

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Thursday 22 May 2025 at 2:00pm

Cuillin Room

MINUTES

Present: Professor Gill Aitken Sarah Barnard (Secretary) Dr Matt Bell Victoria Buchanan Dr Adam Bunni Professor Jeremy Crang Lisa Dawson Dr Murray Earle Dr Valentina Ferlito Clair Halliday Professor Patrick Hadoke (Convener) Professor Linda Kirstein Isabel Lavers Katy McPhail Catriona Morley Dr Donna Murray Callum Paterson Dr Emily Taylor (Vice-Convener) Dylan Walch Kirsty Woomble In attendance: Professor Mary Brennan Rebecca Shade Amy Willis Apologies: Lucy Evans Amanda Fegan Professor Mohini Gray Karen Howie Charlotte Macdonald	Dean of Education (CMVM) Academic Policy Officer, Academic Quality and Standards Senate representative (CSE) Director, Disability and Learning Support Service Academic Policy Manager, Academic Quality and Standards Dean of Students (CAHSS) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Senate representative (CAHSS) Senate representative (CMVM) Deputy Manager, The Advice Place Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) Dean of Education (CSE) Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Head of Taught Student Administration (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 Head of Postgraduate Research Student Office (CAHSS) Dean of Education (CAHSS) Senior Policy and Projects Adviser – Students Academic Policy Officer Deputy Secretary, Students Head of Postgraduate Research Student Administration (CSE) Dean of Students and Alumni (CMVM) Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services Manager, The Advice Place
--	---

1.	Welcome and apologies The Convener welcomed committee members to the meeting and introduced Rebecca Shade and Amy Willis, in attendance. Apologies were noted from Lucy Evans, Amanda Fegan, Mohini Gray and Karen Howie.
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting (Paper 2A) To approve 20 March 2025 The EUSA VP Education commented on a recent discussion at Senate Education Committee about lecture recordings in the context of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy, noting that this felt disconnected from the March APRC discussion regarding lecture recording. The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.
3.	3.1 Matters Arising Convener's Communications A call for expressions of interest in the positions of Convener and Vice-Convener was issued prior to the meeting. The Convener confirmed expressions of interest had been received, and would be brought forward for voting under item 4.4. The committee noted the withdrawal of a proposed amendment to UG DRPS 28, which had been approved by the committee at the previous meeting for recommendation to University Court. Due to an oversight, colleagues in SWAY were not initially consulted and had subsequently raised significant concerns about the proposal. The Convener had therefore approved the removal of this proposed amendment, before the Court Resolution process was undertaken. The regulation will be revisited in the next annual review. Actions Log The Academic Registrar gave a verbal update on Watch That Gap, highlighting challenges including a need for a clear student identification method and resource allocation issues due to shifting focus to the Board of Examiners project. Related work is ongoing through the Widening Participation Strategy, of which the Academic Registrar is co-leading a strand with the Dean of Students and Alumni (CMVM). They have also been working with The 93% Club to provide information to students around availability of financial support. The Academic Registrar will share a further electronic update in due course. 3.2 Report of Convener's Action Summary of Approved Concessions Since the last meeting (March 2025): Number of individual student concessions approved: 20 (15 PGR, 3 PGT, 2 UG) Number of cohort concessions approved: 0 The Convener suggested that the emphasis of concession requests should be on assessing the probability of a successful outcome for the student in their programme, noting the long-standing nature of several recent PGR concession requests. It would also be beneficial to know if Schools, supervisors, and Directors/Deans support these requests to aid in their processing.
4.	SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS
4.1	Taught Assessment Regulations 2025/26 To approve

The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager.
The Committee discussed the proposed amendments, with the following points raised in the discussion:

27.6 Resit assessment

- Committee members queried whether the proposed amendment was aligned with the new Authorised Interruption of Studies policy, and expressed caution that it would generate more work at College concession level. The amendment was intended to clarify the status quo, which is that recency of study is considered when determining a student's eligibility to resit. Following the discussion, the Committee decided it would be fairer to the student and carry less risk of generating extra work to clarify the regulation in the opposite direction, excluding periods of AIS from consideration.
- "Session" and "academic year" are used interchangeably throughout the regulations. Academic Quality and Standards will review this with a view to standardising language as part of the next annual review of the regulations.

28.1 Late submission of coursework

- A Committee member raised that some areas of the University do not mark on a 0-100 scale, and that anecdotally, using a percentage (e.g., 5%) causes less confusion than using a specific mark. The terminology used in Academic Misconduct procedures varies, using both marks and percentages. The consensus was to maintain the current regulation for now.
- Academic Quality and Standards will review and address the inconsistent use of marks and percentages in the regulations in the next year.

46.3 Release of marks

- Committee members were cautious about the implication of making the three week turnaround a regulatory requirement. It was additionally raised that the reference to "submission date" is insufficiently clear as to when the clock starts.
- The Committee approved new proposed wording which made reference to timelines stated in the Assessment and Feedback Priorities and Principles, but did not specify the timelines within the regulation.

56.1 Postgraduate assessment progression

- The Committee queried the advantages of removing College oversight. The proposed amendment aimed to remove mention of a process distinct from the Exceptional Circumstances process, which applies to null sits. To clarify and avoid confusion, the reference to College approval for provisional progression to the dissertation will be reinstated in the regulation.

The Committee agreed to **approve** the Taught Assessment Regulations, subject to the additional revisions noted above being made, and approved by the Convener.

4.2 Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations 2025/26

To approve

The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager.

The Committee noted that the proposed changes around student capability have potential relevance to Regulation 13: Progression review and Regulation 14: Annual progression review recommendation, and this will be considered in next year's annual review of the regulations.

The Committee agreed to **approve** the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations.

4.3	Updated Support for Study Policy To approve The paper was presented by Rebecca Shade, Senior Policy and Projects Adviser – Students. The Support for Study Policy, in place since 2016, has been revised after extensive consultation to reflect current practice in Schools and Colleges, and to bring the Policy more into line with the approach elsewhere in the sector. It now includes more supportive language: setting out, for example, that students can bring healthcare professionals to meetings. Stage 3 outcomes now include exclusion from studies, intended to be used only where this is in a student’s best interest. The following amendments were proposed by the Committee: Throughout • The repeated phrase “and/or live as part of the University community” is broad and could expose the University to liability for situations beyond scope. Alternative wording such as “participate in the university community” or “residing” rather than “living” would be preferable. Nonetheless, Committee members felt that recognising the impact on other students (as in ResLife cases) within the policy marks an important improvement. Cover sheet (Overview section) • Following the sentence “The University will seek to engage with students who are experiencing health concerns in a positive and constructive manner” with “however” could potentially be interpreted as negating that commitment. 3 Overview of the policy • Under 3.4, clarification sought on whether notifying the Deputy Secretary Students is necessary when cases skip directly from Level 1 to Level 2, or if this was only for more severe cases. 7 Support for Study Stage 2 • Specifying that the phrase “Dean of Students” includes any nominee would be helpful and ensure there can be flexibility when potential conflicts of interest arise, i.e. when a Stage 2 case concerns a student in the Dean of Students’ own School. • Under 7.1, PGR colleagues would like more detail about their role in School level approval for Stage 2 referrals. • Section 7.13 does not specify a voting process; it states that the convener will make the final decision. This aspect is unclear. Committee members recommend removing the reference to a vote. 8 Support for Study Stage 3 • The Students’ Association had previously requested the removal of sabbatical officers from the membership of the Stage 3 meeting; a pool of students similar to the conduct panel would be preferable. Student members from the Student Discipline Committee were not seen as appropriate substitutes. 10 Students detained under the Mental Health Act • The Students’ Association expressed concerns regarding communication with the NHS, specifically that student consent should be obtained prior to sharing information. This wording will be revised accordingly. 11 Return to study

	The reference to eating disorders was felt to be out of place, although it was noted that UUK guidance specifically names eating disorders. The policy suggests that the NHS will have conducted a risk assessment when students are sectioned – this is difficult to guarantee in practice. It is also important to acknowledge that such circumstances can occur outside the UK context. The Senior Policy and Projects Adviser noted that the Director of Student Wellbeing, who has consulted on the policy, emphasised that the University must exercise its own judgment. The Students' Association representatives raised a number of concerns and asked that their objection to the policy be minuted. They expressed concerns that the policy may not comply with equalities legislation and the housing bill currently proceeding through Parliament. The Director of DLSS acknowledged the concern regarding disability discrimination, but cited extensive consultation on this policy, including with Legal Services. Additionally, in some instances, health and safety concerns take precedence over disability discrimination considerations. The EUSA VP Education questioned the purpose of including exclusion in the policy, if it is unlikely to be used, and expressed a view that the policy wording is complex and difficult to interpret. The Convener suggested proceeding with approval on the understanding that a review will be conducted in 2026/27, recognising that a comprehensive evaluation of how various policies (Code of Student Conduct, Exclusion and Withdrawal from studies procedure, Authorised Interruption of Studies) interrelate will be required. Currently, the SfS framework does not integrate seamlessly. With the caveats noted above, the Committee agreed to approve the updated policy, subject to amendments being made to clarify the issues noted. The final version will be approved by the Convener and circulated to members of the Committee for information.
4.4	APRC Convener and Vice-Convener 2025/26 To approve This item was presented by the Committee Convener. The Committee approves its Convener and Vice-Convener roles on an annual basis at the last Committee meeting of the year. The following expressions of interest were received in advance of the meeting: - One note of interest for Convener role (from Dr Emily Taylor, the current Vice-Convener) - One note of interest for Vice-Convener role (from Dr Donna Murray) There were no further notes of interest from members present. For discussion of the role of Convener, Dr Taylor left the room. The Committee discussed and approved Dr Taylor taking the role of Convener for 2025/26. For discussion of the role of Vice-Convener, Dr Murray left the room. The Committee discussed and approved Dr Murray taking the role of Vice-Convener for the next academic year 2024/25.
4.5	Regulatory Framework for Award of Masters with Pathway Specialism To approve This paper was presented by the College Deans of Education.

	The framework, agreed across the Colleges, has a single point of entry and shared core of 60 credits with 40 credits specialism. The Committee was asked to approve the proposed model. The proposal is presented as a response to the ambitions of the portfolio review, allowing specialist pathways which are not sustainable at programme level to be retained. The application of a common framework, including an agreed credit load for specialisms, can lead to consolidation and work being diverted in a different way. Committee members expressed support for the general direction of the proposal, but caution around practicalities such as potential added workload for teaching offices. The paper presenters acknowledged a lack of clarity at this stage as to the systems work implications of the proposal. However, it is expected that this work will be taken through as part of the L&T workstream. The proposed model already exists in areas of the University and developing solutions that are not workarounds would be beneficial. The paper presenters also noted senior commitment to ensuring that the required systems work happens in a way that is aligned with the Board of Examiners review and without creating additional bureaucracy. The Academic Registrar flagged concerns regarding the lack of priority for this work from a systems and governance view. Resources and work packages for the L&T workstream are currently not agreed upon, which could lead to conflicts in resource allocation and project execution. The Senate representative for CSE suggested there is a contradiction between the proposals for a Masters with Pathway Specialism and the pressure on existing pathway-based undergraduate programmes in the School of Biological Sciences. Acknowledging that it is not APRC's role to action systems changes or to rationalise undergraduate and postgraduate policy, and with the caveat that approval does not guarantee that the systems work will follow, the Committee agreed to approve the regulatory framework for award of Masters with Pathway Specialism.
4.6	Updates to the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure To approve The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager. The Committee discussed the proposed amendments, with the following points raised in the discussion: • The late declaration of Exceptional Circumstances in a progression interview introduces complexities that Boards of Examiners can struggle with. It was suggested that TAR 64.1, which outlines the process by which the Board of Examiners can be reconvened to review a decision, should be referenced explicitly under point 14 of the procedure. • In line with related policies, it should be added that students can bring a member of the University community with them to any interviews. • For categories of exclusion outwith the scope of appeal, the appropriate route is the Complaint Handling Procedure. The reference to students contacting Schools in the first instance if they are excluded due to non-matriculation or lapse of time will therefore be removed. • It was queried whether exclusion due to termination of supervision ought to be withdrawal, as the student is not at fault. It was explained that withdrawal is always voluntary on the part of the student, and these terms cannot be used interchangeably. The bar for terminating supervision is very high and has never happened. Exclusion on this basis would be an admission that we cannot provide the supervision.

	- It remains preferable for students to complete the Withdrawal Form, but it is not tenable to require this, as students often stop engaging after they have notified the University of their intention to withdraw. - The Director of Students and the Student Support Manager are more suitable points of contact to be informed of student withdrawals than the Cohort Lead and Programme Director. The Committee agreed to approve the revised Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure, subject to the additional amendments listed above being made.
4.7	Proposed Minor Amendments to Student Appeal Regulations To approve The paper was presented by Amy Willis, Complaints and Appeals Team Lead. Minor amendments to the student appeal regulations were proposed to ensure alignment with other policies. If there is a high volume of rejections of Authorised Interruption of Study requests that are subsequently appealed, these cases will be monitored closely in case review of the policy is required. Maximum appeal timelines for late appeals are to be amended to one year, with the provision in the TAR that the Board can review appeals up to two years later. There has been an increase in late appeals, but typically no later than six months. The Committee agreed to approve the amendments to the Student Appeal Regulations.
4.8	Expected Behaviour Policy To approve The paper was presented by Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar. The proposed changes are minor, primarily prompted by the Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals being established as its own entity, and also the removal of a reference to defamation from the list of unacceptable behaviours, since this term only applies in the context of a formal legal case. The Committee agreed to approve the amendments to the Expected Behaviour Policy.
4.9	Updates to the Policy Review Schedule To approve The Committee agreed to approve the changes to the Policy Review Schedule, including the transfer of responsibility for the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy to Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
4.10	Non-standard programme end dates for the Online MBA To approve The paper was presented by Emily Taylor, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS. The Online MBA has a unique student cohort and strong School support, which are mitigating factors for the non-standard format of the programme. The Convener suggested the repeated APRC approval requests for non-standard dates indicated some reactive decision-making from the School (potentially in response to gaps in the market), and also noted the short lead time. However, the approval of this proposal is not intended to set a precedent, and no additional costs or impact on student experience are expected.

	The Committee agreed to approve the non-standard end dates for this programme.
4.11	Student Discipline Committee Membership To approve The paper was presented by Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar. The terms of the Convener and Vice Convener of the Student Discipline Committee are approaching their conclusion. It is proposed to introduce a Professional Services Convener and an academic Vice-Convener. Given the increase in non-academic misconduct and following benchmarking with institutions across the UK, the appointment of a Professional Services Convener is considered appropriate. The Committee agreed to approve the proposed membership of the Student Discipline Committee. The Committee expressed thanks to the outgoing Convener and Vice Convener, and to the student members.
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION / NOTING	
5.1	Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26 To comment The Committee noted this paper.
5.2	Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review To note The Committee noted this paper.
6.	Any Other Business The Committee expressed its gratitude to the outgoing Convener, Professor Patrick Hadoke, for his contributions to APRC, including his diligent and considerate handling of concession requests. The Committee recorded thanks to Dylan Walch, outgoing EUSA VP Education, and Dr Murray Earle, attending his last APRC meeting as Senate representative for CAHSS.
Dates of meetings in 2025/26 Thursday 18 September 2025, 2-5pm Thursday 20 November 2025, 2-5pm Thursday 22 January 2025, 2-5pm Thursday 19 March 2025, 2-5pm Thursday 21 May 2025, 2-5pm	