

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)  
to be held online on Thursday 31 March 2022 at 2.00pm**

**A G E N D A**

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held online on 27 January 2022** Enclosed
  2. **Matters Arising**
    - **Masters/Dissertations**
    - **Support for Study**
- For discussion**
3. **Response to Senate Questions** APRC 21/22 4A
  4. **Coursework Extensions regulation: proposals for interim amendments** APRC 21/22 4B
  5. **Management of Late Online Examinations** Verbal Update
  6. **Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23** APRC 21/22 4C
  7. **Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23** APRC 21/22 4D
  8. **CAHSS – Business School – Joint Challenge Dissertations** APRC 21/22 4E
  9. **UCU Industrial Action - update** Verbal Update
  10. **CAHSS – School of Law – Postgraduate Degree Regulations 85a 2022/23** APRC 21/22 4F
  11. **Any Other Business**

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting  
held online on Thursday 27 January 2022 at 2.00pm**

**Present:**

Dr Paul Norris (Convener)	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Jamie Davies	Dean of Taught Education (CMVM)
Dr Deborah Shaw	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Professor Patrick Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)
Charlotte Macdonald	Advice Place Deputy Manager
Dr Cathy Bovill	Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

**In attendance:**

Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Stuart Lamont	Observer, Students' Association
Hannah Jones	Director of English Language Education, Centre for Open Learning
Gill Aitken	Programme Director, MSc Clinical Education, CMVM
Dr Sharron Ogle	Programme Director, MSc in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, CMVM
Dr Darren Shaw	Director of Postgraduate Taught, R(D)SVS
Rosie Edwards	Senior Design Lead
Rebecca Shade	Policy and Projects Officer – Student Experience

**Apologies for absence:**

Professor Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Tara Gold	Vice President Education, Students' Association

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

## 2. Matters Arising

**APRC 25 November 2021 - Item 6 (Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses – Updated Guidance)** – At the November 2021 APRC meeting, there was an action point under this agenda item, for Susan Hunter and Kirsty Woomble to seek advice from the library about replacement wording in relation to copyright. Susan Hunter had confirmed that this action point was in progress, and she was anticipating receipt of this information by the end of the month.

Convener's Action had also been taken by Dr Norris since the previous meeting in November in relation to the following items:

**Appeal Committee membership** (Dr Chris Mowat was appointed as Vice-Convener of the Undergraduate Appeal Committee, and Professor Tonks Fawcett had also joined the Committee as a member).

**Student Discipline Committee membership** (Ailidh Mackay joined the Student Discipline Committee, following a nomination from CAHSS).

## 3. Centre for Open Learning - International Foundation Programme (APRC 21/22 3A)

Hannah Jones, Director of English Language Education at the Centre for Open Learning introduced this item. The paper recommended that the Committee approve the proposal presented, which would grant flexibility in relation to Taught Assessment Regulation 27.4 for International Foundation Programme students who scored above the pass mark of 40 on Foundation English for Academic Purposes 1 and/or 2 but less than the 60 score needed for progression to undergraduate studies (allowing the Board of Examiners to recommend a resit). This would require an opt-out from the relevant Taught Assessment Regulation, because under Taught Assessment Regulation 27.4 students were not allowed to resit a course, or components of a course, that they had passed, unless the Board of Examiners had permitted this under special circumstances by granting a null sit for the attempt that the student had passed). The resit score would be used for progression purposes only, and would not therefore replace the original mark which contributed to the students' overall mark on the International Foundation Programme programme.

The Committee discussed the position regarding the Extended Common Marking Scheme in relation to the International Foundation Programme. The marks were reported for the programme under the Common Marking Scheme, and were marked on the basis of global criteria, but were technically not being marked directly against the Common Marking Scheme. The reasons for this position were discussed further, and the Committee were reassured that the criteria for marking was made very clear to the students involved, and that this situation was highly programme specific. It was agreed that the Centre for Opening Learning would benefit in the longer term from having a deeper discussion with colleagues in Academic Services and Student Systems about their assessment processes and the use of the Common Marking Scheme. However, the paper offered a pragmatic workaround for the current issues, offering an appropriate degree of flexibility for this particular programme.

The Committee approved the proposal outlined in the paper, therefore granting an opt-out from Taught Assessment Regulation 27.4 for Foundation English for Academic Purposes.

#### **4. CMVM - MSc Clinical Education Year 3 (APRC 21/22 3B)**

Gill Aitken presented this paper. APRC was being asked to consider alternatives to the current 60 credit dissertation for the third year of study on the the MSc in Clinical Education programme. The proposal was to still offer a 60 credit dissertation, but also to offer an entirely taught third year (3x20 credit courses) or a 20 credit literature course and a 40 credit Quality Improvement course (20+40 credit quality improvement project).

This paper was discussed at length by APRC. APRC had previously considered alternative pathways to the dissertation for other PGT programmes within the University, including 20/40 credit alternative courses, and APRC had granted approval for these, therefore the discussion for APRC in relation to the MSc in Clinical Education proposals was centred more upon the Committee's views of the three 20 credit course option.

It was noted by the Committee that Professor Richard Andrews was currently leading on a Postgraduate work-stream under the Curriculum Transformation project, which reported to a Curriculum Transformation Board. It was anticipated by the Committee that PGT modelling would be something that would likely fall under this work-stream, but this had not been confirmed.

The Committee agreed that it was supportive of this proposal as an alternative pathway to dissertation for the MSc Clinical Education programme, given the level of confidence that the programme team had about both the fulfilment of the appropriate learning outcomes, and the equally challenging nature of the three 20 credit courses (all at SCQF Level 11). The Committee recognised that students on this programme would still have the option to pursue a dissertation if they wished. The paper was approved by the Committee.

On a more general level, the Committee recognised that such flexibility could be supportive both of the learning outcomes for a particular programme and the needs of prospective students, and agreed that this remained consistent with broader expectations for Edinburgh Master's degrees. On this basis, the Committee agreed that similar proposals need not be subject to the same level of scrutiny in the future.

#### **5. CMVM - MSc Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (non-standard dissertation) (APRC 21/22 3C)**

Dr Sharron Ogle presented this paper, which presented a proposal for an alternative route to Masters for the online postgraduate programme in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health. The proposal was for the addition of an alternative route, in parallel with the existing 60 credit Written Reflective Element. Students opting to take the alternative route would engage in a 30:30 split between taught and compulsory

research elements in the final year of study. The 30 taught credits would be taken in semester 1 and 2, selected from the elective course portfolio, as well as a new 10 credit course 'Planning Applied Interdisciplinary Research in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem health'. All students taking the alternative route would finish together in semester 3 by completing a new 20 credit capstone course 'Applied Interdisciplinary Research in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health'.

The proposals outlined in the paper were approved by the Committee.

## **6. CMVM - Professional Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine (APRC 21/22 3D)**

Dr Darren Shaw presented this paper, which proposed changes to the current credit weighting of a number of non-standard courses within the Professional Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine programme, effective from the 2022/23 academic year.

The Committee discussed this paper, and it was noted that one of the main reasons to have standard credit volumes was to allow for portability between programmes, but that the courses here were bespoke for this particular programme, and there would be no expectation that the clinical skills courses would be swapped out for any electives.

It was clarified that students already on programme would continue with the existing credit weightings, and no student would have their assessment credit weightings changed part way through their programme of study.

The proposals outlined in the paper were approved by the Committee.

## **7. Student Support Model (APRC 21/22 3E)**

Rosie Edwards presented this item, which proposed draft regulation changes for the Committee to review in relation to the Taught Assessment Regulations 2022/23, Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23 and Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23. These changes were being proposed through the Student Support Project.

Proposals for review of the Support for Study Policy had also been made through the Student Support Project, but this was being considered by the Committee as a separate agenda item (Paper F).

It was noted by the Committee that the degree regulations were expected to be reviewed at the March 2022 meeting of APRC, and that assessment regulations would be reviewed at the May 2022 meeting of APRC. The proposed changes would be incorporated into the drafts for consideration at those meetings. It was noted that role descriptions had not been approved as yet, therefore role titles could be subject to further change.

It was further suggested that it would be preferable in some cases to refer to responsibilities in the regulations, rather than refer to role titles – for example to state that a Director of Teaching is responsible/has the authority for X but that they may choose to delegate to another person, and that the School will let the students know who they should go to for this.

## 8. Support for Study (APRC 21/22 3F)

Rebecca Shade presented this item.

The Committee agreed to review the Support for Study Policy as per the proposed changes presented in the paper, with the exception of the proposed change in section 7.4 where it referred to “making clear reference to the relevant section of this policy with regards to the case”. This change was not to be made at this time, but would be kept under review.

The Committee discussed the insertion of the reference in Section 8.1 to students being referred directly to stage 3 (in a minority of cases). The policy had already indicated previously in Section 3.1 that in situations where the issues/adverse impact was judged to be particularly severe (and the University had reasonable grounds to believe that earlier stages of the policy would not be effective in addressing these issues), the University could proceed to a later stage of the policy without working sequentially through the stages. Therefore the Committee took the view that the insertion of the reference in section 8.1 to students being referred directly to stage 3 in a minority of cases did not represent a shift in policy, and could be approved.

The Committee further agreed to amend the following wording in the policy immediately in relation to the following:

- References to the Senatus Academic Progression Regulations Committee to be amended to Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee.
- Section 8.5 (“evidence that the student’s behaviour is causing significant risks to the wider University community...” to be amended to more closely reflect the language of Section 1.2 so that it referred to evidence that the student’s behaviour “has an adverse impact on the health, wellbeing or safety of other members of the University community...”
- Section 9.5 to be amended to include reference to the whole url (currently hyperlinked) here, in case the document was printed.

Finally, it was agreed that at the first APRC meeting of the academic year in 2022/23 in September 2022, the policy would be on the agenda for review again to ensure that it remained fit for purpose (especially bearing in mind that fundamental changes were currently being proposed to the University’s student support model). If, at that point in September 2022, a decision was taken to continue with the policy in its current format, then the following items could be listed for review:

- Language - use of language in general, to ensure the language was appropriate for students who may be vulnerable.
- Postgraduate Research (PGR) students - a check that PGR students were properly represented and covered by the policy.
- Job titles – any job title changes to be reflected– for example when Wellbeing Advisers were in post.
- Section 9.2 Students detailed under the Mental Health Act - the wording inserted in this section could be further reviewed, to ensure that the changes reflected the issues that had been raised/ to see if there was an alternative mechanism for very short periods of interruption.

- Section 7.4 Notice periods in advance of a stage 2 student case conference – whether the change from 10 working days to five (or giving as much notice as possible) was working in practice. (However, the Committee recognised that the word “ideally” contained in this paragraph in relation to the invitation being “ideally” sent within X working days was relevant. Given that this word “ideally” had already been included in the previous version of the policy, it had already been accepted that there may be situations where staff could act more quickly without being non-compliant with the policy - and it was further recognised in the policy that in urgent situations it may be necessary for the Dean of Students to act sooner).

#### **9. ESC Review - Coursework Extension Update for Semester 1 2021/22 (APRC 21/22 3G)**

Sarah McAllister presented this paper, which gave information about coursework extensions in semester 1 of 2021/22, with a reflection on coursework extension applications including reference to volume, trends and challenges. APRC had requested regular updates as part of the ESC review to reflect on service demand and project outcomes. APRC was being asked in the paper to consider whether the policy in relation to coursework extensions was meeting student and staff needs. It was clear that students were struggling with multiple competing deadlines through the ‘bunching’ of assessment and staff involved in marking were having to adjust their marking time, particularly for courses where up to 60% of the class cohort had coursework extensions. Currently, the policy was very broad to cover the acceptable reasons that may affect attendance and submission of assessment, and students were self-reporting with no evidence required.

Committee members discussed this item at length. There was a general consensus among members that the coursework extension policy in its current form was unsustainable in the long-term. Members agreed that the huge increase in volume and proportion of coursework extensions presented urgent concerns about the student and staff experience. There was strong support amongst members for changes to be made to the relevant policies and regulations, but that this could not be disaggregated from consideration of Special Circumstances, and would require consultation across the University and involvement from the relevant work-streams and Committees. The ESC Review outcomes would be crucial to any future developments, and are not due until early summer 2022. In addition, the Assessment and Feedback working group, which reports into the Curriculum Transformation board, is considering the University’s approach to assessment, and should encompass the University’s approach to deadlines. Based on these factors, the Committee agreed that a substantive review of the relevant policies could not be concluded in time for 2022/23.

#### **10. Deadline for Submission of Special Circumstances (APRC 21/22 3H)**

This paper proposed an amendment to the deadline for late submission of special circumstances applications, and to the wording of the Special Circumstances Policy regarding the standard deadline for applications.

The Committee approved the proposed amendment to section 3.1 of the Policy regarding the initial deadlines for applications, set out in section 7 of the paper.

As to the deadline for late applications, the Committee decided not to set a specific deadline within the Policy, but to approve deadlines on an annual basis for the subsequent year, based on proposals from the ESC service. The Policy would therefore state that “No late applications will be considered after the deadline for the relevant Semester published on the ESC web pages.”

#### **11. Academic Year Dates 2023/24 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2024/25 and 2025/26 (APRC 21/22 3I)**

The academic year dates for 2023/24 and provisional academic year dates for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were approved as presented, and would be passed to Communications and Marketing for publishing on the website at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates>

Dr Deborah Shaw noted that she was aware of an undergraduate programme in the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences which had non-standard academic year dates, therefore she would pass the information on to Ailsa Taylor so that it could be published on the relevant webpage:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates/programmes-with-non-standard-academic-years>

#### **12. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.



**Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**

**31 March 2022**

**Response to Senate Questions**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper details two questions received from Senate members after the meeting of Senate on 9 February 2022. The paper is provided to ensure committee members are aware of the questions raised by Senate members. In addition it raises a concern forwarded by a Senate member about the status of “closed papers” presented to Senate committees.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Colleagues are asked to note the two questions asked and responses given. APRC members are invited to provide any observations on the questions and responses.

In addition APRC members are invited to discuss their views on closed papers.

**Background and context**

3. Senate Standing Committees operate with delegated authority from Senate. Senate is provided with regular updates of business undertaken by standing committees (including APRC). Senate members are invited to ask questions as part of that update.

**Discussion**

4. The two questions received, and the answers provided, are given below.
5. How is the ESC system being improved in response to recent concerns? What changes are being considered to extension policy?

At their January meeting APRC received an update on the operation of ESC, this included information on the changing level of requests for coursework extensions. APRC discussed a range of issues around extensions and special circumstances at length, with College representatives outlining a range of concerns and difficulties from Schools. There is an on-going review of the operational side of ESC which is due to report by the summer of 2022, while the Assessment and Feedback Working Group is considering assessment practices across the University including the handling of assessment deadlines. In light of the above processes, and in view of the level of consultation required, the Committee agreed that a substantive review of the relevant policies could not be concluded in time for 2022/23 academic year.

Subsequent to the January APRC meeting, all three Colleges contacted Academic Services, Student Systems and the Convenor of APRC, to request an urgent review

of the coursework extension part of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Policy, based on acute concerns from Schools about the impact of extremely high proportions of extensions on the marking and moderation process. The intention of this process would be to consider whether interim changes could be made to the policy around coursework extensions which would alleviate these issues, ahead of the 2022/23 academic year. Academic Services are producing a paper outlining possible options which will be presented to the March meeting of APRC. Following that meeting, it is anticipated that Colleges will consult with Schools on any proposed changes ahead of further discussion, and potential sign-off, of any modifications at the May meeting of APRC.

6. Are special considerations or policy adjustments being contemplated in view of the ongoing industrial action?

To date mitigation has taken the form of advice to Schools from Academic Services and College Offices around flexibility and processes within the present regulations which might allow them to maintain student experience and reliable assessment (for instance the moving of assessment deadlines or changing the coverage of specific assignments).

Depending on the nature of continued action it is possible that APRC will be asked to consider time-limited, specific, changes to regulations. The principles that will govern these discussions are set out in Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71. Initial discussion of possible University responses to disruption are led by the Academic Contingency Group (convened by Assistant Principal Tina Harrison, and including representatives from all three Colleges, the Students Association and other groups within the University). APRC will receive an update on the situation at their meeting on 24th March, and will consider any possible concessions to regulations at that point (and beyond) as required.

7. The Senate Secretariat was approached about the status of closed papers presented to Senate Standing Committees. Specifically, since Standing Committees operate on delegated authority from Senate should such papers be available to all Senate members, rather than just the members of the relevant committee?

Relatively few papers presented to APRC are “closed”. Examples of papers which may be treated as closed include those that contain potentially commercially privileged information, for example, memorandums of understanding with partner institutions, or papers describing situations in the wider sector (used to inform decision making) where that information has been provided on a confidential basis.

APRC members are invited to make any observations they have on the current use of closed papers by the committee. Members are also asked to reflect on the possibility for making more use of open papers and the implications (both positive and negative) this might have for the work of APRC.

**Resource implications**

8. None

**Risk management**

9. The paper does not propose any actions, and does not therefore carry risks.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

10. n/a

**Equality & diversity**

11. The paper does not propose any actions, and does not therefore carry equality and diversity implications.

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

12. The purpose of this paper is to ensure that the points raised by Senate are presented to APRC and recorded in the minutes.

**Author**

*Paul Norris*

*Date 14/3/2022*

**Presenter**

*Paul Norris*

**Freedom of Information *Open.***

**Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**

**31 March 2022**

**Coursework Extensions regulation: proposals for interim amendments**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper proposes options for amending the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to coursework extensions ahead of the 2022/23 academic year.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. APRC is asked to discuss the options for interim changes to the coursework extensions regulation outlined in the paper. If there is support for one of the options, or an alternative option, further consultation will be carried out before a request for approval at the May meeting of APRC.

**Background and context**

3. At its January 2022 meeting, APRC considered evidence from the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service regarding the huge increase in volume and proportion of coursework extensions being approved by the service. In some cases, up to 60% of a cohort were receiving extensions for the same assessment. This raised significant concerns among members about how far our current policy is supporting students to develop skills around time management and working to deadlines, which they are likely to need in their careers beyond University. Moreover, the sheer volume of extensions granted presents significant challenges in marking and moderating students' work timeously. At the January meeting, Committee members agreed that the existing policy regarding coursework extensions was unsustainable, and that changes should be considered during the 2022/23 session alongside a wider review of the Special Circumstances process. This review would take account of the outcomes from the ESC review, which is due to report in early summer, and from the Assessment and Feedback group, which reports to the Curriculum Transformation Board.
4. Following the January 2022 meeting, the Colleges sent a joint communication to Lisa Dawson, Interim Deputy Secretary Students, and Academic Services, requesting an urgent review of the coursework extensions policy, in view of the concerns raised.
5. The existing policy regarding coursework extensions is set out in Taught Assessment Regulation 28 (Appendix 1). Students can request an extension of up to 7 days via the ESC service, based on one of the accepted reasons set out in regulation 28.6. Students are not required to submit supporting evidence alongside their applications, though they are expected to explain how their circumstances meet one of the accepted reasons.

## Discussion

### *Problems presented by the existing policy*

6. Staff are raising concerns that the current approach is not adequately preparing students for life beyond university, where there may be much less flexibility regarding adherence to deadlines, and therefore good time management is likely to be crucial.
7. Schools have reported that very high proportions of students are receiving coursework extensions for some assessments, in some cases up to 60% of a cohort. This makes it extremely difficult for staff to undertake marking and moderation in an efficient way, and especially in line with expected feedback turnaround times.
8. Under the current policy, it is permissible for Schools not to allow extensions for some assessments, for example where the turnaround time for feedback is very short. It is reasonable that extensions should not be offered in these sorts of circumstances, where there are sound, pedagogical reasons. However, should the issues with the current policy not be resolved, there is a significant risk that more Schools may refuse to offer extensions for a wider range of assessments where there are no specific pedagogical reasons for this, in order to circumvent the policy.

### *Options for interim changes*

9. As discussed above, the ongoing ESC review, and the work of the Assessment and Feedback group, combined with the high level of controversy associated with any policy regarding coursework extensions, limits the University's ability to make a profound change to the policy in advance of 2022/23. There are also likely to be system impediments to making significant changes at short notice. On this basis, the options outlined in this paper are intended to be interim solutions, which could serve to mitigate the concerns raised while the broader approach to this policy area is considered in 2022/23. The intention, however, is that any change made in the interim would be consistent with the general direction of travel, which is intended to move to a position where effective time management and submission of work by the formal deadline is given more value than at present.
10. The options proposed in this paper do not apply to the provision of coursework extensions as a reasonable adjustment for students with disabilities who are offered these as part of a Schedule of Adjustments.
  - i) *Reduce the default length of extensions to (e.g.) 3 days*
11. Reducing the time offered for extensions to 3 days would not be expected to reduce the overall volume of applications for extensions, but may be a step in the direction of changing the culture regarding the use of longer extensions to manage deadlines. It is expected that for any individual, substantive item of coursework, three days ought to be a sufficient length of time for a student to complete the work. Students would retain the option of submitting a Special

Circumstances request, where three days was unlikely to be adequate to their circumstances. Students who are entitled to longer extensions as part of a Schedule of Adjustments would continue to be able to access these, as normal. Under the Expedited Decisions provision of the Special Circumstances Policy (7.6), Conveners of Special Circumstances Committees (or their delegate) can make prompt decisions about extension requests which go beyond the length permitted under the coursework extensions regulation. This would continue to apply, irrespective of any change in the permitted length of extension under the regulation.

12. From a resource perspective, such a change would be unlikely to reduce the workload for the ESC service, and may lead to an increase in Special Circumstances applications from students seeking longer extensions. It would, however, serve to reduce the gap between initial submissions and those from students granted extensions, which should alleviate issues with protracted marking and moderation to some extent. A minor development would be required in the ESC system to reduce the maximum period of extension to 3 days. It may also be necessary for Schools to update APT to reflect the change, due to the way this feeds through to the ESC system.
13. Colleagues in CMVM responsible for online PGT programmes have raised specific concerns about how far a reduction in the permitted time for extensions may disadvantage their students, who are often professionals in full-time employment and may require longer extensions. Where the question of distinguishing between full-time and part-time students has been raised in past discussions of coursework extensions policy, the following issues have been considered:
  - The University does not currently offer part-time courses, only part-time programmes; the difference in load between full-time and part-time students therefore comes down to the volume of courses taken at any given time;
  - It can be the case that full-time and part-time students are taking the same courses alongside each other; it may be regarded as unfair to treat students differently on the same course; this would also be likely to make it very difficult to implement such an approach in the ESC system;
  - Although it is understood that (especially some) part-time cohorts are *more likely* to have other, profound commitments on their time, these commitments are not *exclusive* to them, since many of our other students- including those on full-time programmes- have families, significant employment commitments etc.; there would therefore be a concern that we were denying them the benefits we were offering to part-time students.

It is worth noting that the existing policy sets 7 days as the maximum permitted extension offered under the regulations (though longer extensions can be offered under Special Circumstances), but TAR 28.3 explains that Schools can reduce the period of extension to less than 7 days for some assessments. Data provided by the ESC service indicates that the vast majority of assessments (7931 of 11,958) in the system currently offer the full 7 days. Bearing in mind the above feedback from CMVM, it may therefore be most appropriate to consider changing

the default extension offered, rather than the maximum permitted, in order to accommodate reasonable variations in practice. This would be a shift in approach, rather than a change in policy, with Schools and students advised that the default extension was now expected to be 3 days, but that Schools may depart from this, where there is a good reason to do so.

*ii) Relaxation of feedback deadlines*

14. Since one aspect of the concern about the existing policy relates to the impact upon marking and moderation, a further option would be to allow Schools latitude to extend feedback deadlines, for example where a high proportion of students completing an assessment had been granted extensions. However, this would not achieve any aims of changing the culture among students regarding extensions, nor serve to reduce the overall volume of extensions (and associated workload). It would have the potential to lead to a poorer experience for students, with greater uncertainty about when they could expect feedback, prompting an increase in enquiries from students to teaching offices about this issue. Moreover, there is often little flexibility to extend marking and moderation periods, in view of the need to ensure marks are ready for Boards of Examiners. In addition, anecdotal feedback regarding a pilot scheme to relax feedback deadlines in CAHSS suggested that this was not especially effective at alleviating the problems experienced within Schools.

*iii) Reduce the range of acceptable reasons for requesting an extension*

15. There are currently a very broad range of acceptable reasons for requesting coursework extensions, which reflect those regarded as valid under the Special Circumstances Policy. Reducing the range of acceptable reasons may serve to promote more of a culture of regarding extensions as being for use in exceptional circumstances, and may therefore reduce the overall volume of extensions. However, it may not be reasonable to consider reducing the range of acceptable reasons for coursework extensions without also reducing the range of reasons accepted for Special Circumstances, bearing in mind that coursework extensions are generally regarded as a lesser concession than some of those available under the Special Circumstances Policy. It would also be difficult to decide which grounds should be removed. A further option may be to clarify or narrow some of the existing grounds.

*iv) Require evidence to support applications*

16. A further option, which would have the potential to change the culture to one in which extensions were regarded as more exceptional, would be reintroducing the requirement for supporting evidence in order for applications to be approved. However, this option would carry a number of potential drawbacks:

- The existing self-certification approach was based on the fact that staff can generally self-certify for short periods of absence, although there are more restrictions around how frequently a staff member can do this;

- A strict requirement for evidence would be out-of-step with the Special Circumstances policy, which allows applications to be approved based on self-certification in some cases;
- Students are likely to be unreceptive to such a change to a stricter approach, especially coming relatively soon after the lifting of temporary Covid-19 measures, which allowed automatic extensions;
- Requiring evidence would compound the existing workload challenges within the ESC team, with staff required not only to consider evidence, but also likely to need to have protracted email exchanges with some students in order to request evidence where this had not been provided;
- Moving to requiring evidence would also be likely to require major development to the ESC system, which is unlikely to be feasible in advance of 2022/23.

#### *Additional options for longer-term change*

17. The options listed above are those which appear most feasible to consider for application at short notice, ahead of the 2022/23 session. A longer-term review of the coursework extensions policy may consider more profound changes, such as:

- Moving away from having individual deadlines for substantive coursework assignments, introducing instead a “submission period” (or multiple submission periods) of (for example) one week shortly after the middle of the Semester, akin to the exam diet. Students would be expected to submit all relevant coursework during the submission period, but could decide in what order they approached the work for themselves. Where students were unable to submit work by the end of the submission period, they could request an extension via the Special Circumstances process.
- Allowing students one extension to an assignment per Semester as an automatic right (i.e. without a requirement for an acceptable reason), with any further requests requiring an application through the Special Circumstances process.
- Removing the coursework extensions regulation and requiring students to use the Special Circumstances process to request an extension to a deadline, albeit retaining an expedited process for dealing with requests which involve coursework extensions only.

#### **Resource implications**

18. The potential resource implications of the interim options proposed are considered in the discussion section of the paper.

#### **Risk management**

19. The possible risks of the interim options proposed are considered in the discussion section of the paper.

#### **Equality & diversity**

20. The equality and diversity implications of the interim options proposed are considered in the discussion section of the paper.



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

21. As above, this paper requests an initial discussion of options. If a preferred option emerges, Academic Services will conduct further consultation about this with the assistance of Colleges and EUSA, with a view to bringing a formal proposal to the May 2022 meeting of APRC.

### **Author**

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### **Presenter**

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Regulation  
Academic Services

## **Freedom of Information**

**Open**

**Appendix 1- Coursework extensions regulation****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 for late submission, the Extensions and Special Circumstances Team will consider accepting late submission of up to seven calendar days without applying 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 School. The penalty applied 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 Scheme 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 Team will consider cases for accepting late submissions up to a maximum of seven calendar days without applying 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 in advance of the published deadline for the coursework, using the relevant online system.
- 28.4 The Extensions and Special Circumstances Team decides whether the student has provided an accepted reason to justify an extension.
- 28.5 Self-certification will provide sufficient evidence in all circumstances. The Extensions and Special Circumstances Team are responsible for ensuring a record is kept of the decision and the information provided by the student with their request.
- 28.6 Accepted 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. Accepted 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;
- Severe financial difficulties;
- Exposure to a difficult/challenging home environment;
- Significant problems with access to teaching and learning materials, e.g. due to connectivity, power, or equipment issues;
- Catastrophic technical failure preventing submission of an online assessment by the relevant deadline;
- Lack of access to library resources, where there are no viable alternatives.

28.7 In addition to these unexpected circumstances, the Extensions and Special Circumstances Team 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](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/performance_sport_policy.pdf)

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

- 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.

28.9 Where a student has a good reason for requiring a coursework extension of more than seven calendar days, the student should apply via the Special Circumstances process to request an alternate deadline. Accepted applications relating solely to extensions of more than seven days can be handled under the “expedited decisions” function of the Special Circumstances Policy (7.6).

## Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

31 March 2022

### Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23

#### Description of paper

1. This paper contains the draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations for 2022/23. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the key changes. The Undergraduate Degree Regulations contribute to the University’s Teaching and Learning focus of Strategy 2030.

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval.

#### Background and context

3. Annual review of degree regulations.

#### Discussion

4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations for academic year 2022/3. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments. Academic Services will submit a paper to the University Court, presenting the draft “Resolution” for its 25 April 2022 meeting and final Resolution at its 13 June 2022 meeting.
5. When changes were invited from Schools and Colleges by Academic Services this year for the 2022/23 regulations, we asked for essential changes only. This was based on the understanding that we could not expect staff in Schools and Colleges to engage with consultation around more complex or controversial issues at this time.

### Key Changes to Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23

Links within the regulations to other information have been updated as necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
Various	Added “Director of Teaching” and “Student Adviser” to list of named contact roles for students, reflecting changes to student support arrangements for taught students.
24 Attendance and Participation	Amended to add clarification that students are expected to attend and participate in person, unless they are on a designated online or distance learning programme, or

	remote participation has been specifically stated as permissible for an activity.
<b>26 Leave of absence</b>	Amended to add clarification that leave of absence can affect the visa conditions of some students.
<b>93 BVM&amp;S Distinction at graduation</b>	Amended to reflect planned changes to criteria for Distinction at graduation, which will affect students entering the BVM&S from 2022/23. The new criteria will be published in the relevant programme handbook. Any equality and diversity implications of revised criteria will be subject to consideration by the School and College, as necessary.
<b>122-126 Professional requirements: School of Engineering</b>	Amendment and clarification regarding the use of resits for professional purposes on accredited degree programmes in the School of Engineering. These amendments reflect requirements stipulated by accrediting bodies.

#### **Resource implications**

6. Any issues around resource will be covered in the key changes section.

#### **Risk management**

7. Any issues around risk management will be covered in the key changes section.

#### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8. The paper does not contribute to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Equality & diversity**

9. Any issues around equality and diversity will be covered in the key changes section.

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

10. 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, March 2022

**Presenter**

Dr Adam Bunni

**Freedom of Information Open**

## Extract from Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23: Updated Regulations

### A General Undergraduate Degree Regulations

#### Compliance

2. Where the Head of College has the authority to grant permissions and concessions, this authority may be delegated to appropriate nominees in the College or Schools. Students must consult their Personal Tutor or Student Support Team [or Student Adviser](#) as to the appropriate point of contact, and must not approach the Head of College directly.

#### Attendance and Participation

24. Students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. This includes being available for teaching sessions, assessment, examination and meeting [with](#) Personal Tutors [or allocated Student Adviser](#) face to face and electronically. Except when registered on a designated online or distance learning programme, or where remote participation is specifically stated, students are expected to attend and participate in person. The Degree Programme Table and programme handbook sets out programme requirements for engagement. Certain students' visa requirements may require the University to monitor attendance and engagement in specific ways.

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

#### Progression and Permissible Credit Loads

43. In pre-Honours years, a student may be allowed to take up to 40 credits of additional Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF, [www.scqf.org.uk/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/)) level 7 and 8 courses (in addition to the normal 120 credits), subject to the approval of the [Director of Teaching or delegated nominee \(e.g. student's Personal Tutor or Student Adviser\)](#).

45. Students may attend courses on a class-only basis (i.e. not for credit), with the agreement of the Course Organiser and the approval of the [Director of Teaching or delegated nominee \(e.g. Personal Tutor or Student Adviser\)](#). Decisions will be based on the overall load (credit and non-credit bearing) on the student, which must not exceed 160 credits.



## C College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Undergraduate Degree Regulations: Degree Specific Regulations

### Awards

#### Distinction at Graduation

993. Students who entered the BVM&S prior to the 2022/23 academic year and have displayed special merit in the Professional Examinations over the whole degree programme will be awarded BVM&S with Distinction at the time of graduation. Students who have displayed special merit in the Professional Examinations over the whole degree programme will be awarded BVM&S with Distinction at the time of graduation. Awards are made based on calculations equally across all years and are weighted by course credit value. For students who entered the BVM&S from the 2022/23 academic year onwards, criteria for the award of Distinction at graduation are set out in the relevant programme handbook.

### Bachelor of Science

#### Honours Degree

113. Limitation on Courses Taken in Honours Years: Students in all Honours years may take Honours curriculum courses to a maximum value of 120 credit points, all of which count in the final Honours assessment. Students may attend additional Honours courses on a class-only basis (i.e. not for credit), with the agreement of the Programme Organiser and the approval of the Director of Teaching or delegated nominee (e.g. Personal Tutor or Student Adviser).

Where a student takes level 9 courses in year 2, such courses should be regarded as part of the non-Honours curriculum and, if failed, may be repeated as a resit in Junior Honours. These courses will not be included in the degree classification.

Students intending to graduate with an Ordinary degree may resit a failed level 9 course for the purposes of gaining the required number of credits, as specified in the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations.

Students in Junior Honours are permitted also to take up to 40 credit points of level 7/8 courses, which do not count towards the Honours assessment, as specified in the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations.

Students in Junior Honours must take 60 credit points of level 9/10 courses in semester 1 and 60 credit points of level 9/10 courses in semester 2.

## D College of Science and Engineering Undergraduate Degree Regulations: Degree Specific Regulations

### Professional requirements: School of Engineering

122. An Honours student who is eligible for progression or for the award of an accredited Honours degree by the University regulations but who fails a level 9, 10 or 11 course, for which a pass is required for reasons associated with breadth of professional knowledge and/or the stipulation(s) of one or more of the Professional Accreditation bodies will be required to "resit for professional purposes" the failed course.

123. A student requiring "resit(s) for professional purposes" will be ineligible for the degree of Bachelor of Engineering with Honours / Master of Engineering with Honours unless the necessary passes at "resit for professional purposes" are achieved, but may be eligible

either for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (Ordinary) in a Designated Discipline or for the award of the unaccredited degree of Bachelor of Engineering Technology with Honours / Master of Engineering Technology with Honours in a Designated Discipline.

124. 'Resits for professional purposes' should be taken at the next available opportunity. The maximum number of attempts will equal that permitted for pre-Honours or non-Honours students in the Taught Assessment Regulations. Where students are offered a third attempt at an assessment, having failed twice, they will be offered an assessment-only repeat year. Where a student has exhausted the maximum number of attempts and has still yet to pass a course or courses, they will not be eligible for the accredited Honours degree or to progress, but will be considered for an exit award in line with Regulation 123.

125. Where resits for professional purposes are required, the first (fail) mark will be recorded for the Honours degree classification.

126. It will be for each Discipline within the School of Engineering to identify the requirements for each degree programme. This may be done on the basis of individual courses, and/or on the basis of an aggregate. The requirements for each Discipline will be stated in the relevant Degree Programme Handbook.

~~122.— An Honours student who is eligible for progression or for the award of an Honours degree by the University regulations but who fails an Honours course, for which a pass is required for reasons associated with breadth of professional knowledge and/or the stipulation(s) of one or more of the Professional Accreditation bodies, will be required to “resit for professional purposes” the examination and/or resubmit the course work at the next available opportunity. However, the first (fail) mark will be recorded for the Honours degree classification.~~

~~123.— Should the resit or resubmission still fail to achieve a pass, the student will not be eligible to progress or graduate with Honours. In such cases, the student will be required to interrupt for a year and take a further “resit for professional purposes”. A final year student requiring “resit(s) for professional purposes” will be ineligible for the degree of Bachelor of Engineering with Honours / Master of Engineering with Honours until such time as the necessary passes at “resit for professional purposes” are achieved, but may be eligible for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (Ordinary) in a Designated Discipline. The maximum number of attempts will be the same as the number normally allowed by undergraduate assessment regulations.~~

~~124.— It will be for each Discipline within the School of Engineering to identify “courses for which a pass is required...” This may be done on the basis of individual courses, and/or on the basis of an aggregate. The requirements for each Discipline will be stated in the Degree Programme Handbook~~

## Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

31 March 2022

### Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23

#### Description of paper

1. This paper contains the draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2022/23. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the key changes. The Postgraduate Degree Regulations contribute to the University’s Teaching and Learning focus of Strategy 2030.

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval.

#### Background and context

3. Annual review of degree regulations.

#### Discussion

4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations for academic year 2022/3. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments. Academic Services will submit a paper to the University Court, presenting the draft “Resolution” for its 25 April 2022 meeting and final Resolution at its 13 June 2022 meeting.
5. When changes were invited from Schools and Colleges by Academic Services this year for the 2022/23 regulations, we asked for essential changes only. This was based on the understanding that we could not expect staff in Schools and Colleges to engage with consultation around more complex or controversial issues at this time.

#### Key Changes to Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23

Links within the regulations to other information have been updated as necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
Throughout	Added “Director of Teaching,” “Cohort Lead” and “Student Adviser” to list of named contact roles for students, reflecting changes to student support arrangements for taught students.
24 Attendance and Participation	Amended to add clarification that students are expected to attend and participate in person, unless they are on a designated online or distance learning programme, or remote participation has been specifically stated as permissible for an activity.

<b>30 Leave of absence</b>	Amended to add clarification that leave of absence can affect the visa conditions of some students.
<b>60 Application for Associated Postgraduate Diploma or Masters</b>  <b>(also 16 Recognition of Prior Learning)</b>	Amended to add clarification that credit for courses completed previously, which form part of the Degree Programme Table for the new programme, does not count against the credit allowance for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
<b>110 – 114 MSc Engineering degrees: profession requirements</b>	<b>New</b> College specific regulations setting out requirements where MSc courses are required for reasons associated with breadth of professional knowledge and/or the stipulation(s) of one or more of the Professional Accreditation bodies. Includes requirements for resits for professional purposes and options for award of unaccredited degree.

**Resource implications**

6. Any issues around resource will be covered in the key changes section.

**Risk management**

7. Any issues around risk management will be covered in the key changes section.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8. The paper does not contribute to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals.

**Equality & diversity**

9. Any issues around equality and diversity will be covered in the key changes section.

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

10. 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, March 2022

**Presenter**

Dr Adam Bunni

**Freedom of Information Open**

## Extract from Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2022/23: Updated Regulations

### Introduction

#### Authority Delegated to Colleges

4. Where the Head of College has the authority to grant permissions and concessions, this authority may be delegated to appropriate nominees in the College or Schools. Students must consult their Personal Tutor, Student Support Team, Supervisor, [Student Adviser](#) or School as to the appropriate point of contact, and must not approach the College directly. Where the College does not have authority to award a particular concession then the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee may award the concession.

### A General Postgraduate Degree Regulations

#### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

16. RPL can only be recognised at the point of admission to the University. The Head of College has the authority to recognise the transfer of a student's credit previously gained either at the University or another institution and to count it towards their intended award. Before approval is granted the College must be satisfied that the learning to be recognised and transferred provides an adequate current basis for the programme or courses as set out in the appropriate Degree Programme Table. The maximum number of credits that the Colleges will grant RPL for taught programmes is one-third of the total credits for the award for which the student is applying, that is 20 credits for a postgraduate certificate; 40 credits for a postgraduate diploma; and 60 credits for a masters (or 80 credits where a masters programme is comprised of 240 credits). For research programmes, the maximum number of credits that the Colleges will grant RPL is 360 credits. [These restrictions do not apply to credit transferred when a student starts an associated Diploma or Masters, in line with regulation 60.](#)

#### Permissible Credit Loads

20. Students may take courses on a class-only basis (i.e. not for credit), with the agreement of the course organiser, and the approval of the ~~Programme Director, or supervisor.~~ [Director of Teaching or delegated nominee \(e.g. Programme Director or Student Adviser\), or supervisor.](#) Decisions will be based on the overall load (credit and non-credit bearing) on the student in the year. Students may not take more than 40 additional credits in any year.

#### Attendance and Participation

24. Students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. This includes being available for teaching sessions, assessment, examination and meeting, Personal Tutors [or Student Adviser\(s\)](#), Programme Directors or [Cohort Leads or supervisors](#) face-to-face and/or electronically. [Except when registered on a designated online or distance learning programme, or where remote participation is specifically stated, students are expected to attend and participate in person.](#) The Degree Programme Table and programme handbook sets out programme requirements for attendance and participation. Certain students' visa conditions may require the University to monitor attendance and participation in specific ways.

#### Leave of Absence

30. Leave of absence is required ~~for~~ [where students undertake](#) compulsory and optional activities related to, [or part of,](#) the programme of study ~~that are not undertaken away from~~

campus in Edinburgh. Students must have the formal approval of the College for any leave of absence to study away from Edinburgh that is 30 calendar days' duration or longer. Study location changes of less than 30 calendar days must be agreed with the Supervisor or [Director of Teaching or delegated nominee \(e.g. Personal Tutor or Student Adviser\)](#). Where the activity is a compulsory part of the programme of study and is organised by the School or College, permission may be given by the College for a cohort of students without individual applications being made. Colleges and Schools must maintain records of all leaves of absence. [Certain students' visa conditions may be affected by study away from Edinburgh.](#) This regulation does not apply to students on a recognised distance learning programme.

## **Additional Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Degrees and MSc by Research, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates**

### **Application for Associated Postgraduate Diploma or Masters**

60. A candidate who already holds a postgraduate certificate or diploma from the University of Edinburgh may be permitted by the appropriate College to apply for candidature for the associated postgraduate diploma or masters degree, provided that not more than five years have elapsed between their first graduation and acceptance as a candidate for the subsequent award. Marks awarded for courses taken previously as part of the certificate or diploma may be used in progression and award decisions relating to the new programme. [Credit for courses taken previously which form part of the Degree Programme Table for the new programme does not count against the credit allowance for Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\).](#)

## **D College of Science and Engineering Postgraduate Degree Regulations: College specific regulations**

### **Doctor of Engineering (EngD)**

109. The Prescribed Period of Study is 48 months full-time and 96 months part-time.

### **MSc Engineering degrees: professional requirements**

110. An MSc student who is eligible for progression or for the award of an accredited MSc degree by the University regulations but who fails an MSc course, for which a pass is required for reasons associated with breadth of professional knowledge and/or the stipulation(s) of one or more of the Professional Accreditation bodies, will be required to "resit for professional purposes" the failed course.

111. A student requiring "resit(s) for professional purposes" will be ineligible for the accredited MSc degree unless the necessary passes at "resit for professional purposes" are achieved, but may be eligible for the award of the unaccredited degree of MSc in Engineering Technology in a Designated Subject.

112. 'Resits for professional purposes' should be taken at the next available opportunity. Only one resit attempt will be permitted. Where a student has exhausted the maximum number of attempts and has still yet to pass a course or courses, they will not be eligible for the accredited MSc degree, but will be considered for an exit award in line with Regulation 111.

113. Where resits for professional purposes are required, the first (fail) mark will be recorded for the MSc degree classification.

114. It will be for each MSc Programme Director within the School of Engineering to identify the requirements for each degree programme. This may be done on the basis of individual courses, and/or on the basis of an aggregate. The requirements for each Programme will be stated in the Degree Programme Handbook.



**Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee****31 March 2022****CAHSS – Business School - Joint Challenge Dissertations****Description of paper**

*(Should also explain how any proposals will contribute to one of more of the Strategy 2030 outcomes)*

1. Many potential MSc dissertation topics related to global strategy and sustainability such as fast fashion supply chains, the future of work and organization in the post-covid work, micromobility and its impact on urban accessibility are inherently difficult for an individual student to manage successfully within the time constraints of a Business School MSc dissertation (60 credits to be completed over 3 months: June - August). As part of the new MSc in Global Strategy and Sustainability (GSS), we propose a new format for the dissertation to be available to students (as an alternative to the 60-credit individual dissertation) that allows students to engage with complex topics within the time constraints of their MSc programme. The proposed Joint Challenge Dissertation would combine 20 credits of joint study project with 40 credits of individual work. This proposal aligns with Strategy 2030 in that it: a) will improve the PGT learning experience by enabling a new dissertation format to allow students to tackle the study of complex environmental and social issues line with UN SDGs as part of their dissertation topics (which would otherwise would have been too complex to be effectively approached as part of their individual dissertation) and b) create further opportunities for students of the Business School to achieve impact the community through engaging partners, friends, neighbors, and supporters as partners in their dissertation work, and thus co-create, engage and amplify the potential impact of their work1. .

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For approval - alternative format of the Joint Challenge Dissertation (20 credits +40 credits) for the new MSc GSS programme in the Business School

**Background and context**

3. The Business School launched a new MSc GSS programme in September 2021 (with the first cohort starting in September 22). This programme has a strong focus on governance, society and responsibility and its mission is to support students to develop a critical and reflexive understanding of the broader context of critical environmental and social issues, and how they can be responded to and integrated within a broader range of organizational practices and processes. As part of this programme, we propose to include a Joint Challenge Dissertations – to be offered addition to existing 60 credit individual dissertation. Although the existing 60 credit dissertation format is flexible in that it can take the form of i) research dissertations and ii) company

sponsored dissertations, a key disadvantage is that it requires students to engage in topics that can be tackled individually within the 60-credit structure and 3 months of the dissertation period. Many topics relevant to this new MSc programme however, concern complex challenges that business face in relation to SDG, ESG, climate change, social justice and the associated changing policies, processes and practices at macro, meso and micro level. Such potential topics include fast fashion supply chains, the future of work and organisation in the post-Covid world, micromobility and its impact on urban accessibility, the impact of capital market imposed ERS standards on firms seeking capital. Such topics are complex with the formulation of responses required a strong systemic grasp of the issue. They require an understanding of stakeholders, with dynamics of interaction at multiple levels of scale, such that a good research project is beyond that of what can be reasonably accomplished by an individual student within a traditional dissertation format. It is however such complex topics which are particularly suited to environmental and social issues which are the scope of the MSc GSS degree.

## Discussion

4. **Joint Challenge Dissertations.** The primary difference between this proposed format and the traditional dissertation format is that it consists of two outputs: i) a joint study project (33.3% or 20 of 60-credits) and ii) an individual dissertation (66.7% or 40 of 60-credits). The joint student project and the individual dissertation work will take place concomitantly over the summer, and the deadline for both outputs will be the same as for other dissertations, which is at the end of August of the academic year. Collectively, the joint study and the individual dissertation components will constitute the 60-credits and equivalent to a traditional dissertation. This balance between individual and group effort ensures that the student will progress based on individual effort, and yet provide adequate incentive to coordinate and contribute to the development of the joint study project and to overcome the interpersonal frictions that are inevitable in an ambitious undertaking. Recent research (McCune et al, 2021) suggests that this method is an effective approach to the teaching and learning of wicked problems. In the case of issues leading to a falling out by one or more members of the group, those members that leave will automatically revert to a traditional dissertation format. Most of these joint study projects will be supervised by a single dissertation advisor. In rare cases where a different expertise is required and beyond the scope of any individual advisor, joint advisors or engaging with others on a consulting basis, within or out with the Business School, may be considered. Allocation of workload would be split between Business School groups in the case of joint advisors if outside the Strategy Group.

- 5. Joint Study Project (20 credits).** Groups of 3-5 students will cooperate to plan and implement a joint study project related to a problem within the realm of environmental sustainability or social impact, which will be agreed between the supervisor and students, in consultation with the University's Social Responsibility and Sustainability Department. The joint study project dissertation proposals can be based on: a) student proposals, b) a proposal by a potential dissertation advisor, or c) be a variant of a CSD (company sponsored dissertation) proposed by an external firm or organization. As part of the joint study projects, in addition to their individual dissertation work (see section below) students will be required to collectively develop the overall scope of the project, data collection and understanding of the background and contextual knowledge of the case. The joint effort will culminate in the creation of an output or 'product' which synthesizes the collective findings of the joint study in a logically coherent narrative that is accessible to, and appropriate for, a non-expert audience. The output, or 'product' should be materials or media that addresses the relevant problem that is identified. Examples of acceptable output from a joint study project include: a video, a written report or paper, or an accessible online portfolio of materials. The marking criteria will draw on existing approaches where students develop project outputs for wider use (e.g., GeoSciences Outreach, Currents). Marking criteria will be broadly based on the format, communication and perspective of the output (e.g., is it appropriate for the problem / audience, is it pitched at the right level for the target audience, and does it draw on relevant data other information), as well as engagement and legacy (e.g. does it help solve a problem or address a need, and will it have or add value beyond the period of the dissertation). The assessment framework will be designed and specified to explicitly encourage creativity and risk taking for the joint study product. The EFI ['Currents: Understanding and addressing global challenges'](#) PGT course launched in 2020-21 is an example of how the strengths of collaborative groupwork between students of diverse backgrounds can be used for the teaching and learning of wicked problems, and examples of creative approaches to the final 'product'. The Currents course organisers are currently developing a repository for project outputs to enable new groups of students to build upon the work of previous groups.
- 6. Individual dissertation (40 credits).** Although the size of the 'wicked' or complex problem typical for a joint study project is necessarily larger and beyond the scope of a single dissertation research project – the size also allows for different aspects of the same problem to be tackled across different 'research projects' that would form the backbone of the individual dissertation that may require and benefit from different theoretical perspectives as well as different methodologies. To accomplish this, data for this project will be jointly collected and the use of mixed methods are encouraged. Students will still however, individually develop their own research questions and conceptual frameworks for their formal dissertation. We anticipate that some sharing of data coding and early-stage analysis as methodological abilities will not be uniform across the group – some group members can work with quantitative methods while others can do qualitative analysis for example. This approach has already been developed and refined within the PGT 'Design for

Informatics' and UG 'Data, Design & Society' courses ([Interdisciplinary modules and the Edinburgh Living Lab](#)). This individual dissertation closely resembles the output of a traditional dissertation and will be marked according to the same criteria.

### **Resource implications**

7. No resource requirements beyond supervision requirements for the traditional dissertation format.

### **Risk management**

8. The potential risks with this proposal will be mitigated through a number of measures including:
  - a. clear guidelines for students regarding accountabilities and responsibilities in teamwork (e.g. team log, clear allocation of tasks, agreement on respective deliverables);
  - b. what to do in case things go wrong (i.e. defined procedures for raising concerns about social loafing);
  - c. allocation of the supervisors with prior experience with Company Sponsored Dissertations – and thus experienced with research projects that require engagement with multiple stakeholder groups – within the Strategy Group of the Business School to supervise JCDs; and
  - d. limiting the number of JCD projects in the first cohort of the MSc GSS so as to allow for learning on a smaller scale (e.g. what works and what doesn't) to gain insight into best practice for JCDs.

This approach has already been developed and refined within the PGT 'Design for Informatics' and UG 'Data, Design & Society' courses ([Interdisciplinary modules and the Edinburgh Living Lab](#)).

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

9. This proposal contributes directly to the University's objectives as Joint Challenge Dissertation topics will directly address the UN SDGs, thus enhancing the PGT learning experience.

### **Equality & diversity**

10. The proposal does not negatively impact the University's equality and diversity.

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

11. If approved, the Joint Dissertation Format will be included as an option in the 2022-23 DPRS for the MSc Global Strategy & Sustainability.

### **Author**

*Name:* Winston Kwon

*Date:* 10/02/2022

**Freedom of Information** (*Is the paper 'open' or 'closed'?*) Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

31 March 2022

Change to Degree Specific Regulation 85a

**Description of paper**

1. This paper is a proposal to amend the current Degree Specific Regulations for the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice, which is the final required qualification for all solicitors wishing to practice in Scotland prior to starting a traineeship. This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes as it relates to a matter of programme regulation.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. APRC is asked to discuss and approve the amended wording for the Degree Specific Regulations at Regulation 85a, in relation to the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice.

**Background and context**

3. At present, the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice operates an exemption from the final written examination for students on three of the core seven subjects. If the required standard is met in the coursework, which it is in the majority of cases, the student is exempted from the written examination and the final mark derived from coursework only. Where the requirement is not met, the student sits a written examination and must pass at 40%; the final course mark is derived from the examination result only. In practice, almost all students gain the exemption<sup>1</sup>. This arrangement nevertheless creates conditions where inequitable treatment of students can occur, although this should be set in the context that the overall result for all students on the Diploma is Pass/Fail. It is not possible to receive Merit or Distinction. For example:
  - a. Student A completes all coursework on time and passes with a mark of 60%. This is their first sit mark.
  - b. Student B completes the coursework and does not receive an exemption with an overall mark of 59%; Student B is required to sit the written exam and passes with a grade of 70%, which is recorded as their first sit mark. **Student A was not permitted this additional opportunity to obtain a higher score.**
  - c. Student C, who obtained the same overall mark as Student B in the coursework, sits the exam and scores a 45%, which is a pass. **Their higher coursework score of 59% is disregarded.**
4. At some point (the approval of which has not been recorded appropriately in local records) a change in practice was introduced which raised the required standard from

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<sup>1</sup> Across the past 3 years, averaged across the three courses, the rate of failure to gain exemption was 2.11%. This ranged from an average 0% on Professional Skills and Responsibility, to an average of 4.07% on Company and Commercial. The cohort size is typically around 130.

50% to 60% for exemption to be offered. Current Course Organisers feel that the standard of 60% is appropriate and would like to retain it. However, this does not match the degree regulations, so these require revision.

5. The School would like to address both of these issues this year, in order to avoid any unequal treatment of students entering the programme in 2022/23. However, it is proposed that a wider review of assessment on the programme be carried out in the 2022/23 academic year, which may result in change that is more substantial to the assessment arrangements for these courses from 2023/24 onwards. This would be led by the permanent Director of the programme who has been on a period of parental leave in 2021/22. Any such major change would be carried out in consultation with the Law Society of Scotland (who set the standards for degrees of this nature Scotland-wide), with students, and in compliance with University of Edinburgh regulations. The expected timeframe for the review is Semester 1 of 2022/23.

### **Discussion**

6. As an interim measure, whilst a review takes place, the School proposes to remove the exemption from the assessment, and replace it with a higher pass mark that will result in a Forced Fail should the requirement not be met through coursework. Students failing the course will be offered one resit examination, which requires to be passed at 40%.
7. The current wording of Regulation 85a is as follows:

85. The degree specific regulations are:

a. **Grounds for Award.** Students must pass all of the core courses and three elective courses to be awarded the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. Attaining a mark of 50% or more in the assignments, participation and attendance gives exemption from sitting the examination in Company and Commercial, Financial Services and Related Skills and Professional Responsibility.

The new wording proposed as follows:

85. The degree specific regulations are:

a. **Grounds for Award.** Students must pass all of the core courses and three elective courses to be awarded the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. Attaining a mark of 60% or more in is required for a pass in the coursework for the following courses: LAWS11250 Company and Commercial; LAWS11249 Financial Services and Related Skills; LAWS11310 Professional Skills and Responsibility.

8. APRC are invited to discuss the proposed wording and suggest any amendments to the approach presented.

### **Resource implications**

9. None

### **Risk management**

10. Risk currently posed by the mismatch between practice and regulations is effectively managed by the proposed change.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

11. The paper does not contribute to the CE and SDG goals as it relates to a matter of internal programme regulation.

**Equality & diversity**

12. The proposed change results in a more transparent arrangement and thus contributes to a more equal assessment process.

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

13. The change to the regulation would be published by Academic Services in the PGDRPS for 2022/23. The School (delegated to the Head of Postgraduate Office) will take responsibility for publishing updated requirements in the Student Handbook for the relevant programme of study. Information about the change would also be shared with teaching staff and administrators working on the programme.

**Author**

*Lucy Gaunt  
22 March 2022*

**Presenter**

*Professor Andrew Steven  
Convenor of the Board of Studies,  
School of Law*

**Freedom of Information**

*Open*

**Board of Studies**  
**Wednesday 16 March 2022**  
**2.00pm via MS Teams**  
**Addendum to Minutes**

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**Chair's Action Item – 22 March 2022****Diploma Exemption**

Following the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee on 02 March 2022, approval is sought for a change to the assessment arrangements on the following courses:

- LAWS11249 [Financial Services and Related Skills](#)
- LAWS11250 [Company and Commercial](#)
- LAWS11310 [Professional Skills and Responsibility](#)

The assessment details from the current course descriptors state:

<b>Assessment (<a href="#">Further Info</a>)</b>	Written Exam 0 %, Coursework 100 %, Practical Exam 0 %
<b>Additional Information (Assessment)</b>	Classwork - 100% if individual standard of 60% achieved across assignments/both parts Failure to achieve this - Examination - 100%

At present, the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice operates an exemption from the final written examination for students on three of the core seven subjects. If the required standard is met in the coursework, which it is in the majority of cases, the student is exempted from the written examination and the final mark derived from coursework only. Where the requirement is not met, the student sits a written examination and must pass at 40%; the final course mark is derived from the examination result only. In practice, almost all students gain the exemption<sup>2</sup>. This arrangement nevertheless creates conditions where inequitable treatment of students can occur, although this should be set in the context that the overall result for all students on the Diploma is Pass/Fail. It is not possible to receive Merit or Distinction.

At some point (the approval of which has not been recorded appropriately in local records) a change in practice was introduced which raised the required standard from 50% to 60% for exemption to be offered. Current Course Organisers feel that the standard of 60% is appropriate and would like to retain it. However, this does not match the degree regulations, so these require revision.

The School would like to address both of these issues this year, in order to avoid any unequal treatment of students entering the programme in 2022/23. However, it is proposed that a wider review of assessment on the programme be carried out in the 2022/23

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<sup>2</sup> Across the past 3 years, averaged across the three courses, the rate of failure to gain exemption was 2.11%. This ranged from an average 0% on Professional Skills and Responsibility, to an average of 4.07% on Company and Commercial. The cohort size is typically around 130.



academic year, which may result in change that is more substantial to the assessment arrangements for these courses from 2023/24 onwards. This would be led by the permanent Director of the programme who has been on a period of parental leave in 2021/22. Any such major change would be carried out in consultation with the Law Society of Scotland (who set the standards for degrees of this nature Scotland-wide), with students, and in compliance with University of Edinburgh regulations. The expected timeframe for the review is Semester 1 of 2022/23.

### **Proposed change**

As an interim measure, whilst a review takes place, the School proposes to remove the exemption from the assessment, and replace it with a higher pass mark that will result in a Forced Fail should the requirement not be met through coursework. Students failing the course will be offered one resit examination, which requires to be passed at 40%.

The change in arrangements will cause minimal impact on the majority of students, but will ensure that any student who misses the minimum will find the resit arrangements to be clearer and more transparent.

The change to the assessment can be made at School level, but this change will necessitate a change to the wording of the Postgraduate Degree Regulations, Regulation 85a. The current wording of Regulation 85a is as follows:

85. The degree specific regulations are:

a. **Grounds for Award.** Students must pass all of the core courses and three elective courses to be awarded the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. Attaining a mark of 50% or more in the assignments, participation and attendance gives exemption from sitting the examination in Company and Commercial, Financial Services and Related Skills and Professional Responsibility.

The new wording proposed as follows:

85. The degree specific regulations are:

a. **Grounds for Award.** Students must pass all of the core courses and three elective courses to be awarded the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. Attaining a mark of 60% or more in is required for a pass in the coursework for the following courses: LAWS11250 Company and Commercial; LAWS11249 Financial Services and Related Skills; LAWS11310 Professional Skills and Responsibility.

**The Convener of the Board of Studies, Professor Andrew Steven, granted approval via correspondence for this change to be passed to the College Dean of QA, and subsequently passed to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee. The justification for Chairs Action as opposed to full Board scrutiny is:**

- **The Learning and Teaching Committee, which has a similar membership, approved this course of action**
- **This change affects a small number of students**
- **This is an interim change which we expect to be addressed in more detail in the very near future.**