

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Thursday 19 September 2024 at 2:00pm
Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House, Central Area / Teams

AGENDA

1.	Welcome and apologies Introduction of Senate Task and Finish Group observers	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 May 2024 	APRC 24/25 1A
3.	3.1 Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convener's communications • Actions log 3.2 Report of Convener's Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Discipline Committee members • Summary of approved concessions 	Verbal Update
4. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
4.1	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2024-2025 For discussion	APRC 24/25 1B
4.2	Doctoral programme length and submission periods For discussion	APRC 24/25 1C CLOSED
BREAK		
4.3	Amendments to policy on University use of email as a method of contacting students To approve	APRC 24/25 1D and 1D Appendix 1
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
5.1	Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24 To note and comment	APRC 24/25 1E
5.2	Committee Administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APRC Membership • APRC Terms of Reference To note Committee Priorities 2024/25: To note	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum Transformation Programme (policy and regulatory arrangements)• Postgraduate research students• Scheduled review of policies• Students with support needs beyond the scope of the Exceptional Circumstances policy	
6.	Any Other Business	
Date of next meeting Thursday 21 November 2024, 2-5pm, Boardroom at Chancellor's Building, BioQuarter / Teams		

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Thursday 23 May 2024 2:00pm
Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House (hybrid meeting)

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

<p>Present: Dr Adam Bunni</p> <p>Professor Jeremy Crang Professor Jamie Davies Lisa Dawson Dr Murray Earle Professor Patrick Hadoke (Convener)</p> <p>Clair Halliday Karen Howie</p> <p>Alexandra Laidlaw Professor Antony Maciocia Callum Paterson</p> <p>Professor Tim Stratford Dr Emily Taylor</p> <p>Professor Stephen Warrington (Vice-Convener) Kirsty Woomble</p> <p>Substitute members: Olivia Eadie on behalf of Donna Murray Valentina Ferlito on behalf of Uzma Tufail-Hanif Patrick Walsh on behalf of Aidan Brown</p> <p>In attendance: Meg Batty Craig Bolan Andrew Horrell Patrick Jack Cristina Matthews</p> <p>Catriona Morley</p> <p>Paul Norris</p> <p>Apologies: Dr Aidan Brown Lucy Evans</p>	<p>Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services Dean of Students (CAHSS) Dean of Taught Education (CMVM) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Elected member of Senate (CAHSS) Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS) Dean of Student Experience (CSE)</p> <p>Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>Co-Director (IAD)</p> <p>Elected member of Senate (CMVM)</p> <p>Elected member of Senate (CSE)</p> <p>Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services Performance Sport Coordinator, Sport and Exercise Senior Lecturer, MHSES Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services APRC administrator and Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Senior Lecturer, SPS (Seconded to Curriculum Transformation Project)</p> <p>Elected member of Senate (CSE) Deputy Secretary, Students</p>
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Carl Harper Dr Donna Murray Dr Deborah Shaw Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif	Vice President Education, Students' Association Head of Taught Student Development (IAD) Dean of Students (CMVM) Elected member of Senate (CMVM)
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1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Convener welcomed members and introduced substitute members. The Convener also welcomed Cat Morley, who will soon join the Committee as a member in the role of Head of Taught Student Administration and Support in CAHSS, and will be observing this meeting.</p> <p>The Convener thanked a number of members for whom this may be the last Committee meeting, for their contributions to the Committee. This included the Students' Association VP Education for 2023/24, a number of representatives from CSE, and Senate representatives, for whom this may also be the last meeting, depending on the outcome of the Senate Standing Committee elections.</p> <p>It was also noted that a number of guests would be joining the meeting in order to present papers.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>To approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 March 2024 <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting from the 21 March 2024 as presented.</p>	APRC 23/24 7A
3.	<p>3.1 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convener's communications <p>Notes of interest for Convener and Vice-Convener: The Convener noted that there had been a call for committee members to submit any notes of interest for the Convener and Vice-Convener roles for next year, and that these would be discussed as part of item 7 on Committee membership.</p> <p>Update from Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC): The Convener shared an update regarding the action for the Committee to request a 'for information' update from SQAC on any impact of the temporary variations to the regulations noted in the output of annual quality assurance monitoring processes, or in SQAC's discussion of degree outcomes for 22/23. The statement from SQAC was as follows:</p> <p><i>A paper on the Degrees Awarded Outcomes analysis was presented to the May meeting of SQAC. It was noted in the paper that, based on the information provided by Schools, there were two cases in one School where students who were in the borderline for classification purposes (i.e. they had a weighted course average of 68.00-69.99%) were awarded a First Class degree, where their full profile was ultimately found to be in</i></p>	Verbal Update

	<p><i>the 2:1 category (based on the rules relating to the award of classification in borderline cases in operation in CAHSS). There were small numbers (between 0 and 13 in any given School) of cases in several Schools involving students whose degree classification was upgraded based on their full profile of results.</i></p> <p><i>Going forward, SQAC requested more granular detail on the awarding gap and the impact on particular cohorts of students, and requested a clearer indication from School data of which mitigations have been applied. It was recognised by SQAC that e.g. extensions and special circumstances will have affected the 2022-23 data but these mitigations are not separated out from MAB mitigations.</i></p> <p>Policies due for review 2023/24: There are two policies that were due for periodic review in 2023/24 but are now expected to come to the Committee next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Study policy (expected for September 2024) • Shared Academic Timetabling policy (the intention is that this will be reviewed as part of a project being proposed by the Student Lifecycle Management Group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions log <p>The Convener noted a number of updates to the actions in the action log.</p> <p>3.2 Report of Convener's Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of approved concessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 individual student concessions approved (7 PGR, 2 UG) - 2 cases of concessions to the criteria for appointing PhD External Examiners - No cohort concessions approved 	
4.	<p>Board of Examiners Handbook for Taught Courses and Programmes To approve</p> <p>This paper was presented by Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.</p> <p>The Handbook was due for periodic review this year. Consultation has been undertaken with Colleges and Schools, and the proposals set out in the paper take into account feedback as part of that consultation.</p> <p>The Committee noted the amendments in the Taught Assessment Regulations (Paper 7C) which relate to the proposed amendments to the Handbook.</p> <p>The main proposed changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To reduce the duplication between the Handbook and the Taught Assessment Regulations; some of the wording is currently slightly different between the two documents so there is potential for confusion; - To reflect aspects of current practice where these are appropriate, e.g. examiners are not appointed by Head of College; - To clarify the roles of office holders in relation to Boards of Examiners; 	APRC 23/24 7B and 7B Appendix 1

	<p>- To review appropriate and efficient size of Boards of Examiners.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that there was no additional conflict of interest presented by Cohort Leads being able to take the role of Convener of a Board of Examiners (4.5). There was discussion regarding whether or not there was a conflict of interest between being a marker and being a Convener. The Committee agreed that, as with Programme Directors and Course Organisers, markers could take the role of Convener as long as formal chairing of the Board was delegated to another member of the Board for discussion of the course where there is a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>Members agreed that where the Handbook mentions the Head of School, it should be clear that the Head of School may delegate specific responsibilities.</p> <p>Members welcomed the addition of 4.22, whereby Board meetings are able to take place asynchronously, given that this sometimes happens in practice. However, members agreed that it should be clarified that asynchronous meetings should be exceptional, rather than routine practice, and that Schools should seek approval from their College if an asynchronous meeting was required. College members noted that approval would not be required for 'mop-up' discussions following a Board meeting, e.g. where a meeting is held asynchronously, following the formal Board meeting, in order to follow up on specific outstanding items.</p> <p>Members noted a number of typos in the numbering, which will be corrected by Academic Services.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding whether the publication of prize winners contravened the principle of anonymity (5.1). The Convener clarified that it would not, given that the publication of prize information would not include specific assessment results.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments, and that minor amendments as noted above could be approved by Convener's action.</p>	
5.	<p>Taught Assessment Regulations 2024/25 To approve</p> <p>This paper was presented by Cristina Matthews, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>The Taught Assessment Regulations are reviewed on an annual basis and the Committee was invited to discuss and approve the proposed amendments. Colleges were requested to consult with their Schools and submit proposals for changes to the regulations. The proposed amendments take this consultation into account.</p> <p>A number of amendments were dependent on the Committee's approval of item 4 (Board of Examiners Handbook), which was now approved.</p> <p>The Convener noted that the amendment to regulation 50 was dependent on Senate's approval to delegate the authority to confer degree awards</p>	<p>APRC 23/24 7C and 7C Appendix 1</p>

	<p>to Boards of Examiners. Senate did not cover this item of business at its meeting on 22 May 2024, so this proposed amendment was withdrawn from consideration at the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to replace the reference to ‘<i>examiners</i>’ with ‘<i>markers</i>’ in regulation 23. <i>Oral assessment</i>.</p> <p>Members had queries and requested amendments, which the Committee agreed to, regarding regulation 27. <i>Resit assessment</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Advice Place noted that there is further detail regarding how resits apply to visa-sponsored students in 27.12, but requested that this also be highlighted nearer to the top of the regulation so that students would not overlook this. - CSE requested further review of regulation 27.5 to clarify that the next available opportunity for resits also applies to visiting students. Academic Services agreed to draft amended wording to reflect this, and the Committee agreed that this could be approved by Convener’s action. - To change “may be awarded the higher mark” to “will be awarded the higher mark” in 27.9 since this should be applied consistently and should not be at the discretion of the Board. <p>Members agreed to add the link to proofreading guidance to 30.3 (in relation to Academic Misconduct).</p> <p>There were several further comments, which the Committee agreed required no amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members discussed whether or not regulation 27.6 would include periods of interruption of study. Members agreed to keep the wording as is, given that this allows Colleges flexibility on how to best manage the concessions required for these cases. - One member noted that in regulation 27.10, it is technically possible that students achieve a classification of ‘fail’ based on their original result, but achieve a classification of ‘pass’ upon their resit result. Members agreed that, although this was possible, the cases are extremely infrequent and sufficiently niche to not include this in the regulations, but that the Committee would consider concessions in these cases. <p>A member noted a reference to ‘<i>special circumstances</i>’ which should be amended to ‘<i>exceptional circumstances</i>’, in line with the new policy.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments, including the minor amendments agreed during the meeting (as above), and that these could be approved by Convener’s action.</p>	
6.	<p>Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2024/25 To approve</p> <p>This paper was presented by Cristina Matthews, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>As with the previous item 5, the amendment to regulation 40 was dependent on Senate’s approval to delegate the authority to confer degree awards to Boards of Examiners. Senate did not cover this item of</p>	<p>APRC 23/24 7D and 7D Appendix 1</p>

	<p>business at its meeting on 22 May 2024, so this proposed amendment was withdrawn from consideration at the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments, with no further amendments.</p>	
7.	<p>Committee membership 2024/25 For information</p> <p>This paper was presented by the Committee Convener.</p> <p>As part of this item, the Convener explained that the Committee would need to approve its Convener and Vice-Convener roles for next year, which is done on an annual basis at the last Committee meeting of the year. Members had been asked in advance whether there were any notes of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One note of interest for Convener role (from Prof Patrick Hadoke, the current Convener) - One note of interest for Vice-Convener role (from Dr Emily Taylor) <p>The Convener asked for confirmation of whether there were any further notes of interest. Members present noted there were no further notes of interest.</p> <p>For discussion of the role of Convener, Prof Hadoke left the room. Prof Warrington, as Vice-Convener, chaired this part of the meeting. The Committee discussed and approved that Prof Hadoke continue in the role of Convener for the next academic year 2024/25.</p> <p>The current Vice-Convener, Prof Warrington, confirmed that he would be stepping down from his role as Dean of Student Experience in CSE later in 2024, and would thereafter not continue as a member on the Committee. The Convener thanked Prof Warrington for fulfilling the role of Vice-Convener for 2023/24. For discussion of the role of Vice-Convener, Dr Taylor left the room. The Committee discussed and approved that Dr Taylor take the role of Vice-Convener for the next academic year 2024/25.</p> <p>The Convener confirmed that the elections for the Senate representatives at the Senate Standing Committees for 2024/25 was still to take place. Current Senate representatives were advised that, if they would like to continue to represent Senate at the Committee, they should present their nomination to these elections. Senate representatives for this Committee for 2024/25 would therefore be confirmed once the outcome of the elections for members of the Senate Standing Committees had been confirmed.</p> <p>The Convener also noted that the Standing Committees membership paper was due to go to Senate for approval at its meeting yesterday (22 May 2024), but that the meeting did not cover this item of the agenda.</p> <p>The Convener also noted that there would be further changes to the membership, with a number of ex-officio members who had either finished their term of office, or would be leaving their current roles in the</p>	APRC 23/24 7E

	<p>next academic year, and new members who would be taking on these roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dylan Walch will become a new member of the Committee from June 2024 as the new Students' Association VP Education, a role currently held by Carl Harper. - Catriona Morley (in attendance at this meeting) will formally become a new member of the Committee once she commences in the role of Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS), previously held by Rachael Quirk. - All four ex-officio CSE members would be demitting from, or moving to new roles within the University over the course of 2024/25, with their replacements to be confirmed in due course. 	
8.	<p>Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review For comment</p> <p>This paper was presented by the Committee Convener.</p> <p>Senate Standing Committee members will be invited by the Committee Administrator to respond to an online survey regarding the Committee's effectiveness, in line with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance during Summer 2024. The number of survey questions has been reduced since last year, and these were provided in Appendix 1 to the paper.</p> <p>The Convener noted that the main issue to highlight was the low response rate the survey had received in previous years, and encouraged all members to complete this. Members who are not to continue on the Committee for 2024/25 should still complete the survey, given that it is a reflection on the Committee's effectiveness over the past year.</p> <p>There were no comments from members on this item.</p>	APRC 23/24 7F
9.	<p>Curriculum Transformation: Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes For comment</p> <p>Secondee to the Curriculum Transformation Project, Paul Norris, presented this paper.</p> <p>This paper was presented to the Committee for comment, as a follow up to discussions held at Senate at its meeting on 22 May 2024. The paper specifically highlights policy issues in relation to the PGT aspects of the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP), which will be presented to the Committee for consideration in due course. The paper also includes a proposed timeline for implementation, and it is anticipated that the work will be undertaken during 2024/25.</p> <p>The presenter noted that Senate will have final approval of any approvals made by APRC in relation to CTP proposals.</p> <p>The key issues the Committee discussed were:</p> <p>Progression points</p>	APRC 23/24 7G

The presenter noted that the range of current practices relating to progression means there is a lack of consistency across the University regarding the criteria and purpose of progression points. The range of practices includes Masters programmes that have progression points for a range of routes, e.g. taught-only or dissertation, as well as programmes with elevated hurdles. The presenter noted initial discussions at a workshop with SQAC members, who had suggested that there may be different approaches to progression for different archetypes. SQAC members at the workshop had also suggested that it would be desirable to review practices with elevated hurdles for progression, particularly given that these decisions are approved by Boards of Studies without any guidance, and there is now a lack of consistency across Schools.

The Committee noted that some Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) stipulate elevated hurdles for progression, and agreed that these will need to be accommodated within the new framework.

A member from CAHSS noted that they have had initial discussions with their Schools about removing progression points. Most staff seemed open to this in principle, although some staff still consider that dissertations are at a higher level than taught courses, even though they are at the same SCQF level. The presenter noted the argument that some programme outcomes can only be covered in the dissertation, even if it is accepted that they are at the same level, and that these programmes would be able to retain the dissertation as a compulsory element within the new archetypes.

A member noted that the data obtained following the marking and assessment boycott showed that students who were allowed to progress (in the absence of the standard amount of data required for progression decisions) did not then fail, and that other students did, i.e., that progression criteria were not a useful predictor of student performance in the dissertation.

The presenter explained that there would be consultation with Colleges and Schools on this over summer 2024, and that the expectation was to return to the Committee with proposals in early 2024/25. It was likely that proposals would include a set of options for progression.

A member requested that the CTP team include staff who work with Postgraduate Research students as part of any consultations, and that the CTP team be alert to the needs of Postgraduate Research students who take PGT courses as part of their PhD programmes, as well as MSc by Research programmes, and where these would fit into the CTP models.

PGT models and archetypes

The presenter noted that the majority of existing programmes will fit into the proposed archetypes and that there would be no additional approval required for these. There was clarification regarding the mechanisms for identifying programmes that do not fit into the archetypes, and confirmation that there will be multiple routes for checking this, e.g., via Programme Directors and also via Deans and Colleges.

A member from CMVM noted that their College consider the proposed PGT framework will be a helpful simplification of the approval mechanisms, and that it will enable staff to make changes to programmes, and set up new programmes, in more efficient ways.

A member noted some concerns regarding the option for stackable programmes that are research-based/experience-based (Model E), given that assessment of these could be very difficult, and that it would be helpful to have more clarity on these. The presenter agreed that there may be aspects of this model that need further review, given that Model E is one of the new models. It was confirmed that there would be no requirement for every programme to offer every option, i.e. not all programmes would need to offer stackable models. The presenter also noted that it would be useful for the Committee to consider how it would like to review these sorts of amendments in future.

A member noted the comments at the Senate meeting on 22 May 2024 regarding whether or not the framework is transformative, and what the archetypes would do that was not done already. Members noted that the proposed framework would standardise approaches currently approved by exception, which would enable staff to set up, and modify, more innovative programmes without needing to seek concessions to regulations from APRC. This would in turn reduce the workload for Programme Directors and administrators in Schools, as well as Board of Studies and College committees.

Degree-specific regulations

The presenter noted that many of the degree-specific regulations had been included in the general degree regulations many years ago, and that some of these no longer applied, some of them were no longer exemptions from the standard regulations, and some would be covered within the new CTP archetypes. The presenter proposed that CTP could be an opportunity to remove these degree-specific regulations, and that these would be better placed in programme handbooks.

Members supported the proposal to remove the degree-specific regulations, given that many are out of date and also that there are exemptions agreed at the Committee which are not included in the regulations, so the current approach to these is inconsistent.

Study period table

The presenter noted that the Study Period Table would need to be adapted for the new degree models, and that this would come to the Committee for discussion and/or approval.

Maximum duration of PGT degrees

The presenter noted that there is currently no maximum period stated in the regulations for PGT degrees, as there is for UG degrees. Given the proposal to include stackable models of degrees, this is a discussion that will need to take place.

Regarding point 15 of paper 7G, the Committee agreed that simple changes to terminology could be approved by Convener's Action, but that any more substantial changes to policy should come to the full Committee.

10.	<p>Performance Sport Policy To approve</p> <p>Craig Bolan, Performance Sport Coordinator at Sports and Exercise, and Andrew Horrell, Senior Lecturer at Moray House, presented this paper.</p> <p>The proposed amendments follow the periodic review of this policy, which has not had a significant review since it was introduced in 2015. The policy review has been led by colleagues in Sport and Exercise and Moray House with support from Academic Services.</p> <p>Amongst our students we have athletes who are at the highest level, and the requirements of these athletes are increasingly demanding. The proposed amendments aim to clarify the eligibility criteria and also to provide more flexibility for adjustments without impacting on students' ability to complete their degree.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the options for adjustments and agreed that it was critical that academic standards were maintained. Some members noted that it can be difficult to know how far to go with the adjustments without there being more detail in the policy, and that Schools may therefore take different approaches. Overall, members agreed that the proposed wording was appropriate but also agreed to include a sentence to note that where Schools were unsure about the approach to take, they should consult with their College.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed that in order to enable students to take part in elite sports it is reasonable that there should be a higher tolerance of risk to students' academic progress associated with this policy than with other policies. Student athletes are aware of these risks, and as staff we need to help students understand and manage those risks.</p> <p>There was discussion about how this policy interacts with other policies, e.g. interruptions of study, maximum periods of study, etc. The Convener confirmed that very few concessions to policies and regulations reviewed by this Committee relate to performance sport.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments, including the minor amendment agreed during the meeting (as above).</p>	APRC 23/24 7H and 7H Appendix 1
11.	<p>Academic misconduct investigation procedures To approve</p> <p>Meg Batty, Academic Policy Officer, presented this paper.</p> <p>This policy was not due for periodic review; however, the amendments proposed are in response to feedback from teams across the University, e.g., the appeals team, College Academic Misconduct Officers (CAMOs), School Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOs), and the Students' Association Advice Place.</p> <p>The key amendments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification of how affirmation meetings fit in to the procedures - Addition of penalty options for pass/fail courses, which were not previously included 	APRC 23/24 7I and 7I Appendix 1

- Addition of information regarding requirements for reporting academic misconduct investigations to students in receipt of UKRI funding
- Formatting and clarifications

Affirmation meetings

The Committee discussed the addition of affirmation meetings in 2.2. The paper's author confirmed that the inclusion of affirmation meetings is to ensure that these take place separately, and not as part of the academic misconduct procedures, and that students should have the opportunity to respond to an allegation of academic misconduct in addition to any affirmation meetings, if these have taken place.

Members agreed that describing the affirmation meeting as a 'precursor' of an investigation could be misleading given that there may be no follow-up investigation, and could also be misinterpreted as being a new compulsory step prior to screening. The Committee agreed to remove section 2.2 and instead clarify in sections 4.1 and 5 that students must be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegations, regardless of any prior interventions or meetings.

Reporting of academic misconduct to UKRI

Members noted that there was potential for confusion regarding whether research misconduct or academic misconduct should apply, particularly for PhD students, and noted that the Doctoral College would likely review the guidance on research misconduct.

A member queried whether the reporting of academic misconduct in these cases was in line with GDPR regulations. The paper author confirmed that it was, and advice from Legal Services was that, given that this is a requirement within the UKRI Terms and Conditions, the University and students in receipt of their funding would be bound by these Terms and Conditions.

'Breach' vs 'offence'

A member representing the Students' Association Advice Place noted the replacement of the term 'breach' with 'offence', reversing the change made in previous years. The Advice Place were concerned about reintroducing the term 'offence', and noted that removing this had resulted in fewer students thinking that they needed a lawyer. The paper author explained that staff had correctly pointed out that the phrase 'breach of the procedures' did not make sense. The Committee agreed to replace references to 'offence', either with 'academic misconduct investigation', or by rewording the sentence simply to remove the word.

The Committee agreed to add a link in section 1.1 to the Guidance on the appropriate use of AI, and also to remove some of the double negatives between sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6.

The Committee agreed to **approve** the proposed amendments, including the minor amendments agreed during the meeting (as above), and that these could be approved by Convener's action.

12.	<p>Programme and Course Handbooks policy To approve</p> <p>Patrick Jack, Academic Policy Officer, presented this paper.</p> <p>The proposed amendments are a result of a policy review conducted within Academic Services in consultation with key stakeholders. The number of amendments is small, mainly to ensure that the information and links provided are up to date, and there none of the amendments are substantive changes.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for the policy to clarify that course and programme handbooks may contain degree-specific regulations.</p> <p>There was also discussion about the requirement for degree-specific progression requirements to be publicly available, and how this interacts with the option to hold copies of course and programme handbooks on webpages that are not publicly accessible (e.g. wikis or Virtual Learning Environments). The Committee agreed it would be helpful for the policy to clarify that these requirements must also be available publicly (for example, on the Degree Programme Table) if the course and programme handbooks were not publicly available.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments, and to incorporate the minor amendments as noted above could be approved by Convener's action.</p>	APRC 23/24 7J and 7J Appendix 1
13.	<p>Exceptional Circumstances policy communications plan To note</p> <p>Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar, presented this paper.</p> <p>A member representing the Students' Association Advice Place noted that the plan included lots of communications at the start of semester, but that these might need to be repeated around assessment/exam times. The Advice Place also asked whether it was possible to have early sight of emails before these were sent to students.</p> <p>Members also noted that there should be central oversight of communications sent out by Schools, and that key contacts at Graduate Schools should be included in order to ensure there is an awareness that the policy will apply to PGR students taking taught courses.</p>	APRC 23/24 7K
14.	<p>Pass/fail arrangements for HCA year abroad courses To approve</p> <p>Emily Taylor, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS), presented this paper on behalf of the College.</p> <p>This paper requests approval for a concession to Taught Assessment Regulation 35.3, which states that "courses with pass/fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption." The request follows similar requests approved by APRC</p>	APRC 23/24 7L

	<p>previously for courses within the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (LLC). The paper has already been approved by the School's Board of Studies and by the College.</p> <p>The Committee approved the concession.</p>	
15.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Academic Registrar provided the Committee with the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch that Gap project: Meetings to take place next week to agree how to operationalise the recommendations from the project. - Senate Task & Finish (T&F) Group: The T&F Group had agreed that members of the T&F Group may observe meetings of Senate Standing Committee. The Committee agreed to support this. 	
<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 19 September 2024, 2-5pm, at Charles Stewart House, Cuillin Room (central area) (hybrid meeting)</p>		

DRAFT

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

19 September 2024

Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2024/25

Description of paper

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

1. This paper notes the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team for 2024-25.

Fit with remit

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee	Y/N
Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities.	Y
Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information and discussion.

Background and context

3. Each year a report is presented to the Senate standing committees on the priorities of the student representatives for the coming year.

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications:

5. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have resource implications. These will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Risk management:

6. The risk of any action arising from the ideas discussed in the paper will be assessed if specific action is proposed.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals:

7. This paper does not itself directly impact the SDGs or Climate Emergency, but this will be considered when specific actions are proposed or progressed.

Equality & diversity:

8. The ideas discussed in the paper aim to encourage and support equality, diversity, and inclusion. The equality impact of any specific actions arising from the paper will be assessed once the actions are proposed.

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

9. This will be agreed if specific actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper are identified.

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Presenter

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Freedom of Information *Open*

Priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education for 2024-25:

- Advocate for transparency and accountability in University decision-making, giving students the power to shape their experience. This includes work around informed decision making for students, allowing them to make properly informed course choices and learning support conversations, and empowering student representatives with data so they can be more effective.
- Enhance students' experience of interacting with the University, by streamlining key processes and setting high standards of service delivery. This includes making student support services easier to identify and navigate, exploring improvements to PATH to make course choice easier, and assuring the quality of lecture recordings.
- Empower student leaders to create positive change within Schools, with strong governance, ensuring staff engage meaningfully with student feedback. This includes exploring pay and reward for student representatives, and ensuring they are key components of the feedback loop.

Shared priorities of the Sabbatical Officer team for 2024-25:

- Build a University for all, that centres student communities who have historically been marginalised, from international and Widening Participation students, to trans and Black and Minority Ethnic students.
- Make students' lives easier, ensuring they have what they need to thrive academically and personally, from affordable housing, transport, and food to accessible support services and academic processes.
- Lobby for institutional reform, whilst empowering students to create positive change, in accessible ways, on the issues that matter to them, from racial justice to the climate crisis.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

19 September 2024

Proposed amendments to the policy on the University use of email as a method of contacting students

Description of paper

1. This paper proposed minor amendments to the policy on the University use of email as a method of contacting students.

Fit with remit

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee	Y/N
Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.	Y
Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the policy on the University use of email as a method of contacting students included in Appendix 1.

Background and context

3. A section of the policy is now out of date, as it describes a practice of forwarding email correspondence which the University no longer enables. Although the policy is not due for review until 2026/27, it would be helpful to amend this sooner so that we do not have a policy which encourages a practice which is no longer allowed.

Discussion

4. The proposed amendments clarify that forwarding emails to external email addresses is disabled in order to protect information security. The amendments also describe a number of options permitted as described on the Information Services website, i.e., students may add their University email address to their own email client(s), or they may apply to Information Services for an exemption which enables a forwarding rule.
5. Other minor changes to terminology have also been updated throughout the policy.

Resource implications

6. The proposed amendments do not entail any resource implications, given that they reflect what is already in practice.

Risk management

7. There is a risk that this policy remains out of date with current practice if the amendments were not to be approved.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

8. The proposals within this paper have no impact on the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals, given that they reflect what is already in practice.

Equality & diversity

9. The proposed amendments do not raise any equality and diversity concerns. Difficulties in using email due to disability have been considered, and the policy directs students in this situation to contact the Disability and Learning Support Service for advice and guidance regarding technology that will assist with access to email.

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

10. Should the Committee approve the amendments, the policy will be updated and published for use with immediate effect. The policy update will be included in the list of updated policies for 2024/25.

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Freedom of Information Open



University use of email as a method of contacting students

Purpose of Policy

The policy makes clear that email is an official method of communication to students and sets out their related responsibilities.

Overview

Students are given a University of Edinburgh email account and address when they join the University, which is used for important information. Students must access and manage this account regularly.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to all students and staff. It is overseen by the [Academic Policy and Regulations Committee](#) ~~Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~ as part of the regulatory framework.

Contact Officer

[Academic Registry Services](#)

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Document control

Dates	Approved: 2005/06 XXXXXX	Starts: 2005/06	Equality impact assessment: 3.9.14	Amendments: 16.12.21 XXXXXX	Next Review: 2026/2027
Approving authority	Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)				
Consultation undertaken	Student Administration, Registry Services, Student Disability and Learning Support Service, Student Systems and GSPCAPRC				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Registry Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Degree regulations and programmes of study (DRPS)				
UK Quality Code	N/A				
Policies superseded by this policy	This policy replaces the version reviewed in 2008.				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Student email, forwarding email, email official communication				



University use of email as a method of contacting students

1. When a student joins the University they are given a University of Edinburgh email account and address. This University of Edinburgh email account is used by the University for a variety of essential communications with students. ~~For example, the University uses this email account to send individuals vital information from time to time~~ on matters such as exam arrangements or library-related alerts.
2. Students must therefore access and manage this account regularly, as it is assumed that students have ~~opened read~~ and acted on these communications where necessary. Failure by students to do so will not be considered an acceptable ~~excuse reason~~ for student actions or inactions, or as a ground for appeal.
- ~~3. If a student already has a web-based email account, and thinks that they are unlikely to check his or her University of Edinburgh email account, it is that student's responsibility to set up an auto-forward on the UoE account to ensure that all official University communications are received. Check the help information for the email provider for guidance on doing this. Automatic forwarding of emails to external email addresses is disabled to protect information security, and only internal forwarding is allowed. However students may be able to add their University email account to their own email client(s).~~
4. Students who wish to forward emails to an external email address will need to apply to Information Services for an exemption.
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/email>
- ~~3-5.~~ _____ If a student has a disability which makes it more difficult to use email as a method of communication then ~~he / she~~they should contact the ~~Student~~ Disability and Learning Support Service for advice and guidance regarding types of technology that will assist with access to email.
~~<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service>~~<https://disability-learning-support-service.ed.ac.uk/>

~~16 December 2021~~ 19 September 2024

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**19 September 2024****Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24****Description of paper**

1. This paper provides the Committee with the results, analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the Committee's annual internal effectiveness survey, conducted in summer 2024.

Fit with remit

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee	Y/N
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note the analysis of feedback received and comment on the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1, which is intended to aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance.

Background and context

3. The University is required under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out an annual internal review of Senate and its Committees which carry delegated responsibilities.
4. In summer 2024, the Committee administrator issued a short survey to members of the Committee and their responses were collated.

Discussion

5. The survey responses received from members, an analysis of these responses, and proposed actions can be found in Appendix 1.
6. Proposed actions for the Committee, in response to the feedback from members, are intended to be proportionate to the scope of an annual effectiveness review, and the volume of feedback received.
7. Senate will receive the analysis of responses and proposed actions for each Standing Committee at its meeting in October.

Resource implications

8. The resource implications of the proposed actions will be considered within Registry Services alongside other Departmental work for 2024/25. Actions will be prioritised and taken forward in line with available resources and in consultation with Senate Standing Committee Conveners. An update on progress with suggested actions will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Risk management

9. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity

10. The review provides an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity issues in the composition of Senate Standing Committees, and the way they conduct their business.

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

11. As detailed in paragraphs 8 and 9 above.

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APPENDIX 1: Report of Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

The Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee had 24 members for the academic year 2023/24. 13 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire, equating to a 54% response rate. This is a small drop in response rate compared with 2022/23 when there were 13 responses from 22 members equating to a 59% response rate.

Survey responses

- **Composition of the Committee**

1. The composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit

● Strongly agree	5
● Agree	8
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively

● Strongly agree	6
● Agree	5
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



Additional comments received in relation to the Composition of the Committee:

- Three respondents commented positively on the balance of professional services staff, academic staff and student members
- Three respondents noted the importance of members having appropriate expertise; one respondent noted it was helpful to have members whose work focussed on the interpretation and implementation of regulations and policies
- Two respondents noted that the Committee is large, with one respondent commenting that it was maybe larger than it needed to be

• **Support and facilitation of Committee meetings**

4. The information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee

● Strongly agree	8
● Agree	5
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



5. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services

● Strongly agree	11
● Agree	1
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



6. For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined the Committee

● Strongly agree	1
● Agree	1
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	1



Additional comments received in relation to the support and facilitation of Committee meetings:

- Three respondents commented positively on the support and advice provided by Registry Services, with one respondent noting that meeting minutes are accurate
- Two respondents noted that Committee papers contain the necessary detail and complexity, with one respondent noting that this can make the papers quite onerous
- One respondent, who joined mid-way through the academic year, noted that they had not received an induction to the Committee

- **Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and Committee remits**

8. The Committee's remit is clear

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	4
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



9. The scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	3
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



10. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee

● Strongly agree	8
● Agree	5
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



11. I am able to engage effectively with and contribute to the work of the Committee

● Strongly agree	8
● Agree	5
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



Additional comments received in relation to the engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and Committee remits:

- One respondent commented that the Committee runs in an atmosphere that encourages discussion and contributions from all members
- One respondent noted the importance of members recognising that they are functioning parts of the Committee and take collective responsibility for any decisions reached
- One respondent noted that it might be helpful to clarify the role of College representatives vs Senate representatives in terms of formal consultation with constituents, as there was sometimes confusion about which members were representing the views of the College
- One respondent noted that due to the size of the Committee and the fact that the remit includes both taught and research programmes, not all papers were relevant to all members

• **Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee’s work**

13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

● Strongly agree	7
● Agree	5
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



14. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	3
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



15. Equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee

● Strongly agree	5
● Agree	4
● Neutral	3
● Disagree	1
● Strongly disagree	0



Additional comments on how the work of the Committee can represent the views and needs of our diverse University community to inform decision-making:

- Two respondents commented that equality and diversity had become a more prominent focus of the Committee’s work, with one respondent noting that this could be extended further
- Two respondents noted that the inclusion of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) presented alongside policy proposals had made equality and diversity considerations more visible; however, another respondent noted that EqIAs were not obviously part of the development of proposals
- Two respondents noted that it would be challenging to attempt to diversify membership, with one respondent expressing concerns of maintaining relevant expertise and another respondent expressing concerns about tokenism, given that there cannot be representatives of all groups, and that these considerations should be built into the work of the Committee
- One respondent commented that members carefully consider how decisions would affect the diversity of student and staff populations, and that it is particularly helpful in this to have student representatives who can represent the student voice
- One respondent commented that there were no practical ways to improve equality and diversity considerations beyond the current paper format
- One respondent noted that the positive impact of the Committee is possibly largely unseen

17. The work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University

● Strong agree	1
● Agree	8
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	3
● Strongly disagree	0



Additional comments received in relation to the impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committee’s work:

- Four respondents noted the challenges of communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University, with two respondents noting that the challenges of dissemination and engagement of all staff members remain despite communications being shared
- Two respondents noted that effective communication was an issue for areas across the whole University
- One respondent proposed that Schools could improve communications to staff regarding the work of Senate Standing Committees in order to avoid selective and often simplistic explanations
- One respondent noted that it is hard to know how the wider University views or uses the work which is done at the Committee
- One respondent commented on the need to improve communication with Senate to ensure that the relationship between Senate and the Committee remains constructive.

Good practice

Based on the responses to the survey presented above, the following areas are consistently highlighted as areas where there is good practice:

- **Composition and remit:** All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit, that the Committee's remit is clear, and that they are clear on their roles and responsibilities as a member of the Committee
- **Committee support:** All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services
- **Impact and strategic relevance:** 12 out of 13 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of the Committee makes a positive impact and that the work of the Committee links to the University's strategic priorities

Areas for development

In addition to the response rate, two themes were identified within the feedback as areas where the Committee could seek to focus enhancement:

- **Survey response rate:** The low response rate to the survey over the past two years (54%-59%) makes it difficult to ensure that the results are sufficiently representative of members' views and that the proposed actions reliably reflect members' priorities for improving the internal effectiveness of the Committee. We will therefore aim to improve response rates for next year's survey (see proposed action 2).
- **Equality, diversity and EqIAs:** Whilst most respondents (9 out of 13) agreed or strongly agreed that equality and diversity are appropriately considered by the work of the Committee, three respondents were neutral and one disagreed with this statement. Proposed actions 1 and 3 relate to this area for improvement.
- **Communicating the work of the Committee:** The question with most negative or neutral responses (4 out of 13) was in relation to whether the work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University. Effective communication was identified as a challenge by almost half of the respondents, either specifically regarding the work of the Committee, or regarding the broader challenges of communications across the University. There were mixed responses regarding whether or not the Committee could take further action which would result in improvements to communications. Suggestions included the following areas for improvement, although the mechanism by which to implement these would need to be determined:
 - Improving dissemination of the work of the Committee at School level
 - Improving communications between the Committee and Senate
 - Feeding back to the Committee regarding the impact of its work
 - Consulting with staff and students outside of the Committee regarding the impact of its work

Proposed actions 4 and 5 relate to this area for improvement.

Proposed actions for APRC:

1. The Committee will consider ways of further highlighting equality and diversity issues in relation to policies and regulations, with particular focus on issues arising from Equality Impact Assessments.

Proposed actions for all Senate Standing Committees:

2. In order to enhance the response rate to the survey, Registry Services propose to allocate time during the last Committee meeting of the academic year to provide members the opportunity to complete the internal effectiveness review survey. This action will be implemented across all three Senate Standing Committees.

3. Committee members to discuss how the work of the Committee can be communicated effectively to the wider University.
4. Registry Services will update the paper template for Senate Standing Committees, listing the remits of each Committee and requesting authors highlight where their paper aligns.