IAD postgraduate research supervisor network

https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/research-roles/supervisors/network

6.7   Students working during study

Work benefits both student and employer, but good self-management is needed to make sure students meet their research commitments. It is also important for students to maintain a good work-life balance.

The University will employ full-time postgraduate research students for no more than an average of 9 hours per week across the academic year (this is University policy), and recommends that students also apply this limit to work with other employers. Students should discuss any proposed employment with their Principal Supervisor.

If students get funding for their research, they must also check whether there are any restrictions or conditions on the amount of work they are allowed to do. Most funders allow

some part-time work, particularly in areas relevant to the students' research, and encourage a common sense approach to other paid work.

For students on Tier 4 visas, there are additional limits on employment set by the UK Home Office. More information on visa implications for students is available on the University website:

Part-time work during studies

https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/finance/working

More information on combining part-time work with study is available on the Careers Service website:

Part-time and vacation work

http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/looking-for-work/part-time-vacation

The University's Policy for tutors and demonstrators is also available online:

Tutors and demonstrators

https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/research-students/tutors-demonstrators

6.8 Fees and funding

6.8.1 Paying fees and fee status

Student fees and tuition costs are paid to the University Finance Department and more information on paying fees is available on their website. Tuition fee status and discount information is available on the Scholarships and Student Funding website.

Student Academic Fees – Finance Department

https://www.ed.ac.uk/finance/students/fees

Tuition fees – Scholarships and Student Funding

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/tuition-fees

6.8.2 Scholarships and funding

Information about scholarships and financial support for research students is available on the Scholarships and Student Funding website.

Funding for UK/EU students

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/uk-eu

Funding for international students

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/international

Scholarships and Student Funding

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding

UK Research and Innovation is the organisation which brings together the seven UK Research Councils (UKRC). Their website includes links to UKRC research funding information.

UK Research and Innovation

https://www.ukri.org/funding/

6.9   Degree and assessment regulations and other University policies

Postgraduate research degrees are governed by the University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations. These include regulations ~~cover issues such as~~ on study and submission periods, leave of absence, interruptions, extensions and withdrawal from study. Supervision regulations and the grounds for award of doctoral degrees are also here, as well as additional programme specific regulations.

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations are in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) website.

DRPS

http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Research degrees are assessed under the University's Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees. These regulations cover the conduct of assessment, including annual progression reviews, thesis assessment and viva, thesis regulations and assessment decisions.

Some research degrees may contain taught elements and these will be assessed under the University's Taught Assessment Regulations.

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf

Taught Assessment Regulations

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

In addition to these regulations, students must follow all the other University regulations, policies and procedures. The University's student contract encompasses the policies and regulations that support the partnership between students and staff. Students should familiarise themselves with these documents, particularly those that are most likely to be relevant to postgraduate research study.

The student contract

https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/contract

6.10   Student appeals

The University has an appeals process to allow students to request a review of a decision in relation to progression, degree award, student conduct, fitness to practice or exclusion. Information on the Student Appeal Regulations, arrangements and timescales for submitting an appeal and where to get advice is available on the University website.

Supervisor role in appeals

A supervisor's pastoral role continues after an appeal is lodged, even though the appeal might question the quality of supervision. After taking appropriate advice, supervisors will decide whether to assist the student in making their appeal case.

Appeals

https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals

6.11 Complaints

The University's Complaint Handling Procedure has two stages. Firstly, students should usually try to resolve any problems locally, by speaking to the appropriate staff member(s) as early as possible. If this does not resolve matters, the student can submit a complaint form (available at the link below) to request that their complaint is investigated at Stage 2 of the procedure. Students are encouraged to talk to the Students' Association Advice Place before submitting a complaint. More information is available on the University website.

Complaints

https://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/complaint-handling-procedure~~Students are encouraged to resolve any problems locally as early as possible, however if this is not possible a formal procedure is also available. The University's complaints procedure is designed to ensure that complaints are properly investigated and given careful and fair consideration. More information is available on the University Student website.~~

~~Complaints~~

~~https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/complaints~~

6.12 Student conduct

Advice on expected conduct is also available on the University Student website.

Student conduct

https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/conduct

6.12.1 Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating, is covered by the Code of Student Conduct. More information is available on the University website.

Academic misconduct

https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct

6.13 Links to useful resources

Alphabetical list of links to University regulations, policies, guidance and other useful information.

The Advice Place – Edinburgh University Students' Association's professional advice service

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/

Assessment Regulations

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment

Authorised Interruption of Study Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/authorisedinterruption.pdf

Careers Service – information for PhD students

https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad/phd

Centre for Research Collections

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc

Complaint Procedure

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/university-secretary-group/complaint-handling-procedure

Computing Regulations

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/computing-regulations

Conduct, Student Code

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/code-of-student-conduct

Contacting Students by Email Policy

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

Data Protection – University policy – includes use of personal data by students

https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/policy/data-protection

Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS)

http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Digital Skills Programme

http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/skills

Dignity & Respect Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/respect

Disclosure of Information about Students - Guidelines

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information

Equality and Diversity

https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity

Edinburgh University Students' Association Postgraduate Activities

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/postgraduate/

Glossary of Terms – defines terms used in the Degree Regulations

http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2019-20.pdf

Graduations

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/graduations

Health and Safety – University policy and codes of practice

https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/policy-cop

Health and wellbeing

https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing

Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses, Guidance

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

Lay summary guidance

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

Library Regulations

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/library-regulations

Library theses website

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/scholarly-communications/how-to-deposit-theses

Mental Health, Student Strategy

http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/student-mental-health/student-mental-health-strategy

New students' website

http://www.ed.ac.uk/new-students

Peer proofreading – The Advice Place scheme

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/peer_proofreading/ Plagiarism guidelines

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct/plagiarism

Postgraduate Research (PGR) Annual Progression Review Form software help (PGR Supervisors)

http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/academic-staff/pgr-supervision

Postgraduate research supervisor network

https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/research-roles/supervisors/network

Research support

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support

Research Data Service

https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/research-data-service

Research ethics and integrity resources

https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/research-roles/research-only-staff/research-good-practice/research-integrity

Smoking - University Policy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/no_smoking_policy.pdf

Social Media, University Guidelines

http://www.ed.ac.uk/website-programme/training-support/guidelines/social-media

Student website - University (including Health and Wellbeing, Academic Life, Careers, Money and Fees information)

https://www.ed.ac.uk/students

Student Appeal Regulations

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

[Student Information Pages](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration) (Scholarships and Student Funding, Student Information Points, Timetabling)

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration

Video linked viva examinations, Guidance

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/videolinked_phd_oral.pdf

Wellbeing resources:

Big White Wall

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling/self-help/big-white-wall-bww

Feeling Good App

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling/self-help/apps-podcasts-ted-talks-relaxation-recordings/feeling-good-app

SilverCloud online cognitive behavioural therapy

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling/what-is-silvercloud

References

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20

University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20

August 202019

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

28 May 2020

Update to Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Description of paper
1. Outlines minor updates to the Course and Programme Handbooks Policy.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For approval.

Background and context
3. Minor updates have been made to the Policy.

Discussion
4. Minor updates have been made to the cover sheet, web links, and standard text.

Resource implications
5. No additional resources implications have been identified.

Risk management
6. There is a risk associated with not providing students with accurate information in programme and course handbooks.

Equality & diversity
7. The changes made to the Policy are minor and do not warrant an update to the existing Equality Impact Assessment which is available at:
http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/Academic_Services-Programme_and_Course_Handbooks_Policy-2015.pdf

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. The Policy changes will be highlighted in the annual update to policies email sent by Academic Services.

Author
Nichola Kett, Academic Services
6 May 2020

Freedom of Information
Open

Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Purpose of Policy
To confirm the status, purpose and core content of programme and course handbooks.

Overview
The main aim of this policy is to ensure that students know where to find particular information on their programmes and courses through the provision of core content in handbooks. Programme and course handbooks are part of the academic governance framework of the University. Additionally, there are external requirements in relation to the provision of information for students that the University must follow.

Scope: Mandatory Policy
This policy applies to all staff who are producing programme and course handbooks and applies to both taught and research programmes.

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

Document control

Dates	**Approved**: 14.04.16	**Starts:** 01.08.16	**Equality impact assessment:** 25.05.15	**Amendments:** 2~~8~~3.05~~11~~.20~~18~~	**Next Review:** 2021/2022
Approving authority			Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee~~Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~		
Consultation undertaken			Staff in Schools, Colleges and support departments, Edinburgh University Students' Association, students, and the Project Board		
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review			Academic Services		
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations			Creating Accessible Handbooks Guidance		
UK Quality Code			~~Part C: Information about higher education provision~~Advice and guidance: Course design and development; Enabling student achievement; and Research degrees		
Policies superseded by this policy					
Alternative format			If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.		
Keywords			Programme, course, handbook		

Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Status of Programme and Course Handbooks

Programme and course handbooks are part of the academic governance framework of the University and are referenced in the Degree Programme Regulations. Therefore, as well as providing information for students on their programme and courses, they can be used to stipulate requirements. Once approved and published, the details set out in programme and course handbooks must be adhered to by students and staff for the academic session to which it applies.

A **programme** of study is the sum of all the elements leading to a defined graduating curriculum. A **course** is a unit of teaching and learning formally offered within the University, which carries credit expressed in credit points and which may contribute to a University award.[1]

Requirements

It is the responsibility of Schools to determine how best to provide students with programme and course information. The "home" School must ensure that students are provided with all the necessary information to cover their programme and courses (of particular importance for joint awards). Additionally, consideration should be given to ensuring that students who are taking outside courses are provided with all necessary information. It is not a requirement that handbooks are created for all programmes and courses, but students must be provided with the core content detailed below using an appropriate combination of programme and course handbooks. It is of particular importance that formal agreed assessment and feedback activities (as detailed in the course descriptor) and any related requirements are explicitly communicated in written form at the outset of each programme or course. This does not preclude additional formative assessment and feedback opportunities.

Other types of handbooks are not part of the academic governance framework of the University and are not required to adhere to this policy. Additionally, other types of handbooks (e.g. School or year level handbooks) should not contain any regulatory or academic compliance requirements.

Programme or course handbooks do not need to be physical documents. It may be that information is held on a website, wiki or virtual learning environment and forms the equivalent of a programme or course handbook. Students should be made aware of which form(s) of media their course and/or programme handbooks are held. This policy applies to all forms of media.

The Creating Accessible Handbooks guidance should be followed for programme and course handbooks. There are no other design requirements in relation to programme and course handbooks.

The core content listed below must be included in programme and course handbooks and can be presented in any order. Core content can be supplemented with any other information the School wishes to provide.

Where information is owned and maintained by another area, links should be provided rather than cutting and pasting it into handbooks. This approach aims to reduce the risk of misinforming students and also to reduce the time taken by staff to produce handbooks. Particular examples include course and programme information on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) and academic regulations, policies and guidance.

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[1] University Glossary of Terms

Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Programme and course handbook content must align with the information on the DRPS (including the Degree Programme Specification, the Degree Programme Table and the course descriptor) which forms the definitive record of programme and course information.

Final versions of programme and course handbooks must be made available to students at the start of a programme or course. The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requires reading lists (at minimum indicative core texts) be made available at least four weeks before the start of the course (with additional reading that indicates priority/relevance provided nearer to the start date of the course). Therefore, if reading lists are only contained within handbooks, these need to be made available to students within this timeframe. Arrangements should be made to provide handbooks in an alternative format upon request.

Approval Process

Boards of Studies have responsibility for the formal oversight of programme and course handbooks. In practice the approval of handbooks can be delegated to members of staff within a School as part of an approvals process that ensures accuracy of information and all handbooks are approved prior to the commencement of a course or programme.   Boards of Studies need to have formal oversight of the approvals process and would be expected to record that handbooks had been approved at the relevant Board of Studies meeting.

Changes

Exceptionally, changes may need to be made to a programme or course handbook after publication. In this case, all students who are affected by the change must be informed as soon as possible. Changes which differ from the approved programme and course information in the DRPS (including the statement of assessment) are not permitted.

Purpose

Programme Handbooks

- A source of information and guidance for students on a specific programme or group of programmes.
- Work in conjunction with degree programme tables, degree programme specifications, degree programme regulations, and assessment regulations to provide students with all the information they require for their studies.
- A collection of information and "signposts" to information that exists elsewhere.
- Contain core content.
- An information resource for staff, external examiners, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

Course Handbooks

- A source of information and guidance for students on a specific course or group of courses.
- Work in conjunction with the course descriptor to provide students with all the information they require for a specific course.
- A collection of information and "signposts" to information that exists elsewhere.
- Contain core content.

- An information resource for staff, external examiners, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

Core Content

Core Content	Description/further information		Reference/Source
Session that the Handbook applies to	State the session that the handbook applies to and make it clear that the University may make changes to the course / programme for future sessions.		
Organisation (for accessibility)	Contents page Glossary[2] **Standard text** (in Arial 14 bold): "If you require this document or any of the internal University Of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in this document in an alternative format please contact [name and contact details]" It is good practice to provide two methods of contact e.g. phone number and email or email and postal address		
Details	**Programme** Name, date of publication	**Course** Name, code, level and credits, date of publication	Path Course descriptor in the DRPS
Overview*	**Programme** Structure and core courses, aims, learning outcomes and graduate attributes	**Course** Timeline of activities: lectures; tutorials; laboratories; placements; syllabus; learning outcomes	Degree Programme Tables and Degree Programme Specifications in the DRPS Course descriptor in the DRPS
Assessment and feedback information^	To include: submission and feedback deadlines, extensions procedures, late penalties, word count, submission procedures, dissertation (or equivalent) arrangements (including supervision), and exam diet dates		Statement of Assessment in Taught Assessment Regulations

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[2] Can assist with the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requirement: Key technical words and/or formulae shall be provided to students at least 24 hours in advance of the class.

Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
PGT handbooks only **Dissertation or research project supervision**	**Standard text:** "The dissertation/research project is an independent piece of work. You will be allocated a supervisor, who will provide you with advice and guidance in relation to the dissertation/research project, but you should remember that the sole responsibility for the academic quality of your dissertation/research project lies with you. You should research and develop your own ideas, and discuss your proposed approaches with your supervisor. Feedback you receive from your supervisor is intended as guidance, and must not be interpreted as an indication that your work will receive a particular final mark/outcome. You may be allocated a supervisor whose area of expertise is not a precise match for your chosen area of research, but who has the required expertise to supervise a dissertation/research project. All supervisors are experienced and knowledgeable regarding academic writing." Provide information regarding: • Expected timelines relating to supervision, e.g. when supervision starts and ends; • The number of meetings students can expect with their supervisor; • Expectations regarding email contact with the supervisor; • How many draft chapters the supervisor will review and comment upon; • Whom students should contact if they experience problems with their supervision.	
Referencing guidance	Add referencing guidance	
Marking scheme^		[Extended Common Marking Scheme](#)
Prioritised reading list³^	Or learning resources It is a requirement of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy that reading lists shall indicate priority and/or relevance.	[Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy](#)
Contacts	Key programme staff contact details It is good practice to provide two methods of contact e.g. phone number and email or email and postal address	
Dates+	Important dates not detailed elsewhere (including timescales for online distance learning students)	
Timetable^	Link to student-facing timetabling service	• [My Timetable](#) • [Course Timetable Browser](#)

Commented [TA1]: Update link to https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

Commented [KN2]: Update link to https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/timetabling/personalised-timetables/student-timetables

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³ Please note the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy requirement: Course outlines and reading lists shall be made available at least 4 weeks before the start of the course. Reading lists at this stage may focus on the core texts only (where they are used). Additional reading may be provided nearer to the start date of the course.

Programme and Course Handbooks Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Lecture recording	If the course involves lectures, inform students which of their lectures will be recorded or not. An appropriate explanation should be provided to students where a lecture will not be recorded.	Lecture Recording Policy
Key locations	Teaching Office, laboratories, online environments (VLE, etc.), etc.	
Progression requirements and award criteria		Degree Programme Regulations in the DRPS
"Local" requirements+	College, School, programme, or course-specific requirements	
Attendance requirements	Please note there are particular requirements for Tier 4 Students: Schools should ensure that students are made aware of their attendance, engagement and on-campus obligations. Handbooks should include this information, together with guidance on how all students should submit requests for absences (special circumstances, interruptions of study, leave of absence, etc.).	Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy
Reference to relevant University regulations	Add links to University regulations, policies and procedures	Academic Regulations Student Complaint Procedure Academic Appeals Academic Misconduct (including plagiarism) Special Circumstances Dignity and Respect For general information on rules, regulations and policies: Student Contract webpage
Student Support	Including what happens when things go wrong	School Personal Tutoring Statements
Student Wellbeing	**Standard text**: "As with all transitions in life, applying to and studying at university can be both exciting and challenging – whether it is your first time at university or you are returning to higher education, and whether you have a pre-existing mental health condition or not, it is important to look after yourself. University can be busy and stressful at times, this can in turn cause our state of wellbeing to fluctuate. We all have strategies for coping with ups and downs in life and it is important to continue using and revising these skills, to help support and maintain your wellbeing which is crucial to allow you to experience a positive and happy university journey. We provide a range of evidence-based resources, workshops and support which are available to you and can enable you to cope with the ups and downs of university life. These are provided by a number of different services, including the Centre for Sport and Exercise, Chaplaincy, Counselling Service and the Edinburgh University Students' Association."	Health and wellbeing student webpages

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Student Feedback	Detail the opportunities available for students to provide feedback on their experiences and how they will be informed of action taken in response to feedback provided	Student Voice Policy
Student representative structure	**Standard text:** "Staff members at the University of Edinburgh work closely with student representatives. Edinburgh University Students' Association coordinates student representation and provides training and support for student representatives across the University. Student representatives ('Reps') listen to you to identify areas for improvement, suggest solutions, and ensure that your views inform strategic decisions within the University, building a stronger academic community and improving your student life. All Schools are expected to facilitate communication between student representatives and the students they represent. Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent (following the guidelines in the Guidance) or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list."	Students' Association Representation

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Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Peer Support+	**Standard text (edit as appropriate to course/programme):** "~~Peer Support in the context of the University means a student with more experience sharing their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise with a new or less experienced student. Peer Support may focus around advancing your academic work, providing opportunities to socialise with other students within your School or offering additional support to ensure your wellbeing while at University. The Students' Association offers Peer Learning & Peer Support opportunities for undergraduates and PGTs at Edinburgh (in the near future, this will be extended to PGRs). Peer Learning schemes are facilitated by student volunteers, who run structured study sessions to help attendees become familiar with their disciplines, consolidate their knowledge, improve their grades and make friends. Peer Support schemes (e.g. academic families and mentoring) are also led by student mentors, who offer pastoral and wellbeing support to students.~~ <u>Peer Learning and Support in the context of the University means a student with more experience sharing their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise with a new or less experienced student. Peer Learning and Support Schemes may focus around advancing your academic work, providing opportunities to socialise with other students within your School or offering additional support to ensure your wellbeing while at University. The Students' Association, in partnership with your School, provide these opportunities, facilitated by experienced student volunteers, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level of study at Edinburgh. Peer Learning or PALS Schemes are facilitated, structured, out of class, study sessions to help attendees become familiar with their disciplines, consolidate their knowledge and improve their grades. Peer Support Schemes (e.g. academic families, buddies, mentoring or similar) focus on providing pastoral and wellbeing support to students both within the School and beyond. There are also identity based Schemes available for example LGBTQ+ and BAME Mentoring. All of these Schemes offer a place to make friends, build your social networks and feel part of the wider University community</u>" Detail available Peer Support opportunities	

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Reference to University and Students' Association Support Services	Provide information via the thematic student website	My online resources My Personal Tutor Curriculum, assessment and exams Study Support Student conduct Adapting well Disability support Careers and opportunities Money, fees and finance Students' Association – Advice Place Link to A to Z of University Student Services
Accreditation to external bodies, discipline-specific career/industry information+	Detail here as appropriate	
Name, position and institution of External Examiner(s)^	Where an External Examiner is appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body, this will also be stated. Students must be informed in the handbook that they must not make direct contact with External Examiners, and that other routes exist for queries about the assessment process.	External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy ~~Handbook for External Examiners of Taught Programmes~~

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Health and safety	**Standard text:** "The University has a duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and students while at work, and the safety of all authorised visitors and members of the public entering the precincts of the University. The University Health and Safety Policy is issued upon the authority of the University Court and contains the Health and Safety Policy statement and summary of the organisation and arrangements of health and safety within the University. The successful implementation of the University Policy requires the support and co-operation of all employees and students - no person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the University in the interest of health, safety or welfare. **The University Health and Safety Policy** The University Health and Safety Policy is supported by a Framework document published in two parts on the Organisation and Arrangements of health and safety within the University. Individuals are required to comply with any procedures or arrangements formulated under the authority of this Policy. Any questions or problems about matters of health and safety can be taken up initially with the School Safety Adviser. Further guidance on health and safety matters can be found on the Health and Safety Department website at http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety including contact details for all professional staff within the corporate Health and Safety Department." Provide information on local health and safety arrangements (including for online distance learning students).	Health and Safety Policy

Core Content	Description/further information	Reference/Source
Data Protection	**Standard text:** "Under Data Protection Law, personal data includes all recorded information about a living, identifiable individual. Students using personal data as part of their studies must comply with the University's data protection policy and the related responsibilities as outlined in the linked guidance. Before using personal data as part of their studies students must become familiar with the linked guidance, discuss implications with their supervisor and seek appropriate ethics approval. They must also obtain consent from the data subjects to take part in the studies. Failure to comply with the responsibilities under the policy is an offence against University discipline, and could lead to a breach of Data Protection Law. A data protection breach of the University policy can cause distress to the people the information is about, and can harm relationships with research partners, stakeholders, and funding organisations. In severe circumstances the University could be sued, fined up to £20,000,000, and experience reputational damage." Provide information on local data protection arrangements (including for online distance learning students).	Student responsibilities when using personal data
PGR handbooks only		
Supervision	Information on supervisory arrangements and expectations, including annual progression review.	
Thesis (or equivalent) requirements	To include local context on expected thesis length	
Training and development	To cover: research culture; professional development; research skills training; and teaching.	Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators
Code of Practice	Provide a link to the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students	Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

+ If applicable
* As applicable for research programmes
^ Taught programmes only

APRC 19/20 6 I

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2019/20

Description of paper

1. This is the annual report of the Senate Standing Committees: Education Committee; Academic Policy and Regulations Committee; and Quality Assurance Committee. It reports on the Committees' achievements and use of delegated powers in 2019/20. It also proposes outline plans for 2020/21.

Action requested

2. For information

Background and Context

3. The Senate Standing Committees provide an annual report setting out progress on activities in the past year and seeking Senate approval for their general strategic direction and priorities for the next academic year.

Resource implications

4. The proposed plans for 2020/21 will have some resource implications relating to time spent by members of the Committees and Policy Officers in Academic Services or staff invited to participate in working groups. Some of the resource requirements for wider work of the Committees will be met through existing resources or have agreed funding in place.

Risk Management

5. Each individual strand of proposed activity will be subject to risk assessment as appropriate.

Equality and Diversity

6. Where required, Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for individual work packages completed next year.

Next steps / implications

7. The approved report will be highlighted in the Senate committees' newsletter. The Senate Committees will progress the agreed strategic approach during 2020/21 as set out in the report. This report will also be shared with the University Court for information.

Author
Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic Services
May 2020

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Open

Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2019-20

1.	**Executive Summary**

This report summarises the achievements of the Senate Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate, for academic year 2019-20, along with their proposed plans for 2020-21.

2.	**Introduction**

The three Standing Committees of Senate (hereafter referred to as the Senate Committees) are the Senate Education Committee (SEC), Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). Links to the Terms of Reference and memberships of the Senate Standing Committees are below:

- Education Committee
- Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee

Proposals for future work have arisen from Committee discussions, and discussion at the Senate Committee Conveners' Forum. The proposals are designed to assist the University in pursuing its Learning and Teaching Strategy and meeting the goals of the University Strategy 2030, see:

- Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Strategy 2030

Please note that Committee discussions over the latter part of 2019/20 have been heavily affected by Covid-19 preparations which has meant that, in some cases, Committee priorities for 2020/21 are still under review and will require full sign-off by the relevant Committee at the start of 2020/21 session.

3.	**Key Committee and Task Group Activities in 2019-20***

Name of Committee	No. of meetings
Senate Education Committee	4
Academic Policy & Regulations	6
Senate Quality Assurance Committee	5

Name of Task Group	Task Group of:
Personal Tutor System Oversight Group	SQAC
Support for Curriculum Development Group	SEC
Learning Analytics Review Group	SEC
HEAR Recommendation Panel	SEC

*Includes meetings scheduled for the remainder of the session.

The remits and memberships of any task groups are available within the relevant Committee pages at: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

4.   Senate Committees' Achievements 2019-20

4.1   Activities involving wider contribution or cutting across all Committees

A number of activities proposed in last year's report involved all three Committees. In addition, the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic has necessarily involved each of the Committees in response and mitigation activity, some of which is noted below:

Previously agreed Activity
• **Continue to work with Students' Association to promote and implement the Student Partnership Agreement** At its meeting in October 2019, Senate Education Committee approved a refreshed version of the Student Partnership Agreement for 2019-2020. The revised themes relate to ongoing work in the Student Experience Action Plan and have been discussed with the Students' Association, the Deputy Secretary Student Experience and the Vice Principal (Students). The themes include Community, Student Voice and Social Justice. • Funds were allocated through the Sense of Belonging Task Group for students and staff to submit bids for projects to take forward the priorities within the partnership agreement during 2019-2020. A total of thirteen applications were received and twelve projects secured funding, covering areas including a ceilidh, a student-staff sustainability think-tank to develop meaningful and embedded sustainability conversations throughout the BVM&S curriculum, and the purchase of garden tools to facilitate the development of the Kings Building's Permaculture Garden. • This activity has been coordinated by a member of the Academic Services Quality Team. For further information see: www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/partnership-agreement
• **Implement any agreed changes to the operation of Senate and to its Committee structures following the externally-facilitated review of Senate, and the review of the structure of the Senate committees.** Each Committee received new Terms of Reference (ToR) and memberships and successfully launched their meetings under those arrangements at the beginning of the academic session. These ToR reflected the new approach suggested in the external review. The terms of reference for SQAC remained similar to those of the preceding year. However, the creation of the Education Committee following the disbanding of the Learning and Teaching Committee and Research Experience Committee involved additional considerations on how we might effectively combine Postgraduate Research matters alongside other Learning and Teaching strategy, policy and oversight. The PGR representatives from the three Colleges have maintained an input to agenda setting this year in order that this balance can be set.
• **Continue to take steps towards aligning with the new UK Quality Code, with a view to full alignment prior the University's next Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR).** The Committee has maintained its oversight of alignment with the UK Quality Code and has coordinated the detailed activities and wider consultation on the draft Reflective Analysis document.
Covid-19 Response / Industrial Action
• APRC has been consulted a number of times as emergency academic guidance was produced in response to both industrial action and most urgently the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of temporary concessions to regulations were agreed by APRC during the session.

- SQAC agreed proposals at its May meeting for the suspension of normal annual monitoring, review and reporting process due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Proposals for an interim process to review and reflect on 2019/20 were agreed.
- Education Committee held discussions at its May meeting on the shape and approach to delivering teaching and learning in Semester 1.

4.2 Education Committee

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

Activity
• **Oversee continued implementation of University Learning and Teaching Strategy** – it was agreed at the October 2019 meeting of Education Committee that 2019/20 would be the final year of the operation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The University will transition to a new strategy in due course, the main focus of which will be plans for curriculum reform. The new strategy will also incorporate the key principles from the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive by design.
• **In partnership with the Service Excellence Programme's Student Administration and Support board, oversee and guide the review of student support** - Education Committee received an update on the Student Support and Personal Tutor Project at its October 2019 meeting and approved the proposed support model at its December 2019 meeting.
• **Oversee the implementation of recommendations from the 2018-19 task group on inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum** – it has been agreed that a taskforce will be established by Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley under the new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to drive forward the recommendations of this task group and the Thematic Review of black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University.
• **Monitor the implementation of the new institutional policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service** – the Lecture Recording Policy is currently being reviewed to take account of learning from use of the service during the COVID-19 pandemic.
• **Ensure continued progress to enhance support for Careers, Employability and the development of graduate attributes** – members received a copy of a briefing paper in February 2020 summarising research undertaken by the Careers Service into the future of work and what this means for Edinburgh's students. Graduate attribute development and a curriculum that supports this will be a key focus of the planned curriculum reform.
• **Continue to monitor implementation of the Student Mental Health Strategy** – an update from the Director of Student Wellbeing will be brought to the September 2020 meeting of Education Committee.
• **Continue to strengthen the University's understanding of retention and continuation rates for different undergraduate student groups, and to focus on enabling students from all groups to succeed** – this is now being taken forward by Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

The priorities agreed for Researcher Experience Committee (now being taken forward by SEC) and progress made to date are as follows:

• **Excellence in Doctoral Training and Career Development programme - evaluate the effectiveness of School / College briefings for supervisors, assess the impact of changes to requirements of supervisor training and support planned for 2019-20, and explore the development of online training to supplement School / College**

briefings for supervisors – Education Committee received an update at its October 2019 meeting on work being undertaken under the 'Supervisor Support and Training' work stream of the programme. It also endorsed a proposal to develop an online course for doctoral supervisors to complement mandatory supervisor briefings at its December 2019 meeting.
• **Review the University's approach to overseeing, coordinating, and managing postgraduate research student (PGR) support and development activities at an institutional level (subject to clarifying the relationship with the planned Service Excellence Programme strand of work on the PGR student lifecycle)** – the Committee received an update on proposals to establish a 'Doctoral College' at its October 2019 meeting, and considered more detailed proposals later in the academic year. In the meantime, Education Committee approved (at its December 2019 meeting) temporary governance arrangements to ensure that the business formerly undertaken by REC continues to be well managed. The Doctoral College Management Group met in April 2020 to shape the next steps towards an intended launch of the Doctoral College in the Autumn.
• **Evaluate the implementation of the revised Code of Practice for Researchers and Supervisors** – at the meeting in March 2020, SEC noted an evaluation of the effectiveness of communication of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students (Code of Practice) and revised content published in 2018.

4.3   Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

Activity
• **Work with the Service Excellence Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the current programme of work (e.g. Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions, Programme and Course Information Management)**   The Committee has been working closely with colleagues in the Service Excellence Programme, providing feedback on proposed changes to policy and regulations relating to extensions and special circumstances. The Committee will consider for approval final proposals at its May 2020 meeting, in order to support the introduction of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Team ahead of 2020/21.
• **Guide the University's response to any policy issues raised by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment's report on degree classification outcomes**   Developments in this area are being monitored by the Committee. There has been no specific need to consider any policy changes at this time. However, we have made significant progress on the issue of borderlines for classification, covered below.
• **Oversee the implementation of changes in policy regarding resubmission of PGT dissertations and associated dissertation supervision support, and PGT assessment/progression arrangements**   Academic Services is not aware of any issues arising from the implementation of the new regulations relating to resubmission of PGT dissertations. However, we will be keen to seek feedback from Schools and Colleges. In light of the demands upon Schools and Colleges imposed by Covid-19 contingency, we will delay seeking this feedback until 2020/21.
• **Oversee the implementation of changes to the Code of Student Conduct following the review in 2018-19, and conduct a light-touch review of the impact of the amendments**   In light of the impact of Covid-19 on relevant stakeholders, we will delay seeking feedback on the amendments to the Code of Student Conduct until 2020/21. Staff in Academic

Services are in frequent contact with staff at the Advice Place, who support students through the conduct process.
• **Oversee the implementation of any agreed changes to the Support for Study Policy following the review in 2018-19** The policy was agreed and the website updated and the revised policy will kept under review.
• **Develop an institution-wide approach to borderlines for Honours degree classification** Academic Services and Colleges are currently assessing whether to delay the introduction of any new approach beyond 2020/21 in order to prevent unreasonable impact upon Schools dealing with Covid-19 contingency planning.

4.4   Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

Activity
• **Continue to evaluate the impact of the new programme-based approach to the Class Representation System** SQAC has overseen the move to the new programme-based representative system from the start of the 2019-20 academic session. Academic Services and the Students' Association produced a graphical guide for students giving feedback (including feedback on the new student representation system) which was published online and hard copy versions shared across the University.
• **Oversee institutional activities in response to the University's 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and contribute to preparations for the 2020 ELIR, including continuing to work on assessment and feedback** SQAC has overseen preparations for the 2020 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR). The Convenor and Academic Services drafted the institutional Reflective Analysis report and coordinated contributions from colleagues across the University. However, at the request of Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland, the ELIR has now been postponed due to the coronavirus. SQAC will communicate the outcome of the discussion about new dates for the review to colleagues once it has been confirmation.
• **Oversee implementation of mid-course feedback to taught postgraduate courses (subject to the outcome of the review during 2018-19)** SQAC continues to monitor the implementation of mid-course feedback through annual monitoring, review and reporting processes. The Committee approved the Mid-Course Feedback Guidance for the start of the 2019-20 academic session (as requested by Learning and Teaching Committee in May 2019 in response to the follow-up evaluation of mid-course feedback). The guidance encourages the use of mid-course feedback for taught postgraduate courses with a view to making it Policy for 2020/21.
• **Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the operation of the Personal Tutor system** SQAC has continued to monitor the effectiveness of the Personal Tutoring (PT) system via the PT Oversight Group. Since the last Senate report, the Group met to approve the School Personal Tutoring Statements for 2019-20. While the Group was broadly content with the Tutoring Statements, it asked some Schools to make some amendments to their Statements before publishing them. The Group is due to meet twice during the remainder of the 2019-20 academic session: in July to approve the School Personal Tutoring Statements for 2020-21; and in August to reflect on the student survey results and feed the outputs into the annual School quality report process. This Group will continue to oversee the PT system until the implementation of the evolved model of Student Support.

- **Continue to support Schools to reflect on their patterns of degree classification outcomes**

  SQAC continues to monitor subject areas for patterns in degree classification outcomes which diverge substantially from either the institution average or disciplinary comparators. This year six subject areas were identified as statistically significant outliers. While acknowledging that there may be good reasons for these areas to have these patterns of degree outcomes, SQAC invited them to clarify their position by including a detailed reflection on the degree classification outcome data in their School's annual quality report. Each School provided an explanation of trends and actions taken to address any inappropriate patterns and SQAC will continue to annually monitor degree classification outcomes across the University.

5 Exercising of delegated powers in 2019-20

Senate has delegated to the Committees a range of its powers. These powers are set out in the Committees' terms of reference (see Section 2, above). The main powers that the Committees have exercised during 2019-20 (in addition to the project-based activities set out in Section 4, above) can be summarised as:

- o Strategies / regulations / policies / codes
- o Approval of curriculum changes
- o Quality Assurance
- o Student concessions

- The attached Annex sets out any new strategies / regulations / policies / codes that the Committees have approved (the more substantive of which are covered in Section 4 above), along with changes to existing documents.

- APRC was asked in November 2019 to approve a suite temporary concessions to regulations and policies in response to planned industrial action in Semester 1 and subsequently to cover Semester 2. The aim of this was to mitigate the academic impact on students of the industrial action which had been announced by The University & College Union (UCU) while maintaining academic standards and the value of the University's award.

- In addition, at its meeting in March 2020 and on the recommendation of the Academic Contingency Group, APRC approved the extending of these temporary concessions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Preparation for the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) has been overseen by SQAC throughout the period. It should be noted that the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has led the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to consider changes to their schedule for ELIR visits and have asked that our review is postponed until Semester 2 in 2020/21.

- SQAC agreed proposals at its May meeting for the suspension of normal annual monitoring, review and reporting process due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Proposals for an interim process to review and reflect on 2019/20 were agreed.

6 Senate Committees' Priorities for 2020-21

6.1 Planning Context

As noted above, the year 2019/20 has been influenced both by periods of industrial action and intense response and mitigation of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, it is noted that the Committee priorities for 2020/21 will need to be revisited and that the Committees aim to focus on these at the start of the new academic year.

It is recognised that the University's Academic Governance arrangements and new plans for the management and direction of our Adaptation and Renewal Programme will need to work in harmony, with all Committees playing a major part.

Key areas of activity which will affect the cycles of business of all three Senate Committees will include the evolving approach to Curriculum Reform; response to the ELIR outcomes now expected in Semester 2 and the quality of academic experience for students and learners at all levels.

6.2   Education Committee

Activity
• Drive the curriculum reform agenda in the evolving context
• Ensure effective responses to ELIR recommendations (NB: ELIR now running in Semester 2)
• Oversee the ongoing development of the Doctoral College and monitor its impact upon the experiences of PGR students including discussion and influence of the University approach to PGR scholarships.
• Monitor the evolution and implementation of the institutional policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service in the context of Adaptation and Renewal post-Covid-19.
• Monitor ongoing effectiveness of Student Health & Wellbeing Strategy in the context of overall student learning experience.
• Ensure strengthening of the Committee's link to the Space Strategy Group.

6.3   Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Note: the following list provides a sense of APRC priorities which were under discussion at the time of writing this report. The main focus at the May 2020 meeting of APRC will be the firming up of its priorities for the coming year:

Activity
• Work with the relevant work streams of the Adaptation and Renewal Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the developing programme of work.
• Monitor any requirement for longer term regulatory and policy changes as a result of Covid-19 and take appropriate action as required.
• Input as required into curriculum reform (led by Education Committee).

• Review of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review outputs and take appropriate action as required.

6.4   Quality Assurance Committee

Activity
• Continue to contribute to preparations for the University's 2020 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and oversee activities in response to the review.
• Oversee School and College responses to the coronavirus pandemic via the University's Quality Assurance Framework and share good practice across the institution.
• Review the approach to gathering student feedback across the University from Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs).
• Examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.

Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2019-20

Senate Committee	Name of document	Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)
Education Committee	Student Partnership Agreement	Revision : update of themes for 2019/20
Quality Assurance Committee	Student Voice Policy	Revision: SSLC principles mandatory from 2020-21 Mid-course feedback will become a requirement for all taught postgraduate courses that run for 10 weeks or longer from academic session 2020/21.
Quality Assurance Committee	Work-based and Placement Learning Policy	Technical Updates
APRC	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2020/21	To be reviewed and approved at APRC on 28 May 2020
APRC	Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2020/21	Reviewed and approved at APRC in March 2020. See papers at: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20200319agendaandpapers.pdf
APRC	Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2020/21	Reviewed and approved at APRC in March 2020. See papers at: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20200319agendaandpapers.pdf
APRC	Authorised Interruption of Study Policy	Minor addition with a link to the relevant Privacy Notice at www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/specialcircumstancesaisconcessionsloaprivacynotice.pdf
APRC	UG Progression Board policy	Removal of link which no longer exists and updated dates for next review
APRC	University use of e-mail as a method of contacting students	Updated a link which was no longer valid and updated dates for next review

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

APRC committee priorities 2020/21

Description of paper

1. The Committee discussed the mid-year progress report and a report on planning for 2020/21 at electronic meetings in March 2020, and followed up with discussions by correspondence. As a result of this, we have reported to Senate on progress this year and given an indication of the Committee's plans for 2020/21. However, this came with a disclaimer that the Committee may need a further opportunity to discuss priorities as required, given the current situation with Covid-19. The paper outlines suggested priorities for 2020/21 and asks whether there are any further suggestions or amendments from members.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion

Background and context

3. Required as part of Senate committees' annual planning process.

Discussion

APRC Activity 2020/21
• Work with the relevant work streams of the Adaptation and Renewal Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the developing programme of work.
• Monitor any requirement for longer term regulatory and policy changes motivated by Covid-19 and take appropriate action as required.
• Input where required to curriculum review (led by Senate Education Committee).
• Review of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review outputs and take appropriate action as required.

Resource implications

4. Any resource implications for the priorities identified will be considered in due course.

Risk management

5. Any risks associated with the priorities identified will be considered in due course.

Equality & diversity

6. Any equality and diversity implications of the priorities identified will be considered in due course.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

7. The Committee priorities were discussed by the Conveners of the three Senate committees and reported to Senate via the annual report of the Senate committees. Progress with the identified priorities will be evaluated by the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee in the middle and at the end of academic year 2020/21.

Author
Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services and
Professor Alan Murray
May 2020

Presenter
Professor Alan Murray

Freedom of Information
Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Senate themes for 2020/21 meetings

Description of paper

1. A request to the Committee to suggest themes for the presentation and discussion section of next year's Senate meetings, and a note of recently presented topics.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to make suggestions for themes for the presentation and discussion sections for Senate 2020/21.

Background and context

3. Senate meetings are divided into two sections: an open presentation and discussion section, and a section for formal business open to Senate members only.

4. All members of staff are invited to attend the presentation and discussion section of the Senate meetings and this is an opportunity to hold open discussions on a key strategic theme.

5. From 2018/19, Senate also began to receive 'year-on updates' on selected topics presented in the previous year.

6. Suggestions for themes are being sought from the Senate Education Committee, the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, and the Research Policy Group.

Discussion

7. The themes below have been covered in recent years.

   2019/20
   Main topics:
   - Support for Early Career Researchers
   - Student Support and Wellbeing: Review of Personal Tutoring and Student Support, and update on the Student Mental Health Strategy
   - Enhancement-Led Institutional Review
   - Curriculum Reform
   Year-on updates:
   - Student Experience Action Plan
   - Research Excellence Framework

   2018/19
   Main topics:

- Teaching and Academic Careers
- Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy
- Enhancing the Student Experience – Approach and Action Plan
- Refreshing the University's Strategic Plan
- Research Excellence Framework
- Student Experience Action Plan
- Widening Participation

Year-on update:
- Careers and Employability

Resource implications

8. None relevant

Risk management

9. None relevant

Equality & diversity

10. Committees are encouraged to consider equality and diversity as a factor in their selection of suggestions, and equality and diversity implications will be considered in the final selection of presentation themes.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

11. Committee secretaries will collate suggestions and pass these to the Senate Clerk.

12. Collated themes will be passed to the Principal, who will make the final selection of presentation and discussion themes for 2020/21. Selected themes will be advertised via the [Senate website](#) and in advance of each meeting.

Author

Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer
May 2020

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Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

28 May 2020

Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees

Description of paper

1. This paper notifies Senate Committee members of plans for the annual review of Senate Committees' effectiveness. The paper also sets out plans to review the operation of the revised Senate Committee remits which were approved by Senate in September 2019, and notes that these reviews will be consolidated into one review process.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Committee members are asked to note and provide comments on the plans for the review, and to engage with opportunities to provide feedback on the committees' functioning and effectiveness.

Background and context

3. The 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that institutions are expected to review the effectiveness of their Senate and its committees annually and to hold an externally-facilitated review every five years: "49. The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the Institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward if necessary in these circumstances."

4. In line with the requirements of the Code, during Spring/Summer 2020, Academic Services is conducting an annual review of the three Senate Standing Committees. The outcomes of this review will be reported to Senate in September / October 2020.

5. Revisions to the number and remits of the Senate Standing Committees were approved by Senate in September 2019, with the recommendation that an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the changes to the Terms of Reference and memberships should be carried out at the end of the first year of operation.

6. This review will also provide an opportunity to review and report on Senate Standing Committees' preparedness for academic year 2020/21 in the context of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussion
7. In the interests of efficiency and coherence, the two strands identified above - the annual effectiveness review, and review of the revised remits - will be covered under a single review process and report.

8. In the context of current University priorities and resources, review activities must be proportionate and take into account the ongoing University response to the Covid-19 emergency.

9. The review process is intended to gather information on and evaluate effectiveness in terms of the:
    a. Composition of the committee
    b. Support and facilitation of committee meetings
    c. Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits
    d. Impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work

10. The review process will be primarily self-reflective and will gather information as described below:
    a. Senate Committee members will be asked for verbal comments at the final committee meetings of 2019/20.
    b. Senate Committee members will be invited to respond to an online questionnaire during summer 2020 (managed by Academic Services). Draft questions are appended below.
    c. The Senate Education Committee Convener and Secretary will review committee coverage of Postgraduate Research Student business.
    d. Academic Services will review Senate Standing Committees' Covid-19 preparedness for 2020/21, in the context of ongoing developments in the governance and management of learning and teaching and the student experience as part of the University's management of the impact of the Covid-19 emergency.

11. Academic Services will collate the information above and produce a report on the findings.

Resource implications
12. The review will be conducted by Academic Services and any resource requirements will be met from existing budgets. The resource implications of any actions identified in response to the outcomes of the review will be considered at that stage.

Risk management
13. The annual effectiveness review process assists the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective and enables the University to manage a range of risks associated with its academic provision.

Equality & diversity

14. The review provides an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity issues in the make-up of the Committees and the way they conduct their business.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

15. The report will be represented to Senate and the Senate Standing Committees in September / October 2020. If the review identifies required actions or enhancement opportunities, these will be taken forward by Academic Service (if directly related to the functioning and support of the Senate Committees) or referred to the appropriate body for consideration.

Author

Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer
May 2020

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Appendix

Senate Standing Committees: Internal Effectiveness Review 2019-20

Draft questions for Summer 2020 survey

Members of the Senate Committees will be invited to fill in an online questionnaire during Summer 2020 and the draft questions for this exercise are set out below for comment.

1. **Committee remit**
   1.1. Is the Committee's remit clear? If not, what improvements would you suggest?
   1.2. Is the scope of the remit appropriate?
   1.3. Has the Committee adapted effectively to the challenges or changes in priority?
   1.4. Are you happy with your Committee's use of task groups?
2. **Governance and impact**
   2.1. Do you have a clear understanding of how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University?
   2.2. Do you feel that the Committee makes the desired impact based on its remit and priorities?
   2.3. Are there clear links between Committee business and University strategic priorities?
3. **Composition**
   3.1. Do you think that the current composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit?
   3.2. Is the size of the Committee appropriate in order for it to operate effectively?
4. **Equality and Diversity**
   4.1. Is the composition of the Committee suitably representative of the diverse University population?
   4.2. Are you satisfied that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business?
5. **Committee members – Role clarity and participation**
   5.1. Are you clear on your role and responsibilities as a Committee member?
   5.2. If this is not clear, do you have any suggestions on how to improve this?
   5.3. If you were a new member in 2019/20, were you satisfied with the induction you were given to the Committee and its business?
   5.4. Is lack of engagement by members ever an impediment to the Committee?
   5.5. Does anything create a barrier to your engagement with the Committee?
6. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications**
   6.1. Does the Committee engage and communicate effectively with stakeholders? (For example, is the Senate Committees' Newsletter an effective vehicle?)
   6.2. Do you have a clear understanding of your role on the Committee as a representative of your College or Group?
   6.3. Do you have a clear understanding of your role in cascading information from the Committee to your College or Group?
7. **Committee support**
   7.1. Do you feel that the Committee is supported effectively by Academic Services?
   7.2. Does the information provided to the Committee (in format and volume) support effective decision-making by the Committee?
   7.3. Do papers provide you with appropriate levels of detail on the background of issues brought to the Committee, and on how Committee decisions will be implemented?

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

28 May 2020

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update

Description of paper
1. Informs the Committee of the postponement of ELIR 2020.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For information.

Background and context
3. ELIR is the method by which the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) (QAAS) reviews universities and other higher education institutions in Scotland. The University's next ELIR was scheduled to take place in semester 1 2020/21.

Discussion

4. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, QAAS are making changes to their schedule of ELIRs, and have asked that our review is postponed. Discussions are at an early stage, but the review visits are most likely to be moved to semester 2 2020/21, with the Reflective Analysis (RA) and supporting Advanced Information Set (AIS) submitted towards the end of November 2020. It is hoped to keep the original review team, however, this will depend on availability.

5. Thanks to the valuable contributions from students and staff and the work of internal and external reviewers, the RA is near complete. The majority of the RA will remain the same, however, student data and the status of key activities and projects will be updated, and a reflection on our response to the Covid-19 outbreak will be provided.

6. Discussions are underway with QAAS to identify new dates for the review visits and, once these are agreed, an update will be provided.

7. Additionally, the internal periodic review schedule is being considered. Three reviews from 2019/20 were postponed and eight reviews for 2020/21 were scheduled for semester 2, when the ELIR will now likely take place.

Resource implications
4. Additional updating and editing of the Reflective Analysis will be required.

Risk management
5. A successful ELIR is of vital importance to the University.

Equality & diversity
6. No issues are associated with this paper.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

7. Updates will be provided by email and through the Teaching Matters Spotlight On ELIR series.

<u>Author</u>

Nichola Kett, Academic Services

15 May 2020

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