

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**Thursday 23 January 2025 at 2:00pm****Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House / Teams****AGENDA**

1.	Welcome and apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 November 2024 	APRC 24/25 3A
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"> • Summary of approved concessions 	Verbal Update
4. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
4.1	Updates to the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy To approve	APRC 24/25 3B
4.2	Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy To approve	APRC 24/25 3C
BREAK (as required)		
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
5.1	Committee Priorities – Mid-Year Reflection To note and comment	APRC 24/25 3D
6.	Any Other Business	
Date of next meeting Thursday 20 March 2025, 2-5pm, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House, Central Area / Teams		

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Thursday 21 November 2024 at 2:00pm
Boardroom, Chancellor's Building, BioQuarter / Teams

DRAFT MINUTES

<p>Present: Professor Gill Aitken Dr Adam Bunni</p> <p>Professor Jeremy Crang Lisa Dawson Dr Murray Earle Lucy Evans Amanda Fegan</p> <p>Dr Valentina Ferlito Professor Mohini Gray Professor Patrick Hadoke (Convener)</p> <p>Clair Halliday Professor Linda Kirstein Isabel Lavers Cristina Matthews (Secretary) Katy McPhail Catriona Morley</p> <p>Dr Donna Murray Callum Paterson</p> <p>Dr Emily Taylor (Vice-Convener)</p> <p>Dylan Walch Professor Stephen Warrington Kirsty Woomble</p> <p>Substitute members: Dr Patrick Walsh on behalf of Dr Matt Bell Neil McCormick on behalf of Karen Howie</p> <p>In attendance: Dr Paul Norris</p> <p>Apologies: Dr Matt Bell Karen Howie</p>	<p>Dean of Education (CMVM) Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Registry Services</p> <p>Dean of Students (CAHSS) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Senate representative (CAHSS) Deputy Secretary, Students Head of Postgraduate Research Student Administration (CSE)</p> <p>Senate representative (CMVM) Dean of Students and Alumni (CMVM) Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Dean of Education (CSE) Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Academic Policy Officer, Registry Services Deputy Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Head of Taught Student Development (IAD) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS) Vice President Education, Students' Association Dean of Student Experience (CSE) Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>Senate representative (CSE)</p> <p>Educational Technology Policy Officer, Information Services</p> <p>Secondee to Curriculum Transformation Programme</p> <p>Senate representative (CSE) Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services</p>
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1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted the substitute members present. The Convener also introduced Dr Paul Norris, in attendance.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting (Paper 2A)</p> <p>To approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 September 2024 <p>There was one amendment to the minutes regarding the title of one of the Committee members. No other comments had been received.</p> <p>The Committee approved the minutes with the minor amendment.</p>
3.	<p>3.1 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convener's communications <p>Updated agenda: The Convener noted that the agenda had been updated to remove paper 2C, at the request of the paper authors. The Deputy Secretary, Students, explained that this was an important policy due for review this year, and that feedback from the Colleges indicated that further review was needed prior to the policy coming to the Committee for approval, hence its removal from the agenda. Further consultation will therefore be undertaken before the policy comes to the Committee for approval, and input to this from members would be welcome.</p> <p>Survey on Committee induction for new members: The Convener thanked members who had completed the survey regarding the Committee induction for new members provided in September. The feedback was very positive, and included constructive comments which will help shape how inductions to the Senate Standing Committees are delivered in future years.</p> <p>Update from Senate Task and Finish Group: The Convener attended the October meeting of the Senate Task and Finish Group, which discussed feedback from the Senate External Review on the Senate Standing Committees. The feedback from the Senate External Review was that the Standing Committees work well, particularly APRC and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and this was consistent with the internal effectiveness feedback received from the Committees. There was also discussion regarding better representation of research activities and Postgraduate Research (PGR) students at Senate level.</p> <p>Co-opted member: The Convener asked members to consider including a co-opted member from the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) in the Committee membership, given that there is currently a vacant position for a co-opted member, and that input from DLSS on policy reviews and updates would be helpful. Members agreed with the proposal.</p> <p>Action: The Convener will ask DLSS whether they would like to nominate a member of their team to join the Committee as a co-opted member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions log <p>The Convener reported updates on the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and update APRC concession forms: The APRC concessions form has been updated to include more information regarding the concession request, particularly for

concession requests which relate to an Interruption or an Extension of Study. The form will be circulated to Colleges after this meeting.

- **Provide an update to the Committee regarding any progress on University-wide PhD archetypes:** an initial review of the PhD provision across the University has indicated that the provision is extremely varied, and that this presents challenges for applying our policies and regulations consistently. Colleagues have noted that, as well as the challenges that arise in delivering these programmes, the heterogeneity of the offering is also having an impact on students' experience. The Convener noted that this mapping exercise is not formally part of the Curriculum Transformation Project, but that it may make use of some of the same language, e.g. archetypes, for consistency. If there were to be any formal outputs of this mapping exercise in the form of PhD archetypes, these would need to be reviewed through the Senate Education Committee and Senate.

Members provided comments on this update:

- An acknowledgement that part of the diversity in the PhD provision stems from the diversity in the requirements of funding bodies, which Colleges have responded to by creating bespoke PhD programmes to fit these requirements. The Convener agreed that this was part of the reason for the diversity of the provision, and that it was therefore important to have a suitable range of models, or archetypes, in which to fit new programmes, rather than be dictated to by funders and local areas developing bespoke models.
- There are risks attached to having taught doctoral programmes, given that they are subject to different sets of regulations which apply to taught and research degrees, as well as risks to the student experience.

3.2 Report of Convener's Action

- Summary of approved concessions

Since the last meeting September 2024:

Number of individual student concessions approved: 21 (8 PGR, 7 UG, 6 PGT)

Number of cohort concessions approved: 0

The most common reasons for the concession requests (10 out of 21) were for interruptions or extensions of study, with a smaller number of requests for exemptions to assessment regulations, e.g. resit assessments, degree-specific regulations, aegrotat awards.

4.1 Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes (Paper 2B)

To discuss and comment on proposals

The paper was presented by Dr Paul Norris, secondee to Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP).

The paper provides an update on work undertaken on the CTP Postgraduate Taught Framework (PGT) since this was last discussed by the Committee at its meeting in May 2024. The author noted three significant updates:

1. Previously, it was estimated that 20% of our PGT programmes would not map to the proposed archetypes without modification; further work now suggests that this is closer to 10-15%.
2. The full business case for the PGT Framework has now been approved by the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB). The business case includes support from Academic Quality and Standards to help with this work.

3. The current timelines continue to propose that the majority of PGT degrees would conform to the new framework for students beginning their studies in autumn 2026, with several stop/go decision points identified to check that the University is in a position to support any switchover. Plans for programmes would need to be finalised in summer 2025, in time to be advertised for a September 2026 start. The author would welcome feedback on these, including whether or not there is enough time for the consultation.

The paper invites members of the Committee to comment on a range of issues currently under consideration (in bold text), before these are sent out for wider consultation.

Degree-specific regulations contained within the Postgraduate Degree Regulations

The Committee agreed that, although the degree-specific regulations were significantly out of date, removing them entirely would present significant risks in relation to the governance, approval and implementation of these processes. The Committee agreed to support the proposals on this issue (sections 13-14):

- CTP team and Academic Quality and Standards to undertake further work to establish if Programme Specific Regulations can be recorded within a DPT, or if a separate central resource would be more appropriate.
- CTP and Colleges to review current opt-outs in individual programmes, determine if new PGT archetypes can address these issues without opt-outs, and assess how opt-outs are communicated to students. The findings would be presented to the Committee in Semester 2 of Academic Year 24/25 to consider changes to the Degree Regulations for Academic Year 25/26.

Members noted the following considerations:

- Wherever the information is published, it must be accessible to all staff and students, and not in School resources which are not publicly accessible
- To consider having a requirement for Programme Handbooks to link to the DPT/location of the published information as the final golden copy

One member also noted that, as we move towards implementing the new archetypes, the current DPT system may not be able to support this. The paper author agreed to raise this with the CTP Curriculum Management Group, given that it relates to systems.

Study period

The Committee agreed to support the proposal for the 2-year (240 credit) MSc model to be treated as a 2-year programme for the purposes of establishing appropriate levels of extensions and authorised interruption of studies (section 18).

The paper author proposed to follow up with members who discussed examples of similar programmes in their areas.

Stackable degree structure

The Committee had a wide-ranging discussion of the stackable degree model, which included the following points:

- To consider the experiences of areas which have been offering this type of model for years (e.g. CMVM online PGT programmes), by making use of PG Degree Regulation 60 Application for Associated Postgraduate Diploma or Masters
- To consider the different implications of the model for online vs campus-based programmes, e.g. different tuition fee models
- Members had general concerns about the potential for this degree model to have a huge uptake in programmes and student numbers before the necessary infrastructure is in place:
 - o Current systems for supporting the existing stackable model involve a lot of manual processes which would not scale up easily, so the scale of any pilot programmes would need careful consideration

- Communication regarding annual fee increases would need to be very clear to students from the start
- There was also a general concern that setting up new PGCert and PGDip programmes on a mass scale would lead to a proliferation of new degrees, rather than simplifying the current offering, which is one of the aims of CTP
- Consideration should also be given regarding whether some of these options (e.g. part-time or intermittent study) should be applied to UG programme archetypes

The Committee agreed to support the proposal for the CTP team to work with interested Schools and Colleges, and to hear more about the CMVM experience of delivering this model, in order to consider whether it would be sensible to develop a pilot of this model within the existing regulations. If there was agreement to go ahead with a pilot, careful consideration should be given as to the scale of this and which programmes to include.

Regulations on postgraduate progression and award

The implementation of the proposed PGT degree archetypes will likely require some amendments to the regulations on progression and awarding decisions. This would also reduce the need for APRC to explicitly approve exemptions to progression or awarding regulations for degrees that do not follow the standard MSc model.

A member queried why it was necessary to amend these regulations. The paper author confirmed that the additional options are required in order to be implemented for non-standard MSc programmes, because the current regulations are based on a standard MSc comprising 120 credits of taught courses + 60 credits for a dissertation.

The Committee agreed with the proposal to consult more widely on the development of a 'menu' of possible progression and awarding rules for each PGT archetype. Programmes would then be invited to use whichever of those rules they saw as most appropriate for their academic needs. This approach should avoid the proliferation of bespoke regulations across the University. The Committee favoured this approach over the proposal to develop more streamlined general awarding rules (sections 35-37).

Award of credit on aggregate

The Committee discussed options for the maximum allowance of credit on aggregate on a Masters programme. Some members noted that 40 credits on aggregate would be in proportion to allowances for UG students. Other members were more supportive of allowing 60 credits on aggregate due of the lack of resit options for PG programmes; however, there were also concerns about allowing credit on aggregate for a third of the credits needed for a Masters degree.

Members noted that for fully-taught programmes, students would not have an equivalent opportunity to resubmit for 60 credits of the programme, as compared with students on programmes with a 60-credit dissertation. As such, while members supported on balance setting a maximum for credit on aggregate at 40 credits, they agreed that the potential for resits/resubmission as a method for redeeming assessment failure should also be revisited, instead of focussing exclusively on credits on aggregate. This would be particularly helpful on taught-only MSc programmes.

PGT course pass mark

At its May 2024 meeting, the Committee indicated that they would like the CTP team to consider the current discrepancy between Level 11 course pass marks (40%) and the grades required for MSc progression/award (50%).

Benchmarking across other institutions suggests that most institutions use the same mark for passing a PG course and for PG progression/award. In most cases, this is one grade band up from the mark used for UG courses, although some institutions use the same grade band for PG and

	<p>UG. The UoE approach of having a course pass mark at one level, and a progression/award pass mark at another level seems to be unusual.</p> <p>Members from of the Committee from the College of Science and Engineering noted that informal consultation with staff in Schools suggested that many staff would prefer not to change the status quo. There was also discussion of areas where both UG and PG students take the same course, and also UG Integrated Masters students and PG Masters students take the same course, and the potential confusion in having a different pass mark for these groups within the same course.</p> <p>Members also noted that a simplified approach to the PG pass mark would be less confusing to students and staff. The EUSA VP Education indicated that he would support the position of moving the course pass mark to 50, as long as staff marking assessments were making use of the full scale of marks. The Committee agreed that the evaluation of this option would need to consider data on how many students would not have achieved a pass if the mark were raised to 50, including students registered on PGCert and PGDip programmes.</p> <p>Overall, the Committee agreed to support further consultation on whether to maintain the current position or whether to revise the PGT the course pass mark to 50%.</p> <p>Degree Programme Specifications The EUSA VP Education noted concerns with students looking at Degree Programme Specifications (DPS), given that many of these are out of date. The paper author confirmed that the CTP team are considering the wider context of the use and function of the DPS, and that the Committee should receive a paper on this during Semester 2 of Academic Year 24/25.</p> <p>Action: The paper author agreed to provide a written update with any progress on the above issues to the next Committee meeting in January 2025.</p>
4.3	<p>Academic Year dates 2026/27 and provisional Academic Year dates 2027/28 (Paper 2D) To approve</p> <p>The paper was presented by Cristina Matthews, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>The Academic Year dates are drafted following the model used in previous years which is set by the academic structure approved by Senate and published at Academic year structure. The paper requested approval from the Committee for the academic year dates for 2026/27, which the Committee approved as provisional dates at its January 2024 meeting. The paper also requests Committee approval for the provisional academic year dates for 2027/2028.</p> <p>Members of the Committee raised a number of issues in relation to the proposed dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The overlap between teaching weeks and different sets of school holidays, and the equalities impact of this on staff. Members noted that the dates have different impacts on academic and professional services staff, and also that staff are based across different council areas which operate different school holiday dates. The paper author noted that the dates were dictated by the model and, in Semester 1 in particular, the limitations on the timing for Welcome Week. - Across the University the number of exams seems to have increased post-Covid and, possibly, in response to concerns about misuse of Generative AI in assessments. If this continues to be the case, an increasing number of exams would need to be compressed into a smaller number of days for the December diet of 2026. The Academic Registrar confirmed that the starting premise for the Timetabling team is that students should not have two exams in one day. The Committee discussed some of the implications of the proposal to re-introduce two exam-session days as standard practice, and members noted concerns regarding this generating additional capacity to increase the number of exams. There were

also concerns about this leading to more students having two exams in one day, although another member noted that allowing for two-session days across the full diet should in fact make it easier to avoid students having two exams on the same day due to the increased capacity of the diet. The Convener reminded the Committee that there would be a paper coming to the next Committee meeting specifically focussing on the approach to the exam diet, including the use of two-session exam days, and that these discussions would be most appropriate at the point of the Committee considering those proposals.

A member from the Students' Association noted that the use of two-session exam days in the current diet for December 2024 had not been approved by the Committee, and that the approval of two-session exam days for 2023/24 did not extend to the current academic year. The Convener confirmed that he had received notice that it would be necessary to make use of two-session exam days due to timetabling capacity. It had been due to an oversight that APRC had not been consulted on this matter.

- Members noted that the academic year dates did not reflect the use of three terms spanning the full year (usually in Schools which have PGT online programmes), and that this resulted in a lack of recognition in the calendar of staff who work across the full year.
- One member noted that, in practice, students preparing for exams will often not attend the last few days of classes in order to increase their revision time, and that the Committee could consider ending the teaching blocks sooner in order to facilitate this and reduce absence rates in the last few days of teaching.

The Committee noted that the academic year structure presented wide and varied challenges, but that it was not within the remit of the Committee to make amendments to the overarching model. Members also noted that when the structure was last reviewed in 2018, there were no changes made.

The Committee agreed to **approve** the academic year dates for 2026/27 and the provisional academic year dates for 2027/2028.

Action: Committee Secretary to update the academic year dates website as approved.

4.4 **College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: amendments to Terms of Reference (Paper 2E)**

To approve

The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.

The Terms of Reference are presented to the Committee for approval, following the scheduled review for this academic year. The College Offices and the Study and Work Away (SWAY) team were consulted as the key stakeholders. The consultation indicated that the Terms of Reference are working well, therefore the proposed changes are modest and do not involve significant changes in policy. The paper author noted an additional proposed amendment, not included in the paper, to remove section 1.4.

Members discussed whether or not it would be helpful to include further detail in some sections, but agreed that the range of scenarios was very varied and therefore difficult to list comprehensively.

One member of the Committee noted a reference in 4.5 to Personal Tutors which should be amended.

	<p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference, including the removal of section 1.4 and the removal of the reference to Personal Tutors, with immediate effect.</p>
<p>4.5</p>	<p>Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure (Paper 2F) To approve</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation.</p> <p>The paper proposed a number of minor amendments to the policy, following its periodic review due this academic year.</p> <p>A member noted the use of the term Visiting Undergraduate Taught Students (VUGTs) rather than the more commonly used term Visiting Undergraduate Students (VUGs). The distinction has been made because the consultation noted that there are Visiting Undergraduate Research Students as well, so the term VUGTs differentiates this group from the research students.</p> <p>The Committee approved the amendments to the policy, to be implemented with immediate effect.</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Update on response to Watch That Gap project (Paper 2G) For information and to note</p> <p>The paper was presented by Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar, Registry Services.</p> <p>The paper provided an update to the Committee regarding work undertaken following the 'Watch That Gap' project, which had been commissioned by the Deputy Secretary, Students, in order to identify and propose mechanisms of support for students with needs beyond the scope of the Exceptional Circumstances policy.</p> <p>Members of the Committee discussed some of the challenges regarding identifying students who are parents and carers, given the current lack of data on this, and welcomed the proposal to integrate this information into the student record.</p> <p>One member noted a concern about the proposals to support student parents and carers via the Exceptional Circumstances policy and processes, and whether this would signify a return to conflating this student population with the students with Exceptional Circumstances.</p> <p>A member representing Information Services (IS) provided an update on a project to improve lecture recording and captioning, which is particularly important for this student population, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data on the use and quality of lecture recording - Guidance for staff on the use of microphones - Proposal to switch on captioning by default, instead of staff having to switch this on manually <p>The Committee agreed that further updates on this IS project would be of interest to the Committee.</p> <p>Action: IS representative member to provide an update to the Committee regarding improving the take-up of lecture recording and provision of captions.</p> <p>One member noted that making timetabling adjustments for students who are parents and carers seemed particularly challenging, given the lack of data on this and the challenges with the timetabling system.</p>

	<p>A member from the Students' Association noted that, while these updates were welcome, there was frustration amongst the Students' Association that the implementation of these was not in place yet, and that the introduction of the new Exceptional Circumstances policy in September 2024 had left a gap in support for these students. The Deputy Secretary, Students, acknowledged these frustrations, while also noting the huge amount of effort and time spent by a range of teams across Registry Services to get this far with the proposals, even though the changes have not yet come into effect.</p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Annual Concessions Report 2023/24 (Paper 2H) To note and comment</p> <p>The paper was presented by Cristina Matthews, Academic Policy Officer.</p> <p>The paper provided the Committee with an annual report of the approved concession requests for individual students to have exemptions from the University regulations or policies approved by the Committee during the 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p>The proposed next steps focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and discussing any impact on concessions of amendments to regulations approved by the Committee for 2024/25. A member from CAHSS noted that they were already seeing the positive effects of the amendments to PG Degree Regulation 45 Request for reinstatement on Doctoral and MPhil degrees, and that the College had approved three such cases in the last month. - Considering whether there are further changes to regulations or policies that would be beneficial to the postgraduate research student experience. One member noted the broad concern that the overall scale of PhD projects is becoming more ambitious and that many project plans are not realistic. There was acknowledgement that this may not be an issue that can be addressed via regulations or policies. However, this issue often results in students requesting concessions for extensions, and that the longer students are on programme, the more likely it is they will have a life event requiring further concessions. <p>The Committee agreed that the PGR sub-group could consider these proposed next steps at its next meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Convener noted that the Committee Secretary will be on maternity leave from January 2025, returning in September 2025. More information will be shared in due course regarding cover for the role of Committee Secretary. The Convener thanked the Committee Secretary for the support she has provided for the Committee and wished her well for her Maternity leave.</p> <p>No other business received.</p>

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 January 2025

Updates to the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes amendments to the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy, following the scheduled periodic review of this policy document.

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
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

Action requested/recommendation

2. APRC is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy. Should APRC approve the proposed amendments, the revised policy would come into use from Semester 1, 2025/26.

Background and context

3. Academic Quality and Standards (formerly Academic Services) carry out periodic reviews of all academic policies to ensure they remain fit for purpose, in line with a schedule agreed by APRC. The Authorised Interruption of Study Policy is scheduled for review during the current session.
4. The University allows students to apply for an interruption of study when they are unable to study for a period, usually due to medical or personal circumstances, but sometimes for employment or internships, or other reasons relevant to their future career. During a period of interruption, students continue to be regarded as students of the University, but do not undertake any study at the University.
5. The Undergraduate (19) and Postgraduate (33) Degree Regulations define some aspects of interruption of study, including: responsibility for approval of requests; duration of permitted interruptions; maximum cumulative period of interruptions. In 2018, the University introduced a policy to provide more of a framework for the consideration of requests for interruption of study, which sought to promote a more "permissive" approach to the handling of requests.

Requests for interruption by taught students are generally handled by Schools and Deaneries, while requests for interruption by postgraduate research students are generally handled by Colleges.

6. As part of the review of the Policy, Academic Quality and Standards initially consulted Colleges regarding areas for potential development of the Policy. Based on this initial feedback, we produced a revised draft of the Policy, which was shared with all Schools, EUSA, and relevant support services in order to gather feedback. The final version of the Policy, which is presented for approval in Appendix 1, is designed to take account of the feedback received via consultation.

Discussion

7. The table below provides details of the amendments proposed to the Policy, which is provided in Appendix 1. **APRC is asked to approve the amended version of the Policy, for introduction from the beginning of the 2025/26 session.**

Section (amended policy)	Amendment
ALL	<p>General changes to the policy</p> <p>Early consultation indicated that while the current policy provides a generally supportive statement, in practice it is caught between a mechanism by which a student can take some time off if they wish, and an exceptional process that requires evidence and layers of approval. This inconsistency can create challenges, particularly when dealing with complex cases.</p> <p>The policy has been reviewed to take a clearer position as a supportive policy which facilitates students to take an Authorised Interruption of Study (AIS) when they need to. The School/College still has to authorise the AIS, determine that the AIS and its duration are compatible with completing the programme, and agree on return to study plans for the student.</p> <p>Further embedding and promoting a facilitative approach to AIS could lead to an increase in the number of students taking an AIS. The process of handling requests for interruption and supporting students' return to study carries resource implications, which would increase with the number of accepted requests. However, we do not anticipate a considerable surge in requests for AIS, since taking a period away from study is not a decision students take lightly, as it extends a student's overall duration of study (usually by a year, in the case of taught students), and can have significant financial and visa implications.</p>

	<p>Moreover, taking a break from study can offer a significant benefit to a student's health and wellbeing, and support them to succeed in their studies subsequently. Supporting students who are struggling with medical or other personal circumstances while continuing to study is also highly resource-intensive for Schools and support services in particular.</p> <p>Taught Vs PGR</p> <p>Given that there are different considerations for AIS for PGR students, the policy proposes slightly different approaches and criteria for approval for Taught Vs PGR students. The policy has therefore been reorganised and there are new separate sections for procedures for Taught vs PGR students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section A: Introduction - Section B: Procedures for Authorised Interruption of Study for Taught Students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught) - Section C: Procedures for Authorised Interruption of Study for Postgraduate Research Students - Section D: Return to study and further guidance
1	<p>Section A: Introduction</p> <p>1 Removed wording 'or support their career aspirations' in order to acknowledge that in many cases where students take AIS for employment reasons, this is due to financial need rather than career opportunities.</p>
2	<p>Definition of Authorised Interruption of Study</p> <p>2.1 New definition of AIS added to this section, incorporating some text from other sections.</p> <p>2.2 List of common reasons reordered and reworded. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive.</p> <p>2.3 Additional text to clarify that there are exceptions to the standard position regarding the maximum total permitted interruption due to changes to AIS allowance for PGT students on part-time intermittent programmes and programmes with non-standard periods of study.</p>
3	<p>Initial considerations</p> <p>3.1 and 3.2 sections have been placed earlier in the Policy, given that they apply to both Taught and PGR students, and also to highlight these considerations as part of the broader approach to AIS.</p>

	<p>3.1 “Permissive approach” replaced with “facilitative approach”.</p> <p>3.1 “good reason for the interruption” replaced with “an explanation as to why they will be unable to engage with their studies for the relevant period”. Feedback indicated that the phrase “good reason” was too subjective in nature.</p> <p>3.2 Amended to state that evidence will not normally be required to support applications for AIS, but may be required in some cases. This reflects existing practice in most cases and supports the facilitative approach being promoted by the revised Policy. The Policy states that “Schools and Colleges may require evidence where it is considered that there may otherwise appear to be grounds to refuse an application”, with more information given further down the Policy as to what potential grounds for refusal may be.</p> <p>3.6 Reference to US Federal Loans added.</p>
4	<p>Student Status, Rights and Responsibilities</p> <p>Section placed earlier in the Policy, given that this applies to both Taught and PGR students.</p> <p>4.1 Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) has been removed from the list of services offering support during an interruption, as DLSS have confirmed that the support they provide is specifically to facilitate study, and is therefore not applicable while students are not actively studying. DLSS do, however, provide support with the re-transition into study, prior to a student’s return from an AIS.</p> <p>4.1 Added a clarification that students’ access to some physical spaces may be restricted while they are on an interruption, where these spaces are prioritised for (or restricted to) students who are actively studying, e.g. laboratory and studio spaces, study spaces. This reflects existing practice in Schools.</p> <p>4.3 Clarification added that students studying on programmes which are subject to Fitness to Practise requirements remain subject to these requirements while on an interruption.</p>
5	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>Section placed earlier in the Policy, given that this applies to both Taught and PGR students.</p> <p>Added link to the Privacy Notice.</p>

6	<p>Changes to Programme</p> <p>Section placed earlier in the Policy, given that this applies to both Taught and PGR students.</p> <p>6.1 Added text: “Students will be notified of any relevant changes to courses or programmes during return to study conversations.”</p> <p>Removed the clause (previously 10.2) “in interrupting their studies, students consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while they are interrupted”. In line with Competitions and Markets Authority guidance, interrupted students should be consulted or informed as appropriate regarding relevant changes to their programme.</p> <p>6.2 Removed the phrase: “exceptional circumstances” which could now be confused with the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.</p>
7	<p>Section B: Procedures for Authorised Interruption of Study for Taught Students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught)</p> <p>Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study (Taught)</p> <p>7.1 section amended in order to be specific for Taught students. The Policy suggests that the Student Adviser should be the student’s primary point of contact when requesting an interruption, but that the Student Adviser should seek academic input from the Director of Students, or Programme Director/Cohort Lead for academic input as appropriate.</p> <p>Text has been added to clarify what should be considered as part of the return to study plan, in order to support these conversations with students. Where a student requires visa sponsorship to study, the return to study plan should include any advice provided to the student by the Student Immigration Service regarding any action the student will need to take to maintain or renew their visa permission. The Student Immigration Service will provide this information in a template format so that students can share this with their Student Adviser for inclusion in the return to study plan.</p> <p>7.2 Added a clarification that the return to study plan should be agreed with the student before an interruption is taken, but recognising that this may not be possible in some cases, for example where a student is too unwell to engage in detailed conversations about their return to study.</p> <p>7.3 Amended to indicate that taught students should submit AIS requests to their School, rather than College/School, making the process clearer to students and staff. Feedback from all Colleges</p>

	indicates that these requests come to the School in the first instance for both Taught and PGR students.
8	<p>Consideration and approval (Taught)</p> <p>8.1 Feedback indicates that all Colleges delegate approval of AIS requests of less than or equal to 12 months for Taught students to Schools, where the student's total period of AIS does not exceed 12 months. This approach is felt to be working in practice, so the revised Policy confirms this. The revised policy clarifies that approval of AIS requests which exceed 12 months (either in a single or consecutive AIS periods), is the responsibility of the College. This was the intention of the existing wording in the Policy, but a lack of clarity in the wording had led to variation in application.</p> <p>8.2 Consultation indicated that colleagues would find it helpful to have further guidance on reasons for refusing AIS requests, particularly given that the Policy is meant to be facilitative. Further information is provided regarding common reasons for refusing an AIS request for taught students. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive.</p> <p>8.3 The existing Policy (7.3) states that Colleges and Schools should have processes for students to ask for reconsideration where their request for an AIS has been refused. Feedback from Colleges and Schools suggested that it would be helpful to have more guidance regarding how such processes of reconsideration should operate. We propose that, rather than develop a bespoke process for the reconsideration of refused AIS requests, it would be better to treat such requests for reconsideration as appeals under the Student Appeal Regulations. There are several benefits to this approach: there is an established and transparent process for reviewing a decision via an appeal; students would need to provide valid grounds for an appeal; and staff who are reviewing the decision can refer back to this policy to determine whether or not the policy has been followed. This change would require an amendment to the Student Appeal Regulations, which will be presented to APRC in due course, should the amendments to the Policy be approved.</p>
9	<p>Section C: Procedures for Authorised Interruption of Study for Postgraduate Research Students</p> <p>Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study (PGR)</p> <p>9.1 Amended to clarify that students should have an initial discussion regarding AIS with their Research Supervisor, but may also seek advice from their Graduate School Office or College Office.</p>

	<p>Text has been added to clarify that a plan for completion should be agreed before applying for an AIS, in order to ensure that the duration of the AIS is appropriate. Text has been added to clarify what should be included in the plan for completion. Where the student requires visa sponsorship to study, the plan is expected to include any advice provided by the Student Immigration Service to the student (see 7.1, above).</p> <p>It is also noted, however, that some students may be unable to engage in detailed discussions regarding their plan for completion at the point at which they require an interruption, for example where ill health prevents this.</p>
10	<p>Consideration and approval (PGR)</p> <p>10.1 Colleges continue to be responsible for approving AIS requests for PGR students, and this is not usually delegated to Schools. Text has been added to clarify that requests submitted to Colleges should be supported by the School.</p> <p>10.2 Equivalent section to 8.2, outlining potential reasons for refusal of requests for interruption.</p> <p>10.3 Equivalent section to 8.3 regarding the right to appeal a decision to refuse a request for interruption.</p>
11	<p>Section D: Return to study and further guidance</p> <p>Return to study</p> <p>11.1 Amended to clarify that early return to study requests should be submitted to the relevant School, via the Student Adviser or Research Supervisor. The School will refer these to the College where appropriate.</p> <p>11.2 Amended to clarify that Schools should contact the student before their return to study to ask them whether or not they are ready to return to study, and to offer them a return to study meeting. Although holding a return to study meeting would be desirable in the majority of cases, the Policy stops short of making this an absolute requirement for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Schools indicated that many students do not attend scheduled return to study meetings; • It would appear unnecessarily harsh and likely generate a significant administrative burden were the University to refuse to allow students to return to study had they not attended a return to study meeting; • Some Schools have as many as 60-70 students returning from interruption each September, for a variety of reasons.

	<p>11.3 The Policy places clearer parameters around when Colleges and Schools can request evidence of a student's fitness to study before allowing them to return from a period of interruption for medical reasons. The revised Policy states that this is only relevant where the student is returning to a programme which is subject to Fitness to Practise requirements, or will be working in a high-risk environment (e.g. handling dangerous materials or substances).</p> <p>One School expressed concern about being unable to request medical evidence prior to a student's return to study in more cases, citing the high demands placed on staff by students who continue to study while struggling with severe health issues. Although we recognise that it can be extremely challenging and time-consuming for Schools to support students in these circumstances, we have not proposed to require medical evidence to permit return to study more generally for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring medical evidence for return to study may prove counterproductive, since it may discourage some students from requesting an interruption where this would be in their interest, if they are worried that they may not be permitted to return. This could not only be detrimental to the student's health and their studies, but would also mean that these students would continue to place a greater demand for support upon staff in Schools and support services. • Many students study while suffering from significant health or other issues, and we do not require them to evidence their fitness to study. We may therefore appear to be penalising students who decide to take an interruption for health reasons, were we to require them to evidence their fitness to study. This poses a risk of being perceived as discriminatory, especially with regard to students whose health issues constitute a disability. <p>The new section 11.4 clarifies that, in cases where the student will need exceptionally high levels of support, Schools should consider referring to the Support for Study process as a way to formally acknowledge this and ensure that there is adequate support and monitoring in place.</p>
12	12.1 Link to privacy notice removed as this is now included under section 5, Confidentiality.

Resource implications

8. The table in the discussion section covers any relevant resource implications of the proposed amendments to the Policy.

Risk Management

- 9. The table in the discussion section covers any relevant risks presented by the proposed amendments to the Policy.

Equality & Diversity

- 10. The proposed amendments to the Policy are anticipated to provide a number of benefits from an equality and diversity point of view. A revised Equality Impact Assessment for the Policy is presented in Appendix 2.

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

- 11. The amended Policy would be introduced for the beginning of the 2025/26 session. Information about the amendments to the Policy would be provided in Academic Quality and Standards New and Updated Policies email communication during the summer, and covered in briefing sessions for Schools and Colleges at the beginning of the new session.
- 12. Academic Quality and Standards would discuss with EUSA and Communications and Marketing what approach to communication with students regarding the amended Policy would be most beneficial. This will likely include coverage in the Student Newsletter.

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Freedom of Information

Open



Authorised Interruption of Study Policy

Summary

The policy provides a definition of Authorised Interruption of Study, and explains where authority rests for making decisions regarding students' requests for interruption. It also provides information on the status of students whilst they are interrupted and the return to study process.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy is relevant to all undergraduate and postgraduate students requesting or taking an Authorised Interruption of Study. The policy also applies to staff who are involved in supporting, considering and approving requests for students wishing to interrupt their study.

Contact

Academic Quality and Standards

academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Version Approved: 31.05.18	Effective Date: 01.08.18	Equality impact assessment: 27.06.18	Last Reviewed: 23.01.25	Next Review: 2028/29
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Approving authority

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations:

<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>

Laigh Year Regulations:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, please email academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Keywords

Authorised Interruption of Study



Authorised Interruption of Study

Section A: Introduction

1. The University is committed to supporting students who require time away from their studies, where this will assist them in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies, ~~or support their career aspirations.~~

2. Definition of Authorised Interruption of Study

2.1 An Authorised Interruption of Study is a period during which a student takes a temporary break from their studies. During this period, the student ~~must~~ does not engage with their studies or research, but will continue to be regarded as a student of the University. A student wishing to apply for an interruption of study, must have this approved by the relevant University authority.

~~Where a student is temporarily unable to engage with their studies, they may apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study.~~

2.1.2.2 Common reasons for authorised interruption include, but are not limited to:

- Health reasons ~~(mental or physical health problems)~~
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Family Leave
- ~~Extra-curricular pursuits e.g. elite sport, art/music related opportunities~~
- Employment Opportunities/Internships
- Financial circumstances
- Personal reasons
- ~~Extra-curricular pursuits e.g.~~ Participation in elite sport, art/music related opportunities, or other significant activities contributing to a student's career aspirations or learning
- Military sService

2.3 Interruptions of study will not be applied retrospectively. Any one period of interruption of study will not exceed 12 months (including situations where a student requests a further interruption immediately following a 12-month interruption), unless authorised by the College ~~due to exceptional circumstances~~ by exception. The total period of Authorised Interruption of Study permitted for an individual student is the same for full-time and part-time continuous students and will normally not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study for the relevant programme (for example, a maximum of four years' Authorised Interruption of Study for a four year undergraduate Honours degree). There are a small number of exceptions to this for students enrolled on specific types of postgraduate taught programmes, as defined in Regulation 33, Authorised Interruption of Study, in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations.
Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study

2.2 Students should note that there are separate regulations relating to students taking up positions as sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union, which allow them to matriculate as students of the University without having to fulfil the normal academic requirements of their programme of study.
The relevant regulations are available at: [Laigh Year Regulations](#)

2.4
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf



Authorised Interruption of Study

3. Initial Considerations

3.1 Colleges and Schools should take a facilitative approach when considering applications for Authorised Interruptions of Study. Colleges and Schools should approve applications where the student has provided a good reason for the interruption an explanation as to why they will be unable to engage with their studies for the relevant period, provided that an interruption will be compatible with the student completing their studies subsequently, and would not exceed the maximum allowable total period for Authorised Interruption of Study (see section 2.3).

3.2 Students will not normally be required to submit evidence to support applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. However, Schools and Colleges may require evidence where it is considered that there may otherwise appear to be grounds to refuse an application (see sections 8.2, 10.2). may be required to submit evidence to support applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. The relevant College or School will advise students where this is the case.

3.3 Students should be aware that taking an Authorised Interruption of Study may have financial and visa implications and must seek advice before applying for an interruption.

~~3.1~~

~~3.2~~

~~The Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place provides independent advice to students regarding requests for Authorised Interruption of Study and the potential implications. Further information is available at: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support-and-advice/the-advice-place/The-Advice-Place>~~

The Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students in relation to any visa implications which may arise as a consequence of taking an ~~a~~Authorised~~i~~ Interruption of ~~s~~Study.

~~Further information is available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/student-advisory-service>~~

~~3.3.4 Student Immigration Services - Changes to your studies~~

~~3.4.3.5 The University's Scholarships and Student Funding department provides advice and information to students in relation to any finance and funding issues which may arise as a result of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study.~~

~~Further information is available at: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/Scholarships and Student Funding](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/Scholarships-and-Student-Funding)~~

3.6 Postgraduate Research students funded by a [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#), [US Federal Loans](#), [Research Council](#) or by a University-administered scholarship or [studentship](#) should contact their School to clarify and confirm the implications of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study upon their funding, and to ensure that they are abiding by the terms and conditions of the relevant funding body. Students funded by any other body should contact their funder directly for advice and information.

3.7 [The Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place](#) provides independent [advice to students regarding requests for Authorised Interruption of Study and the potential implications.](#)



Authorised Interruption of Study

The Advice Place

4. Student Status, Rights and Responsibilities

4.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study continue to be regarded as students of the University during the period of interruption. During an interruption, students have the right to access relevant campus facilities, University e-mail, and student support services including the Students' Association, Library Services, the Chaplaincy and Student Counselling. Access to some facilities (e.g. study spaces, laboratories, studios) and services may be prioritised for (or restricted to) students who are actively studying.

4.2 Schools will ensure that a point of contact is available to advise a student regarding their return to study whilst they are interrupted.

4.3 Students remain subject to the Code of Student Conduct during an Authorised Interruption of Study. Students registered on programmes which are subject to Fitness to Practise requirements also remain subject to those requirements.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 All requests will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Privacy Notice, and information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate reason for being informed.

Privacy Notice for ~~Exceptional~~Special Circumstances, Authorised Interruption of Studies, Leave of Absence, Concessions and Coursework Extension requests

6. Changes to Programme

6.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study should be aware that courses and programmes may be subject to change while they are interrupted and that they may return to an altered programme structure. Students will be notified of any relevant changes to courses or programmes during return to study conversations.

~~In interrupting their studies, students consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while they are interrupted.~~

6.2 Students should be aware that if their programme is to be discontinued, it may not be possible to grant an Authorised Interruption of Study.

Section B: Procedures for Authorised Interruptions of Study for Taught Students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught)

4.7. Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study

7.1 Students are expected to liaise with their Student Adviser, ~~Cohort Lead or, Student Adviser, Programme Director or Supervisor~~ about taking an Authorised Interruption of Study and to discuss a proposed return to study plan before completing an application

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for an Authorised Interruption of Study. The Student Adviser should consult the relevant Director of Students and/or Programme Director/Cohort Lead, where this supports the development of the return to study plan. The return to study plan should include:

- the list of compulsory courses the student will need to take upon return;
- any outstanding assessments for courses which have not been completed, and the next available assessment date when the student will be expected to complete them;
- where available, information regarding elective course choices, or other decisions in relation to their studies, which the student should consider prior to, or during, their interruption;
- any agreements regarding academic and pastoral support that will be provided to the student during or after the period of Authorised Interruption of Study;
- (where the student requires visa sponsorship to study) the advice provided to the student by the Student Immigration Service regarding any action they need to take to maintain or secure new visa permission.
any visa considerations or restrictions, where applicable

4.47.2 Where possible, the return to study plan should be agreed with the student before an interruption is taken. However, it is recognised that in some cases, students may be unable to engage in detailed discussions about return to study before an interruption.

4.27.3 In order to apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, a student should complete the relevant request form and submit this to their College/School via their Student Adviser. Colleges/Schools will ensure that they publish details about whom the form should be submitted to.

5. Evidence

5.1 Students may be required to submit evidence to support applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. The relevant College or School will advise students where this is the case.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 All requests will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Privacy Notice, and information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate reason for being informed.

7.8. Consideration and Approval

7.1 Colleges/Schools should take a permissive approach when considering applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. Colleges/Schools should approve applications where the student has provided a good reason for the interruption, provided that an interruption will be compatible with the student completing their studies subsequently, and would not exceed the maximum allowable total period for Authorised Interruption of Study (see section 2.3).

7.28.1 The relevant Head of School (or delegated authorising officer or Committee) will determine whether or not to grant requests for Authorised Interruptions of Study of up to 12 months for students on taught programmes. The approval of Authorised Interruption of Study requests that exceed a 12 month period (either over a single or consecutive Authorised Interruption of Study periods) is the responsibility of the



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relevant Head of College (or delegated authorising officer or Committee), will determine whether or not an Authorised Interruption of Study will be granted, and will inform the student of their decision. ~~Colleges may routinely delegated consideration of applications for Authorised Interruption of Study to Schools where appropriate.~~ The relevant authorising officer or Committee is responsible for informing the student of their decision.

8.2 Where the Colleges or/ Schools has refused a request for an interruption, it considering applications must provide the student with a reason for the decision. Reasons for rejecting/fusing a request may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The interruption would exceed the maximum available time for interruptions for a student, or would take the student beyond the maximum period of study for the programme;
- Visa restrictions which do not allow for the interruption
- Duration of the interruption, e.g. too long or too short to allow the student to rejoin their studies, or inadequate to address the reason for the interruption;
- It would not be possible to complete the programme upon return, e.g., the programme is discontinuing.

7.3–8.3 Students have the right to appeal a decision under the Student Appeal Regulations where the interruption of studies requested has been rejected/fused.

Information about appeals

—information regarding processes for students to request reconsideration of an application for Authorised Interruption of Study, where the application has been refused.

Student Status/Rights and Responsibilities

Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study continue to be regarded as students of the University during the period of interruption. During an interruption, students have the right to access relevant campus facilities, e-mail and student support services including the Students' Association, Library Services, Chaplaincy, Student Counselling and Student Disability Services.

Schools will ensure that a point of contact is available to advise a student regarding their return to study whilst they are interrupted.

Students remain subject to the Code of Student Conduct during an Authorised Interruption of Study.

Section C: Procedures for Authorised Interruptions of Study for Postgraduate Research Students

9. Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study

9.1 Students are expected to discuss requests for Authorised Interruptions of Study with their Research Supervisor in the first instance. Students may also seek advice from the relevant Graduate School Office or College Office. The student and their supervisor should agree a plan for completion upon return before completing an application for an Authorised Interruption of Study. However, it is recognised that in some cases, students may be unable to engage in detailed discussions about return

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to study before an interruption. The plan for completion should include:

- a list of the work completed to date;
- a timetable for completion of the remaining work, including any interim deadlines and requirements for progression or submission/resubmission of the thesis;
- any agreements regarding academic and pastoral support that will be provided to the student during or after the period of Authorised Interruption of Study;
- (where the student requires visa sponsorship to study) the advice provided to the student by the Student Immigration Service regarding any action they need to take to maintain or secure new visa permission.

any visa considerations or restrictions, where applicable

9.2

7.4 In order to apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, a student should complete the relevant form and submit this, along with the plan to completion, to their School via their Research Supervisor or Graduate School Office. Schools will ensure that they publish details about whom the form should be submitted to.

8.10. Consideration and Approval

8.1 Colleges/Schools should take a permissive approach when considering applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. Colleges/Schools should approve applications where the student has provided a good reason for the interruption, provided that an interruption will be compatible with the student completing their studies subsequently, and would not exceed the maximum allowable total period for Authorised Interruption of Study (see section 2.3).

8.210.1 The relevant Head of College (or delegated authorising officer or Committee) will determine whether or not an Authorised Interruption of Study will be granted, and will inform the student of their decision. Requests submitted to the College will take into consideration the views of the student's Research Supervisor and/or the School Director of Postgraduate Research. Colleges may routinely delegate consideration of applications for Authorised Interruption of Study to Schools where appropriate. The relevant authorising officer or Committee is responsible for informing the student of their decision.

10.2 Where a request for an interruption has been refused, the Colleges/Schools considering applications must provide the student with a reason for the decision. Reasons for rejecting a request may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Visa restrictions which do not allow for the interruption
- The interruption would exceed the maximum available time for interruptions for a student, or would take the student beyond the maximum period of study for the programme;
- Duration of the interruption, e.g. too long or too short to allow the student to re-join their studies, or inadequate to address the reason for the interruption;
- The plan for completion upon return is not realistic;
- It would not be possible to complete the programme upon return, e.g., the research data would no longer be valid, there would be no suitable Research Supervisor upon return.

10.3 Students have the right to appeal a decision under the Student Appeal Regulations



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~~where thean interruption of studies requested has been rejectedfused.~~

Information about appeals

~~information regarding processes for students to request reconsideration of an application for Authorised Interruption of Study, where the application has been refused.~~

Changes to Programme

~~Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study should be aware that courses and programmes may be subject to change while they are interrupted and that they may return to an altered programme structure.~~

~~In interrupting their studies students consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while they are interrupted.~~

~~Students should be aware that in exceptional circumstances if their programme is to be discontinued, it may not be possible to grant an Authorised Interruption of Study.~~

Section D: Return to study and further guidance

9.11. Return to Study

~~9.11.1~~ Students wishing to return to their studies earlier than originally planned should submit a request via the relevant School or College Office for consideration contact their Student Adviser or Research Supervisor to request this. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will be referred to the College Office where appropriate.

~~9.211.2~~ Before the scheduled return to study date, the relevant School will make contact with an interrupted student before their scheduled return to study in order to ask the student to confirm whether or not they are ready to return to their studies, and, where relevant, arrange offer a return to study meeting between the student and their Student Adviser or Research Supervisor. At the meeting, the student should confirm whether or not they are ready to return to their studies. TheA return to study meeting is also an opportunity and to review the return to study plan, facilitate any support which may be required upon return, and update the student on any developments or changes to their programme. If the student is returning to student accommodation, the School should notify the Residence Life team of the return to study date and any anticipated support for the student.

~~11.3~~ The University has a responsibility to ensure that students are able to engage safely with their studies following a period of interruption. Where a student has interrupted their studies for medical health reasons, and will be returning to a programme with Fitness to Practice requirements, or where the student may be required to work within a high risk environment (e.g. handling dangerous materials or substances), there are risk assessments, the relevant School or College may require evidence confirming their fitness to return to study, e.g. students who are enrolled on professional degree programmes, or those who are required to work within a high risk environment, handling dangerous materials or substances. Schools and Colleges will not in other circumstances require evidence confirming a student's fitness to return to study. The relevant School or College will be able to advise on whether evidence will be required in a particular case.

~~11.4~~ In cases where students will need exceptionally high levels of support upon



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returning to their studies, Schools should consider referring the student to the appropriate stage of the Support for Study policy in order to ensure that there is adequate support and monitoring in place to support the student in their studies:
Support for Study policy

9.311.5 Students who are unable to return to study after a period of authorised interruption may request an additional Authorised Interruption of Study, provided that this does not exceed the maximum allowable total period of interruption (see section 2.3). Requests will be considered in line with normal standard approval processes (see section 78 for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students, section 10 for Postgraduate Research students).

~~9.4~~

10.12. Further Guidance

10.12.1 Further guidance on Authorised Interruption of Study and the relevant application form is available on the following webpages:

Student guidance and application form

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/study-interruption>

Staff guidance

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/academic-procedures/interruption-study>

~~For further information on the use of personal data, please see the relevant privacy notice which is available on the following webpage:~~

~~<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/specialcircumstancesaisconcessionsloprivacynotice.pdf>~~

~~03 October 2019~~ **23 January 2025**



Equality Impact Assessment Template

If you require this template in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background please contact HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk.

You'll find it useful, before filling in this assessment template, to complete the online course:

[Introducing Equality Impact Assessment](#)

This template is designed to be used alongside the:

EqIA [Guidance and Checklist](#)

EqIA [Policy Statement](#)

EqIA covers policies, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

A. Key Information	
Policy/practice name:	Authorised Interruption of Study Policy
General background/aims of policy/practice:	The University allows students to apply for an interruption of study when they are unable to study for a period, usually due to medical or personal circumstances, but sometimes for employment or internships, or other reasons relevant to their future career. The policy is designed to support a facilitative approach to decision-making regarding students' requests for interruption, and sets out their rights as part of the process.
School/Dept:	Academic Quality and Standards
Assessed by: (name & job title)	Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager
Sign off by: (name & job title)	
Sign off date:	
Review date:	

B. Reason for EqIA	(check one)
New policy/ practice is proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Change to existing policy/practice is proposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in Section D below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Who will most impacted by this proposal?

Consider carefully how your proposal will impact both positively and negatively on people from different groups.

Consider the 9 protected characteristics as below in your proposal. There may be other identity characteristics that you wish to also include in your impact assessment. It is expected that you will consider all equality groups for impact. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups you feel will be most affected by your proposal.

Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race (including ethnicity and nationality)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>				

D. Consideration of Impact

Show your considerations of how all of the above protected characteristics may be impacted. The following prompts will help you to reflect:

- What information and evidence do I have about the needs of relevant equality groups – is this sufficient to fully assess impact?
- Could this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for particular groups and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?
- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?
- How can communication of the policy/practice be made accessible to all relevant groups?

¹ Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applied to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

The revised version of the Policy further embeds the University's facilitative approach to the handling of interruption of studies. It seeks to benefit all students by providing a simple and transparent process for them to apply to take a break from studies for a period, and promotes an approach which will ensure that the overwhelming majority of such requests are approved.

Disability and medical circumstances

The majority of interruptions of studies are taken for medical reasons, which in some cases will constitute a disability. The Policy will provide benefit to students requesting interruption, especially for medical reasons, by removing or reducing barriers associated with applying for interruption, for example by:

- Stating that evidence will not normally be required to support applications for interruption;
- Placing strict parameters around when medical evidence can be required of students before they are permitted to return to study following an interruption, which mean that this will not apply in the majority of cases.

The Policy no longer states that the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) provides support to students while they are on an interruption of study. This does not represent a change in practice, since the support DLSS provide is designed to assist students while they are actively studying. DLSS will continue to provide "wind-down" support for students when they start an interruption, and re-engage with them as they prepare to return to study. Students on an interruption continue to be entitled to access other support services, including the Student Counselling Service and the Wellbeing Service.

Pregnancy and maternity

Authorised interruption of study will continue to be the default mechanism for student maternity and parental leave, and is underpinned and supported by the Student Maternity and Parental Leave Policy, which was revised in 2024. This remains appropriate, since requesting an interruption for maternity leave is a light-touch process and does not require the submission of evidence by the student.

Interruptions of study are subject to restrictions regarding the maximum total (accumulated) period of interruption available to an interruption of study. We have recently amended our regulations to extend the maximum entitlement to interruption on some part-time and shorter programmes, in the case of three-year part-time Masters degrees doubling this from one to two years. It is very rare for students to require more than the maximum period of interruption due to maternity or parental leave, but where this has occurred it has been dealt with as a concession to regulations by Convener's Action on behalf of Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee. This does not require any additional submission from the student and can be dealt with promptly through correspondence between the relevant College and Academic Quality and Standards, via a process which is well-established.

Further enhancements to Policy

There are a number of other enhancements to the Policy which will support all students going through the process of requesting an interruption, as well as facilitating their return to study following an interruption. These include:

- Clearer, single points of contact provided for students regarding whom to contact when requesting an interruption;
- Guidance for staff and students regarding what kind of information should be included in a return to study plan for students, in order to best prepare them for reintegrating into study;
- Promoting the use of return to study meetings;
- Information regarding potential reasons why requests for interruption may be refused, in order to promote transparency for students regarding the process;
- Where requests for interruption have been refused, the revised Policy directs students to the University's appeals procedure. This ensures a fair and transparent process for the handling of such cases, avoiding the potential inconsistency of practice which the previous approach to review could lead to.

E. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision.	(check one)
Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. Action and Monitoring

Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA.

- How can I involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, review and potential future development, of this policy/practice?

Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, to ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in Section A above.

Requests for interruption are currently handled at School or College level depending on the student's level of study. As such, there is not comprehensive data available regarding requests for interruption. However, where interruptions are approved, these are recorded

in the student record. Academic Quality and Standards will discuss establishing an approach to recording and reporting on interruptions to assist monitoring in this area (especially where requests have been refused), but being mindful of the need to avoid adding administrative burden for Schools and Colleges.

Academic Quality and Standards will also seek to gather feedback via EUSA/Advice Place and Schools (particularly Student Advisers) regarding the implementation of the revised Policy around a year after its introduction.

G. Publish

Send your completed EqIA to the HR EDI team (equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk) to published, and keep a copy for your own records.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 January 2025

Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes the deletion of the Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy, with required content being incorporated into a minor revision to the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.

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
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

Action requested/recommendation

2. APRC is asked to approve the deletion of the Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy with effect from the start of the 2025/26 session. APRC is also asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes, to accommodate content from the existing Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy.

Background and context

3. The Undergraduate Progression Boards policy is scheduled for review during the current academic session. The Policy was introduced in 2015 in order to address perceived issues with inconsistent practice across Schools at that time with regard to confirmation of undergraduate students' progression status. Not all Schools routinely held Boards to make progression decisions, especially in the pre-Honours years of undergraduate programmes. Problems had arisen where, for example, students' progression status had not been considered regularly, and they were found at a late stage in their programme to have a credit deficit from an earlier stage of the programme.
4. The Policy required that Schools hold Progression Boards to make decisions about students' progression status at least once per year. The Policy defined Progression Boards as equivalent to, but "distinct from" Boards of Examiners, and set out parameters for them which were almost entirely in line with the operation of Boards of Examiners.

5. In September 2016, Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) - the predecessor to APRC - approved the first iteration of the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes. The Handbook was created by combining six previously separate policies covering various aspects of the operation of Boards of Examiners. At the time the Handbook was being developed, it was noted that:

“It may be that a future iteration of a Board of Examiners Handbook could include information on progression boards, but it is suggested that additional time is needed to embed these policies and it is helpful to have free-standing documents for the present”.¹

Discussion

6. The Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes was reviewed and updated during 2023/24. The Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy was unfortunately not scheduled for review at the same time. On reviewing the Policy, it is our proposal that it is now timely to seek to incorporate its content, where relevant, into the Handbook, and archive the Policy itself. Doing this would simplify the suite of documents relating to Boards, and significantly reduce the amount of policy content required to cover progression Boards, since so much of this is already covered elsewhere in the Handbook. Feedback from Schools is that the practice required by the Policy is now sufficiently embedded that there is no benefit to be gained from retaining a separate document. The Handbook also explicitly communicates an expectation that Boards of Examiners routinely operate in two stages (see especially Appendix B): Course Boards, followed by Programme Boards, with the latter focusing on awards or progression, depending upon the stage of the programme.
7. We would propose therefore to remove the Policy and add a small amount of content to the Handbook to cover those elements of the Policy which require to be retained. The additional content in the Handbook would be confined to a new Appendix C, along with a couple of minor additions to the main body of the document. In particular, we feel that the addition at 4.15 of a description of Course and Programme Boards is of general benefit to the clarity of the document. The table below indicates where the content of the Policy is covered by existing - or proposed new – content in the Handbook, or elsewhere in policy and regulations.

¹ [CSPC 16/17 1D](#)

Section	Existing content	Coverage in Handbook
1	Requirement to make a progression decision for UG students at least once a year	(NEW) Appendix C, Section 2
1.1	Schools may have more than one Progression Board	Principle 5, Section 3.1: "Schools structure Boards of Examiners according to their own requirements."
2-2.2	Information about Progression Boards on Combined degree programmes	Not needed
3	The Progression Board operates as a Board of Examiners	(Updated) Section 4.15-4.16
4 4.1-4.3	Requirements regarding External Examiner input	(NEW) Section 4.19 Also External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy (6; 33.1; 47-47.1)
5-5.1	Nomination of Convener of the Progression Board	Section 4.2-4.5
6	Progression Boards may be held simultaneously with Course Boards if all relevant course information is available.	Appendix B: Key processes for Boards of Examiners
7-7.2	Consideration of Exceptional Circumstances	Section 4.29
8-8.2	Responsibility for recording and publication of decisions	Section 8.1
9 9.1-9.2	Decision making Information regarding the award of credit on aggregate	(NEW) Appendix C, Section 1 This information is copied from the TAR and is redundant
10- 10.1	Progression Boards must act in accordance with the Taught Assessment Regulations	Not needed
11- 11.1	Anonymity	Section 5
12	Decisions are final once published	Section 4.30; TAR 64
13-14	Timing of Progression Boards	Appendix C, Sections 1-5
15-17	Key dates for publication of results; communication of progression decisions	Section 4.30 Appendix B

18	Actions where a student is unable to progress	(NEW) Appendix C, Section 7
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8. APRC is asked to approve the deletion of the Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy, with effect from the start of the 2025/26 session. APRC is also asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and programmes, also with effect from the start of the 2025/26 session.

Resource implications

9. The proposals do not involve any change in practice for any area, and do not therefore carry any resource implications.

Risk Management

10. It is our judgement that the removal of the Policy would not present a risk of undergraduate progression Boards failing to be held as required. The expectations on Schools would be clearly communicated within the revised Handbook.

Equality & Diversity

11. The proposed amendments do not represent changes of policy or process, and do not therefore carry any equality and diversity implications.

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

12. Academic Quality and Standards would include reference to the removal of the Policy and revisions to the Handbook in the annual New and Updated Policies email communication to Schools and Colleges in the summer of 2025. We would also include information about the changes in briefings hosted by the Colleges for relevant colleagues in Schools.

Author

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Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

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Freedom of Information

Open



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Summary

Boards of Examiners take an overview of each student's academic performance on a relevant course or programme, and make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome. This Handbook provides information regarding the remit and operation of Boards of Examiners, and outlines the responsibilities of key roles in supporting Boards of Examiners.

Scope: Mandatory Policy; Appendices are Guidance (Guidance is not mandatory)

This policy applies to Boards of Examiners, and those who support the work of Board of Examiners. Tasks associated with the administrative processes of the Board may be delegated to appropriate academic or administrative staff, but responsibility remains with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

Contact

Academic Quality and
Standards

academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Version Approved: 23.05.24	Effective date: 15.09.25	Equality impact assessment: 31.10.16	Last Reviewed: 23.05.24	Next Review: 2027/28
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Approving authority

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

This policy is subsidiary to the [Taught Assessment Regulations](#).
There is a policy for [External Examiners for Taught Programmes](#).
There is additional policy for [Undergraduate Progression Boards](#).

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, please email
academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Keywords

Board of Examiners



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Handbook for Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes

Content

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 - Regulations Expert
 - Course Organiser
 - Head of School
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- 5 The principle of anonymity
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- 7 Business to cover at meetings of Boards of Examiners
- 8 Minutes for Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings
- 9 Retention of Minutes and Papers of Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committees
- 10 Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners
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Appendices

- Appendix A - Template Board of Examiners Agenda and Minutes
- Appendix B - Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners
- [Appendix C – Undergraduate Progression Boards](#)



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Handbook for Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Handbook sets out the main responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and key role-holders involved in the operation of the Board, and provides information on the principles and remit of the Board of Examiners and guidance to help run effective Boards.
- 1.2 The Handbook should be read in conjunction with the University's Taught Assessment Regulations, Exceptional Circumstances Policy, Policy on External Examiners for Taught Programmes and other relevant policies and regulations. The main part of this Handbook is mandatory policy and the information provided in the Handbook Appendices is guidance and not mandatory.
- 1.3 For sources of support and information in relation to this Handbook, see Section 11.

2 Why we have Boards of Examiners

- 2.1 A Board of Examiners is a body with membership approved by the relevant Head of School whose role it is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a course or programme, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome. Boards of Examiners are a key part of enabling the University to judge that students have achieved their intended learning outcomes in a consistent, fair and reliable way, using agreed evidence and processes to reach their decisions.

3 Board of Examiners' Principles and Remit

Principles for Boards of Examiners

- 3.1 The following principles underpin the operation of Boards of Examiners:

Principle 1 The role of the Board of Examiners is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a relevant course or programme based primarily on assessment results, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome.

Principle 2 Boards of Examiners ensure that all students are treated with consistency and fairness, that the assessment process runs smoothly and correctly, that appropriate standards are set and maintained, and that the External Examiner plays an appropriate role.



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Principle 3 The effective administration of assessment underpins the University's quality of learning and teaching.

Principle 4 Boards of Examiners are conducted according to standard operational procedures defined by the University and using University systems.

Principle 5 Working within the scope of the overarching remit (see 3.2), and agreed models and accompanying guidance, Schools structure Boards of Examiners according to their own requirements.

Principle 6 Members of Boards of Examiners and those working in support of Boards of Examiners receive appropriate support for and recognition of their role.

Board of Examiners' Remit

3.2 The overarching remit of Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes and Courses is:

- to oversee and conduct the entire assessment process according to the University's Taught Assessment Regulations and other relevant regulations and policies, along with the principles approved by the appropriate Board of Studies;
- to ensure that suitably detailed marking criteria are prepared for every item of assessment under the authority of the Board;
- to take responsibility for determining outcomes for students across all elements of courses or programmes for which the Board has responsibility;
- to manage the outcomes of Exceptional Circumstances Committees appropriately;
- to produce a set of outcomes appropriate to the assessments and to record and transmit these as required by regulations and procedures in force at the time;
- to minute its decisions in accordance with current regulation and guidance and ensure that archives of its decisions/minutes and those of any of its subsidiaries are maintained for the appropriate retention period.

4 Who does what?

Authority

4.1 This Handbook, along with the Taught Assessment Regulations and other University regulations and policies set out the authority and responsibility of key office-holders in relation to Boards of Examiners. Colleges and Schools may delegate tasks associated with the operation of the Board to appropriate academic or professional services staff, but responsibility for the delivery of those tasks rests with the formal office-holders. Whenever a specific role is delegated, this must be agreed with the person who has responsibility for the role, and a record kept of the delegations that are in place.



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Appointment of key office-holders

Convener of the Board of Examiners

- 4.2 The relevant Head of School is responsible for appointing the **Convener of the Board of Examiners**.
- 4.3 The Head of School informs the College Office about the appointment of the Convener by the beginning of the relevant Semester for the Board of Examiners responsible for courses assessed in each Semester, and by the beginning of Semester 2 for the Board responsible for programme decisions for each programme.
- 4.4 For combined (formerly joint) degrees the “owning” Head of School liaises with other relevant Heads of School. In the case of any disagreement on the appointment of a Convener of a combined Board of Examiners, the Convener is nominated by the relevant Heads of College or their nominee.
- 4.5 Programme Directors and Course Organisers are not the Convener of the Board of Examiners for their programmes or courses. This is to ensure appropriate separation of roles. If the Convener is also a Course Organiser, formal chairing of the Board of Examiners is delegated to another member of the Board for discussion of that course.

Internal Examiners

- 4.6 The relevant Head of School is responsible for appointing **Internal Examiners**. Internal Examiners are teaching and/or honorary staff of the University who teach on SCQF level 7 to 12 courses which are awarded for credit. Honorary staff in this context include:
- Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House;
 - Academic staff from research pooling partners who are appointed as an internal examiner by APRC on the basis of a recommendation from the relevant College;
 - and NHS staff.
- 4.7 There is no requirement that all Course Organisers, or teaching staff involved in teaching courses in a given Semester should be appointed as Internal Examiners. In appointing Internal Examiners, Heads of School must balance the efficient operation of the Board with the need to ensure sufficient expertise across the range of subjects within the Board’s remit.

External Examiners

- 4.8 The relevant College appoints **External Examiners** on the basis of nominations from the relevant Head of School. External Examiners are members of the Board who are not staff of the University. Their role, powers and responsibilities are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:



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www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

Lists of Examiners

- 4.9 Heads of School approve the list of Examiners for Boards of Examiners for each diet of Boards to be held. Boards need not comprise the same set of Examiners for each diet of Boards to be held, for example following Semester 1 and Semester 2. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the Head of School or their nominee in good time before the relevant exam diet. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant School and are available for inspection by members of staff.

Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 4.10 The Head of School is responsible for appointing the **Convener and members of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee**.

Regulations Expert

- 4.11 The relevant School is responsible for appointing a **Regulations Expert** for each Board of Examiners. The Regulations Expert does not need to be a member of the Board of Examiners, and may be a member of academic or professional services staff. Schools may appoint a Regulations Expert to operate across the School or across a number of Boards of Examiners. The role may be combined with another role in the Board.

Secretary to the Board of Examiners

- 4.12 Schools are responsible for appointing a **Secretary** for each of their Boards of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners

- 4.13 A Board of Examiners is composed of the Internal and External Examiners for the courses and/or programmes covered by the Board. The Convener can also invite to attend Board meetings those markers or others involved in teaching or assessment who are not Internal Examiners, but they are not involved in decision making at the Board.
- 4.14 The Board of Examiners is chaired by a Convener and supported by a Secretary of the Board and a Regulations Expert.

Operation of the Board of Examiners

- 4.15 Boards of Examiners hold formal meetings to make final decisions regarding the course and programme outcomes for students. There are two types of Boards of Examiners:

- Boards which make decisions regarding final results to be awarded for courses. These are sometimes referred to as Course Boards;



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

- Boards which make programme-level decisions regarding progression or final award based on ratified course results. These are sometimes referred to as Programme, Progression, or Awarding Boards.

4.16 -The quorum and operation for formal meetings of Boards of Examiners is covered in 4.187 to 4.242 below. Appendix C provides additional information about Undergraduate Progression Boards.

4.176 Much of the work which supports decision-making by Boards of Examiners, including modelling of students' outcomes, takes place outside of the formal meeting of the Board, and may involve only a subset of members of the Board, working with professional services staff (see Appendix B for further information). Preparatory meetings held as part of this work do not constitute "meetings" of the Board of Examiners, and do not therefore require a quorum of members to participate. However, it is essential that Boards have access to relevant information considered as part of these preparatory meetings and processes in order to support final decision-making at the formal meeting of the Board.

Quorum of the Board of Examiners

4.17-18 A Board of Examiners meeting is quorate if at least half the Internal Examiners participate and at least one External Examiner participates in and approves the decisions of the Board. No Board may have fewer than two Internal Examiners participating, in addition to the Convener.

4.19 For Undergraduate Progression Boards, quorum is met if at least two Internal Examiners and the Convener of the Board participate. At least one External Examiner has oversight of the decision process of the Progression Board. The purpose of the External Examiner is to confirm that the process has been carried out appropriately: the External Examiner does not need to approve individual progression decisions. Appendix C provides more information about Undergraduate Progression Boards.

4.18—20In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the School, the Convener of the Board may substitute Internal Examiners, providing the substitute members meet the criteria in 4.3.

4.21-19 Each subject area covered by the Board of Examiners must be represented and, whenever practicable, an External Examiner from each subject area should participate. Where more than one School is involved, the composition of the Board reflects the contribution of the Schools to the assessment of the courses or programmes.

4.2022 The University's [External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy](#) outlines External Examiners' participation in Boards of Examiners meetings.

4.2423 It is not necessary for the same members of a Board of Examiners to attend all meetings of the Board in an academic year, provided each meeting is quorate.



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4.2224 Meetings of Boards of Examiners may be held in-person, virtually, or in hybrid format, at the discretion of the relevant Convener. Where meetings are held virtually, these should operate synchronously wherever possible, with all present members participating in real-time. However, virtual meetings may operate asynchronously where necessary and with approval from the relevant College, provided that a quorum of members participate. Any External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board's deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect the nature of their participation.

Convener of the Board of Examiners

4.2325 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has overall responsibility for the assessment process for courses and programmes covered by the Board, for ensuring that the Board operates within University regulations, and for corresponding on behalf of the Board. The Convener may delegate specific tasks to the Course Organiser, Programme Director, School Teaching Organisation (or equivalent), but the Convener has responsibility for the activities set out in 4.2426 to 4.2830.

4.2426 Ensuring the Board meets deadlines for the administration of assessment:

- In consultation with the College, School, Registry Services as appropriate, and in line with the key University dates, setting outline dates for meetings of the Board of Examiners at least one year in advance;
- Commenting on the draft examination timetable distributed by Registry Services;
- Ensuring that all assessment administration deadlines are met, including those for recording course and programme outcomes in the EUCLID student record.

4.2527 Ensuring that the necessary activities take place in preparation for assessment:

- Approving the content of examination papers, taking account of the comments of External Examiners;
- Ensuring that the statement of assessment provided to students of how and when each of their courses and programmes is to be assessed includes information about the Board of Examiners' standard setting and moderation methods;
- Ensuring the security of, and arrangements for, setting examination papers and assessments, including the robustness of and resources for electronic assessment, examining and marking of assessed work, processing and storing marks and grades;
- Approving the use of email or other electronic transfer for transmission of draft examination papers and other information to external examiners for their evaluation of the assessment of students provided that appropriate security



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measures have been taken within the scope of current University computer security guidance;

- Considering, with the relevant College Dean and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport.

4.2628 Ensuring the appropriate conduct of marking and moderation processes prior to the Board:

- Ensuring the quality and standards of marking and moderation of members of the Board, as well as those markers who are not members;
- With the Head of School, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a member of staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment;
- Coordinating arrangements for marking assessed work and ensuring that all Internal and External Examiners and markers are aware of their responsibilities and of the relevant common marking scheme;
- Ensuring the operation of appropriate internal moderation processes, and providing examples of students' summative assessments to External Examiners in line with the University's policies / procedures on Moderation;
- Deciding what action to take if markers consider a student's work to be illegible;
- Investigating cases where a student has failed to complete all assessment components of a degree programme, and ensuring that they are dealt with under the appropriate policy;
- Ensuring that any academic misconduct offences are referred to the School Academic Misconduct Officer for investigation.

4.2729 Ensuring the effective operation of Board of Examiners meetings within University regulations, including:

- convening meetings, and informing the Head of School in writing when they delegate this responsibility to another member of the Board (eg where the Convener is also a Programme or Course Organiser, they must delegate formal chairing of the Board of Examiners to another member of the Board for discussion of that programme or course.);
- confirming that the Board is quorate;
- ensuring that summary information about the decisions and recommendations of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee is reported to the Board by, or on behalf of, the ECC Convener;
- applying any penalty imposed by the College/School Academic Misconduct Officer for academic misconduct;
- ensuring that the Board reaches decisions in line with University degree and taught assessment regulations, and, where relevant, any supplementary College rules;
- confirming the detailed assessment results;
- ensuring as part of the formal proceedings of the Board that External Examiners are invited to comment on the structure, content, teaching and assessment of the course(s) and/or programme(s) under scrutiny;



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- guiding the Board of Examiners to reach a collective decision (decisions do not need to be unanimous).

4.2830 Ensuring appropriate follow-up after the meeting of the Board:

- ensuring that results and decisions are recorded in the EUCLID student record and communicated to students within the deadlines published by Student Systems, and that an accurate minute of the Board of Examiners meeting is produced;
- completing any follow-up activity, concessions, or Convener's action business stemming from the Board meeting, ensuring that this is minuted and recorded appropriately;
- in the event of an academic appeal, providing the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meeting and commenting on the appellant's case;
- in the event that new information comes to light about a decision of the Board, deciding whether to reconvene the Board.

Internal Examiner

4.2931 An Internal Examiner must participate as required in meetings of the Board of Examiners. Where an Internal Examiner is unable to participate in a meeting of the Board of Examiners, they must notify the Convener or Secretary to the Board of this as soon as possible.

4.3032 Internal Examiners are responsible for reaching a collective decision with other members of the Board of Examiners regarding the course and programme outcomes for students within the Board's remit. Where an Internal Examiner has questions or concerns about provisional results being presented to the Board, for example regarding the processes of marking and moderation which have taken place prior to the Board meeting, they should raise these with the Convener.

External Examiner

4.3133 One or more External Examiners are appointed to the Board of Examiners (see 4.4). External Examiners participate as a member of the Board and agree jointly the decisions of the Board. Full details of the role and responsibilities of External Examiners are provided in the [External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy](#).

Convener of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee

4.3234 The Convener of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC) has responsibility for ensuring that the Exceptional Circumstances Committee operates within University regulations and the [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Regulations Expert

4.~~33~~35 The role of the Regulations Expert is to act as an immediate source of knowledge and advice to the Board of Examiners about the relevant University regulations and guidance and their academic application.

4.~~34~~36 The Regulations Expert will attend or be available to all meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the relevant regulations and guidance are available for reference at all meetings.

4.~~35~~37 Where the Regulations Expert gives advice outwith the context of a Board meeting, for example in the course of Exceptional Circumstances Committees and academic misconduct investigations, they should consult as necessary with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

Course Organiser

4.~~36~~38 The Course Organiser carries out the detailed administration of the course on behalf of the Head of School, including various administrative aspects of arrangements for assessment. Information in 4.~~20~~39 to 4.~~24~~43 sets out the Course Organiser's main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners.

4.~~37~~39 Preparation for assessment:

- monitoring and checking the timely setting of examination and in-course assessment work.

4.~~38~~40 Marking and moderation processes:

- co-ordinating arrangements for marking assessed work, ensuring that marks are collected and recorded (in most instances via the Teaching Organisation or equivalent) and that markers are aware of their responsibilities;
- in line with the University's policies and procedures on moderation, organising and supervising moderation at the course level, and taking action, in conjunction with the Convener of the Board of Examiners if necessary, where inconsistency or unsatisfactory practice is identified, and supervising the recording of the occurrence and the outcome of moderation decisions;
- liaising with the External Examiners on matters relating to the assessment of the course and arrangements for the Board of Examiners meeting.

4.~~39~~41 Preparing material for the Board of Examiners meeting in line with relevant timelines in the School or Deanery. This includes:

- collating or supervising the collation of marks;
- checking marks (together with the Course Secretary/Administrator or other colleague as appropriate);
- preparing reports on cases of academic misconduct identified in their course;
- liaising with the Secretary to the Board of Examiners on the presentation of provisional results to the Board;



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- briefing the Convener of the Board of Examiners on any complex issues, either directly or via the Secretary to the Board;
- maintaining continuity in the event of sabbatical leave in the following Semester by ensuring that marks are collected and recorded before their departure, or arrangements made for this to be done, and that all correspondence with students and notes about the assessment are handed over to their successor, with appropriate briefing.

4.4042 Contributing to Board of Examiners' meetings including:

- presenting the provisional results for their course/programme, noting any particular issues regarding the marking; Course Organisers may present their results directly to the Board, or via a subject area/year representative or equivalent, who presents a number of courses in their area;

4.4143 Following-up after the meeting of the Board:

- carrying out actions as directed by the Board of Examiners;
- ensuring that arrangements are made as necessary for re-assessment, whether re-submission of coursework or resit examinations, and that students are aware of any requirements relating to these over and above those notified by Student Systems;
- ensuring that the Course Handbook, EUCLID Course Descriptor and other published information are updated in the light of any relevant decisions of the Board of Examiners, Board of Studies, and changes to University regulations and guidance relating to assessment.

Head of School or nominee

4.4244 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the School that owns the programme or course are:

- Appointing the Convener of the Board of Examiners, along with the Internal and External Examiners (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
- Appointing the Convener and members of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee;
- Appointing markers;
- Appointing Regulations Experts (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
- With the Convener of the Board of Examiners, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a marker, Examiner or member of staff, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment.

Head of College or nominee (typically a Dean)

4.4345 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the College or nominee are:

- Appointing External Examiners on the basis of nominations from Heads of Schools;



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- Ensuring that all elements which contribute to the award of a degree from the University are represented by the appropriate number of External Examiners;
- Advising the Convener of the Board of Examiners, Head of School, or Regulations Expert on the interpretation and application of the relevant University Regulations and guidance regarding Boards of Examiners;
- Considering, with the Convener of the Board of Examiners and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport;
- Handling concession requests submitted by Boards of Examiners.

5 The principle of anonymity

5.1 Anonymity is an important principle for the operation of Boards of Examiners and assessment processes. The Taught Assessment Regulations outline the requirements for:

- Marking work anonymously when possible (the marker should not know the identity of the student);
- Anonymising marks and grades during processing;
- Retaining the anonymity of a student's work at the Board of Examiners, until the best interests of the student are no longer served by anonymity;
- A final check of the un-anonymised marks and decisions;
- Anonymity for examiners (the views of a particular examiner at a Board of Examiners should not be made known to a student);
- Anonymity of results (there should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme).

6 Avoiding conflicts of interest

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

6.2 For advice regarding what to do in the event of a potential conflict of interest, see the Taught Assessment Regulations.

7 Business to cover at meetings of Boards of Examiners

7.1 Appendix A provides a Template Board of Examiners Agenda / Minute, which sets out core items to cover at Board meetings. Schools may wish to supplement these with additional items where appropriate.

8 Minutes for Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings



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Responsibility for minute-taking

- 8.1 Conveners of Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committees are responsible for agreeing an accurate record for each meeting.
- 8.2 The School should decide who is responsible for taking the minutes of a Board of Examiners or Exceptional Circumstances Committee meeting (most commonly this will be the Secretary to the Board of Examiners). Conveners of Boards of Examiners should ensure that the minute-taker is properly briefed for any specific issues that may arise in a meeting.

Minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings

- 8.3 Appendix A provides guidance regarding how to record meetings of Boards of Examiners. When recording the proceedings, follow these general points:
 - do not attribute views to an identifiable individual member of the Board;
 - use a student's examination number rather than name when referring to an individual student;
 - record the outcome of any vote taken during the meeting;
 - where relevant, note any guidance or regulations consulted or invoked.

Minutes of Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 8.4 The general points regarding recording Board of Examiners meetings (see 8.3) and many of the core elements covered in Appendix A (eg Date of Meeting, Attendance and Quorum, Scope of the Meeting) also apply to the minutes for Exceptional Circumstances Committees.
- 8.5 The minutes of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC) will also include:
 - The decision taken in relation to each case and the reasons for this decision, along with any recommendations for appropriate action to be taken by the Board of Examiners in response to the circumstances.
- 8.6 The minutes of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee are not circulated to the Board of Examiners. Instead, the Convener should provide a written report of its decisions and recommendations on these matters to the relevant Board of Examiners.

Minutes and Data Protection and Freedom of Information



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- 8.7 While the Board of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances minutes are confidential, there are circumstances in which some of their content must be made available on request:
- Under Data Protection legislation a student can make a Subject Access Request (SAR) for the disclosure of comments about themselves.
 - Under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) anyone can request information contained in the minutes or reports but comments about individual candidates are exempt from disclosure. For example, comments about the general standard of the candidates must be disclosed on request.
- 8.8 Prior to disclosing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR or FOISA request, School Information Practitioners should ask the Convener of the Board or ECC:
- Whether the minutes are draft or approved (this should be stated when releasing the documentation); and
 - Whether there are any concerns regarding releasing any particular content in the minutes (this should be taken into account when applying any exemptions and advice sought from the Records Management Section).
- 8.9 When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR, Schools must only provide identifiable personal information about the requestor - personal information about other individuals must be anonymised. When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a FOISA request all personal information about students must be anonymised. Information is considered anonymised if there are at least 4 individuals to whom the information could refer. Guidance on anonymisation is available on the University website:
[Guidance on anonymisation](#)
- 8.10 When releasing minutes in response to FOISA requests, the names of the individuals that attended the meeting should be disclosed unless there is a justifiable reason not to do so. If the School is aware of a reason not to release the name of an individual, their Information Practitioner should seek exemption advice from the Records Management Section.
- 8.11 School Information Practitioners (<https://information-compliance.ed.ac.uk/roles-responsibilities/information-practitioners>) may seek advice from Information Compliance Services regarding the handling of information requests, informationcompliance@ed.ac.uk.

Minutes and Student Academic Appeals and Complaints

- 8.12 The minutes or relevant extract from the minutes of Board of Examiners or Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings can be taken account in the course of student academic appeals, and may also be relevant to a student complaint. Material produced during an appeal or complaint may receive external scrutiny by the



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Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University procedures and takes their case to the SPSO.

- 8.13 Where a student requests minutes to assist them with an appeal or complaint, Schools should only provide extracts relevant to the Board or ECC's decisions on the individual's case, along with extracts containing any general remarks which might be held by the student to be relevant to their appeal (e.g. on the involvement of supervisors in the assessment process). When supplying minutes to students as part of an appeal or complaints process, Schools should follow the principles set out above in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Interaction between minutes and communications to students

- 8.14 Where Schools communicate with individual students following the publication of course or programme results (often relating to failure to progress), they should ensure that the explanation that they provide the student for the results should accurately reflect that recorded in the minutes.

9 Retention of Minutes and Papers of Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 9.1 Minutes and Papers of Board of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances meetings should be retained for 5 years after graduation, withdrawal or other permanent departure from University, or, in the case of lapsed students, 8 years after last contact with students:

[University Retention Schedules](#)

10 Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

- 10 Appendix B provides an indicative timeline and a summary of key processes associated with Boards of Examiners.

11 Sources of support and information

- 11.1 The Handbook forms part of a suite of support and advice for Boards of Examiners, which also includes briefing and training sessions presented by College Offices and Academic Services, and student record training provided by Student Systems.
- 11.2 Boards of Examiners are supported by office-holders who can provide advice on the interpretation and application of this Handbook and related University Regulations and policies. Each Board of Examiners will have a Regulations Expert (see above). In addition:
- Each College will designate College Office or other College level staff to be available for consultation by Regulations Experts and by Conveners of Boards of Examiners;
 - Academic Services will provide advice on the academic application of regulations;



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- Student Administration and Student Systems can advise on matters regarding examinations and student systems.

11.3 In general, queries should be directed in the first instance to the College.

11.4 The University provides other sources of information about specific aspects of the assessment process.

- [Appeals](#)
- [Exam Hall Regulations](#)
- [External Examining](#)
- [Senate Glossary of terms](#)
- [Policy and terms of reference for Progression Boards](#)
- [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#)
- [Student Systems Guidance](#)

~~23 May 2024~~ 23 January 2025



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Appendix A - Template Board of Examiners Agenda and Minutes

Confidential
[Name of School]
[Name of Courses/Degree Programmes Covered by BoE]
[Academic Year]
[Date and venue of BoE meeting]
AGENDA / MINUTES

1 Introduction

At meeting:

- Confirm BoE quorate; confirm those present, including Convener, External Examiner(s) and Secretary, and whether members or “in attendance”; confirm Regulations Expert is present or available.

In minutes:

- Record that the BoE was quorate, record the names of those present according to whether they are members of the Board or are in attendance, and note any change in the capacity in which a member is attending (e.g. appointment of an Acting Convener).
- If External Examiner(s) was not present, record the reason, together with alternative arrangements made for their input.
- If the Regulations Expert was not present, confirm that they were available for consultation.

2 Apologies

At meeting and in minutes: note any apologies.

3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

At meeting:

- Remind members that discussions at BoE are confidential.
- Confirm whether the marking processes have been conducted anonymously.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

4 Minutes of Previous Board of Examiners meeting(s) of [Date(s)]

At meeting:

- Invite Board to endorse the minutes as an accurate record.
- Report any Convener’s Actions or matters arising.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

5 Exceptional Circumstances

At meeting:

- Invite Convener/representative of ECC to present summary report.
- Invite Board to agree outcomes for each candidate.

In minutes:

- Record that the Board considered the report.



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- Record each decision along with the main reasons (when recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the decision reached). Where the Board has rejected the recommendation(s) of the ECC, record the reasons for this.

6 Confirmation of course/programme results

At meeting:

- For each course/programme, invite the Course Organiser / Programme Director / Subject or Year representative to introduce the provisional results and to note any particular issues regarding the marking, and paying particular attention to borderline cases.
- Decide on final course or award / progression outcomes.
- Invite External Examiner(s) to confirm that they support the outcomes.

In minutes:

- List each course/programme, with appropriate reference number, and note final results. (Alternatively, the minutes may be supplemented by the Board reports produced in BI Suite.)
- Record details of any modification of provisional marks, grades, or award / progression decision, together with the reasons for these.
- Record the discussion and outcome for any borderline cases.
- Where not all results are available by the time of the meeting, record information on the availability of results for individual students and record the reasons for an award or absence of award.
- In Honours years other than final, record any particular circumstances that will subsequently be relevant to classification.
- When recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the decision reached.
- Should there be circumstances in which feedback on work has not been available which would normally have been used by students in their preparation for examinations, this must be noted in relation to the individual students concerned.
- Record comments by the External Examiner(s) about the examination of the course(s) or programme(s), the performance of the students in general, and their approval of results agreed by the Board.

7 Anonymity

At meeting:

- Once decisions have been taken on course and programme outcomes, lift anonymity and substitute student names for examination numbers, then conduct a final check and agree the results as final.

In minutes:



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- Record when anonymity is lifted, and any change made to marks, grades or class of degree in the event of detection of an error which was not detectable when examination numbers were used.

8 Withdrawals and Exclusions

At meeting and in minutes: note student withdrawals and cases where students may be excluded for unsatisfactory progress.

9 Convener's Action

At meeting and in minutes: note any matters to be dealt with by Convener's Action following the meeting.

10 External Examiner(s) comments

At meeting: invite External Examiner(s) to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the course(s) and/or programme(s).
In minutes: record their main comments.

11 Any Other Business



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Appendix B - Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

Main annual timelines

The following is a summary of the main annual timelines associated with Boards of Examiners. It is indicative, and Schools will be informed of the precise timelines for particular processes on an annual basis. The summary is not exhaustive as Boards may have additional activities in local remits. The timeline is based on the standard University academic year structure and examination diets, and programmes with different assessment cycles may need to adapt the checklist.

August / September

- UG resit assessment diet
- Marking and moderation of UG resit diet and PGT assessments (including dissertations)
- UG resit Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC) and Board of Examiners (BoE) meetings
- Record UG resit and progression decisions on EUCLID student record
- PGT ECC and BoE meetings
- Course Organisers check that course handbooks, with assessment statements, are up to date and available to students

Note that Board of Examiner activities in August / September associated with the UG resit diet and PGT assessments should be conducted according to the previous session's assessment regulations and associated policies.

October

- Schools consulted on Semester 1 examination timetable
- Semester 1 examination timetable published
- Record PGT award decisions for November/December graduations on EUCLID student record

November

- Heads of School appoint examiners for S1 examination diet (by 1 November)
- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S1 examinations. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.

December

- S1 examination diet
- Marking and moderation of S1 assessment (continues into January)

January

- Heads of School appoint examiners for S2 examination diet (by 15 January)
- ECC and BoE meetings for S1 courses
- Record S1 course results on the EUCLID student record



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- Latest time for setting date for the next year's January Board of Examiners meetings

February

- Schools consulted on Semester 2 exam timetable

March

- Semester 2 exam timetable published

April

- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S2 examinations. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.
- S2 examination diet starts
- Marking and moderation of S2 assessment (continues into May)

May / June

- ECC and BoE meetings
- Record course results, progression and degree awards on EUCLID student record
- Latest time for setting date for the next year's May / June Board of Examiners meeting
- Communicate progression and award decisions to students
- Taught Assessment Regulations for following academic year published

July

- Schools consulted on resit examination timetable
- Resit examination timetable published

Key dates for recording results on EUCLID student record

The key dates for recording results into the EUCLID student record and communication of results to students is available from Student Systems. Requirements for communicating results to students are provided in the Taught Assessment Regulations.

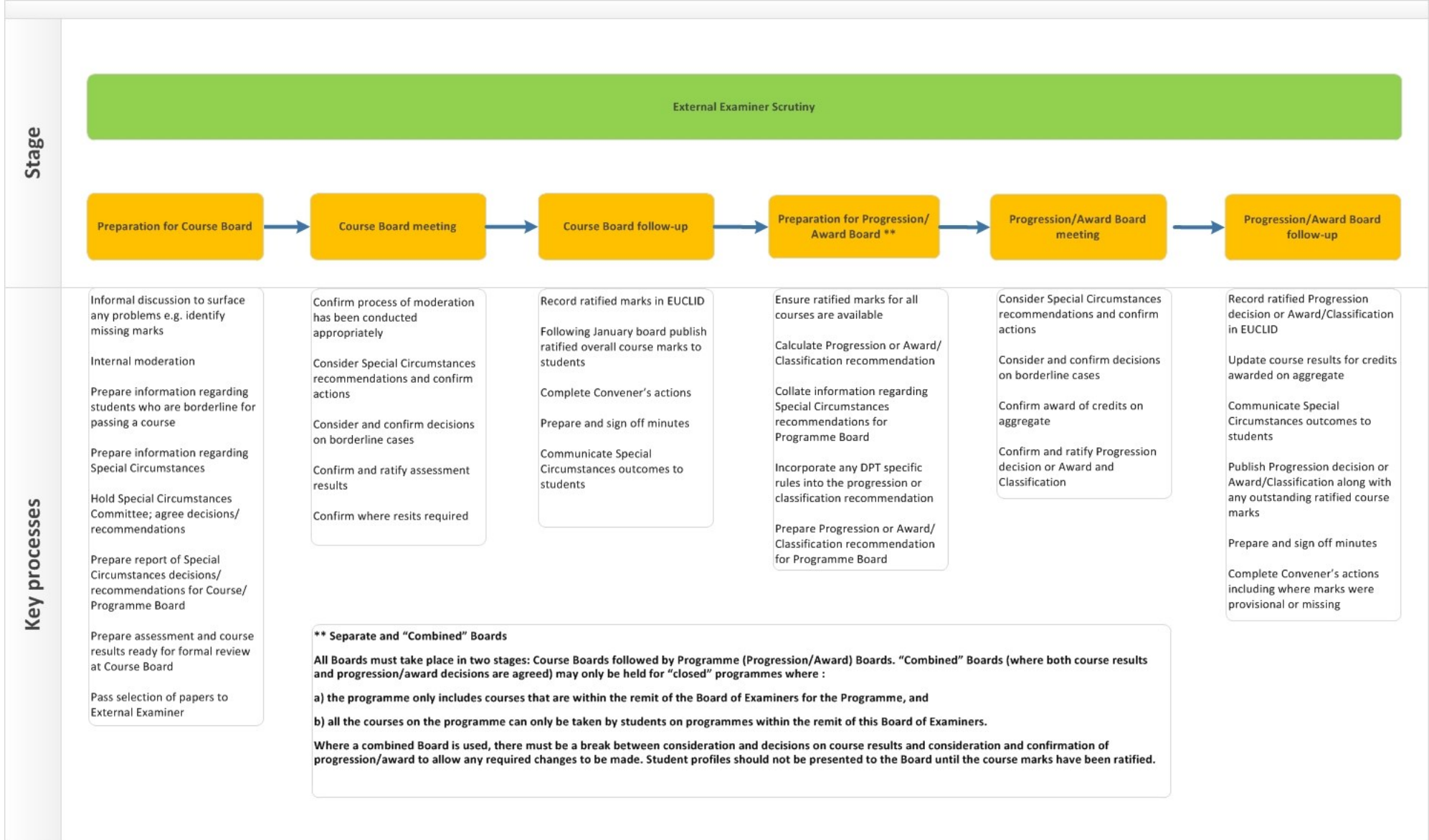
www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations

Key processes for operation of Boards of Examiners

The diagram on the following page provides a summary of key processes to be carried out in the operation of Boards of Examiners.

Key processes for Boards of Examiners



Appendix C – Undergraduate Progression Boards

1. An Undergraduate Progression Board decides whether a student has passed and attained the required amount and level of credit, and satisfied any other specific requirements for the relevant degree programme, as published in the programme handbook and degree programme tables. The Progression Board is responsible for the award of credit on aggregate.
2. A Progression Board is held at each stage of an undergraduate student's degree programme where a progression decision is made. For most undergraduate degree programmes this is:
 - a. at year end, where a decision is made about progression to the next stage of study, i.e. after the May/June assessment diet; and
 - b. after the August resit assessment diet and before the start of the next academic session.
3. Some students may also have progression decisions at other times, e.g. following re-assessments. Once the progression decision is ratified, the School uploads it into EUCLID. So, for example, a student may pass a resit in a December examination diet which is confirmed by a Board of Examiners and Progression Board in January.
4. Progression Boards can only be held when all relevant course results have been ratified and are available to support the progression decision being made.
5. Course results need to be published before or at the same time as progression decisions are published. Award and progression decisions must not be published before the student's course result decisions are published.
6. Unless there is progression to a further stage of a programme, Progression Boards are not held after the semester 1 examination diet. Schools need to have mechanisms to identify students for whom failure in semester 1 courses place them at risk of failure to progress irrespective of the student's performance in semester 2. Follow-up action can then be taken forward by Student Advisers and other relevant staff.
- 4.7. Where a student cannot progress to the next stage of study for their current degree programme, and when they can progress but still need to meet additional requirements, for example taking additional credit in the following year, Schools will have arrangements to consider how the student should proceed. This could include a meeting between the student and Student Adviser, or other relevant staff member. Schools will include information about their process for this on their website. Some options, e.g. transfer to another degree programme, require

approval by the appropriate authority specified in the Undergraduate Degree Regulations.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 January 2025

Committee Priorities – Mid-Year Reflection

Description of paper

1. The paper provides an update on progress with Committee priorities for 2024/25. This will be reported to Senate in February 2025 as part of the mid-year reflection on standing committee priorities and will inform the Committee's work on the priorities for the remainder of the academic year.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to note the paper and **comment** on progress with the Committee priorities for 2024/25 in order to inform area(s) of focus and/or actions/outcomes for the remainder of the academic year as appropriate.

Background and context

3. The Committee agreed its priorities for 2024/25 at its meeting in March 2024 and these were presented to Senate in May, June, and October 2024.
4. **Development of Committee priorities 2025/26:** A paper will be presented for discussion at the March 2025 meeting of the Committee in order to develop the Committee priorities for 2025/26. The following will be taken into consideration when proposing priorities across the Standing Committees:
 - Committee remits
 - Feedback from Senate and other Standing Committees
 - University strategic priorities
 - External and regulatory requirements
 - Outcomes of quality processes, including external review

Discussion

Committee priorities 2024/25

Curriculum Transformation Programme

5. The Committee has provided input to proposals from the Curriculum Transformation Programme regarding the PGT Framework, specifically in relation to:
 - Degree Specific Regulations contained Within the Postgraduate Degree Regulations
 - Study periods for PGT Programmes
 - Stackable degree structure
 - Regulations for MSc Progression and Award
 - PGT course pass mark

6. The Curriculum Transformation Programme team will continue to consult with, and update, the Committee on matters related to the academic regulatory framework throughout the remainder of 2024/25.

The following frameworks and guidance are also due for review as part of the Curriculum Transformation Programme and are expected to come to APRC for approval:

- Models for Degree Types
- Framework for Curricula
- Degree Programme Specification Guidance

The timeline for the review of these documents is unclear at present, since it is dependent upon progress with the undergraduate elements of the Curriculum Transformation Programme.

Postgraduate Research students

7. We are aiming to hold a meeting of the PGR sub-group early in 2025 to consider potential further amendments to regulations and policies to enhance the PGR student experience, building on the progress made in 2023/24. Informal reports from College Offices indicate that there has been some positive impact from the amendments approved by APRC in 2023/24 based on recommendations from the sub-group, in particular the amendment to regulations relating to withdrawal and reinstatement.

Scheduled review of policies

8. Academic Quality and Standards, and other stakeholders and policy owners, are conducting consultations with relevant stakeholders to revise the policies and guidance as set out in the review schedule approved by the Committee in March 2023.
9. The Committee has so far reviewed and approved amendments to the following policies under the remit of APRC:
 - Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure
 - College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference
 - Policy on University use of email as method of contacting students
10. Academic Quality and Standards are undertaking consultation regarding amendments to the following policies and regulations, which should come to the Committee for approval in 2024/25:
 - Authorised Interruption of Study Policy
 - Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy
 - Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure
 - Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations (due March 2025)
 - Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations (due March 2025)

- Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (due May 2025)
- Taught Assessment Regulations (due May 2025)

11. There is also ongoing consultation regarding updates to the Support for Study policy, which is due for review this academic year 2024/25.
12. Due to staffing constraints within the Academic Quality and Standards team, we anticipate that we will need to postpone the reviews of some policy documents into 2025/26, including:
- Dual, Double, and Multiple Awards Policy
 - Associated Institution Policy
- We do not anticipate that this delay will lead to any specific risks.

Students with support needs beyond the scope of the Exceptional Circumstances policy

13. This additional priority was agreed by the Committee by electronic business following its meeting in March 2024.
14. The Committee received an update in November 2024 on work being undertaken by Registry Services in response to the Watch that Gap report, following the initial findings presented to the Committee in March 2024. The Committee is expecting a further update on this work, including detail of how the impact will be evaluated, later in 2024-25.

Resource implications

15. This paper does not propose any new actions. The resource implications of any additional actions which arise from the discussion would need to be outlined and considered.

Risk management

16. Progress against priorities is vital to the Committee fulfilling its remit. Failure to fulfil its remit raises potential risks associated with the University's framework of academic policy and regulations and the student experience.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

17. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

18. This paper does not propose any actions. The equality and diversity implications any actions which arise from the discussion would need to be outlined and considered.

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

19. The outcomes of the discussion will be reported to Senate in February 2025 as part of the mid-year reflection on standing committee priorities. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

Author

Academic Quality and Standards
January 2025

Presenter

Prof Patrick Hadoke
Convener of APRC
Director of Postgraduate Research and Early
Career Research Experience (CMVM)

Freedom of Information *Open*