

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Thursday 22 January 2026 at 2:00pm

Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House / Teams

AGENDA

<p>Present: Victoria Buchanan Dr Adam Bunni Dr Lawrence Dritsas Lisa Dawson Amanda Fegan Charlotte Macdonald Karen Howie Heather Innes Professor Linda Kirstein Professor Dave Laurenson Isabel Lavers Meg Batty (Secretary) Catriona Morley Dr Chris Mowat Dr Emily Taylor (Convener) Kirsty Woomble Dr Matt Bell Professor Ruth Andrew Dr Kirsten Phimister</p>	<p>Director, Disability and Learning Support Service (Co-opted member) Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards Dean of Students (CAHSS) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Head of Postgraduate Research Student Administration (CSE) Deputy Manager, The Advice Place Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Dean of Education (CSE) Senate representative (CSE) Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Academic Quality and Standards Manager Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Dean of Students (CSE) Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS) Head of Postgraduate Research Student Office (CAHSS) Senate representative (CSE) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CMVM) Head of Taught Student Administration (CSE)</p>
<p>In attendance: Katy McPhail Daniel Davis Wood (Observer)</p>	<p>Head of Taught Student Administration (CSE) Student Advisor (MHSES)</p>
<p>Apologies: Lucy Evans Katya Amott Professor Gill Aitken Dr Valentina Ferlito</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, Students (Co-opted member) Vice President Education, Students' Association Dean of Education (CMVM) Senate representative (CMVM)</p>

1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Convener welcomed new members of the Committee, as well as staff who were in attendance in order to present a paper or observe the meeting.</p> <p>The Convener also noted apologies for the meeting and confirmed that there were no substitutions.</p>																				
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>To Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 September 2025 OPEN • 18 September 2025 CLOSED <p>The Convener noted both the Open and Closed September 2025 meeting minutes were confirmed via electronic business following the cancellation of the November 2025 meeting. The open minutes have been published on the website.</p>																				
3.	<p>3.1 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convener's communications • Actions log <p>The action log is up to date and the following actions are ongoing:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="279 1037 1463 1532"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>Responsible</th> <th>Target date</th> <th>Action status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Confirm whether we can obtain data on degree completion rates for PGR Students with concessions, as well as numbers of College-level concessions</td> <td>APRC Administrator</td> <td>Not defined</td> <td>Ongoing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discuss readmission processes following withdrawal with Student Recruitment and Admissions.</td> <td>Academic Quality and Standards</td> <td>Not defined</td> <td>Ongoing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CMVM to work with Academic Quality and Standards to ensure parity between Undergraduate Degree Regulation 6 and required credits for BVM&S.</td> <td>BVM&S staff / CMVM</td> <td>March-26</td> <td>Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consult with Health and Safety regarding who is to conduct the risk assessment and how these should be reviewed, where necessary.</td> <td>Academic Quality and Standards</td> <td>March-26</td> <td>Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Head of Academic Policy gave an update on Action 2. Student Recruitment and Admissions are liaising with admission leads in Colleges to discuss this process. The proposal is for students who are accepted for readmission not to have to go through the full UCAS process but a lighter touch process. Readmission is, however, not guaranteed and remains at the discretion of the University. The aim is to put together guidance for Student Advisors to advise students at the point of withdrawal.</p> <p>Members felt that advice on fees and Immigration would be useful in the Student Advisor guidance.</p> <p>3.2 Report of Convener's Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional Amendment to TAR Regulation 55.3 	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Confirm whether we can obtain data on degree completion rates for PGR Students with concessions, as well as numbers of College-level concessions	APRC Administrator	Not defined	Ongoing	Discuss readmission processes following withdrawal with Student Recruitment and Admissions.	Academic Quality and Standards	Not defined	Ongoing	CMVM to work with Academic Quality and Standards to ensure parity between Undergraduate Degree Regulation 6 and required credits for BVM&S.	BVM&S staff / CMVM	March-26	Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting	Consult with Health and Safety regarding who is to conduct the risk assessment and how these should be reviewed, where necessary.	Academic Quality and Standards	March-26	Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting
Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status																		
Confirm whether we can obtain data on degree completion rates for PGR Students with concessions, as well as numbers of College-level concessions	APRC Administrator	Not defined	Ongoing																		
Discuss readmission processes following withdrawal with Student Recruitment and Admissions.	Academic Quality and Standards	Not defined	Ongoing																		
CMVM to work with Academic Quality and Standards to ensure parity between Undergraduate Degree Regulation 6 and required credits for BVM&S.	BVM&S staff / CMVM	March-26	Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting																		
Consult with Health and Safety regarding who is to conduct the risk assessment and how these should be reviewed, where necessary.	Academic Quality and Standards	March-26	Ongoing- to update at the March Meeting																		

Following approved changes to the programme by CSE College Boards of Studies, the weighting information for the Physics with Year Abroad programme in Regulation 55.3 of the Taught Assessment Regulations was removed. This had gone through the right process at College level but had not been reflected in the TAR.

- **Update to the Sensor and Imaging Systems (SIS) MSc**

A paper was submitted to APRC for approval via electronic business in June 2025. The paper author notified the Convener of a change in the publicised wording to remove ambiguity on the availability of the approved resit type for non-SIS MSc Students. It was agreed the wording does not materially change anything about the nature of the exemption previously approved in June via APRC.

- **Summary of approved concessions approved via Convener's Action 25/26 (since previous meeting on 18 September 2026)**

The 24/25 annual concession report was shared via electronic businesses following the cancellation of the November meeting.

2025/26 (from last meeting in September- Mid January)

Total number of individual Student concessions approved: 35

Total number of individual Student concessions rejected: 0

Total number of cohort concessions approved: 0

The Convener reflected on a number of themes apparent from the concession requests and the Committee discussed:

- In 24/25 we saw majority AIS concession requests, these have substantially reduced and we are seeing increasing numbers of programme extensions.
- We are increasingly seeing the extension of full-time PGR programmes up to 8/9 years. Within some of the concession requests where a student is in the process of writing up their thesis, staff are stating that these extensions have no financial impact to the University. This is, however, incorrect as it will result in additional Student Services time and additional supervisor time.
- A number of cases have been received after the student's end date has passed resulting in the concession request being applied retrospectively. Whilst this is in evidence in PGT and UG, it has been most prevalent at PhD level. This is poor governance and creates a risk.
- In several concessions' requests, the filing on EUCLID is not kept up to date e.g., years without supervisory meetings, annual reviews, attendance not recorded or EC decisions not recorded. This makes it difficult for College Committees to understand what has been happening and on follow up supervisory and annual reviews have not been happening.
- APRC has sought to encourage more withdrawal with the opportunity to return to study at a later date and not permit continuous extensions as in many cases this can be in the best interest of the student. Director, Disability and Learning Support Service supported this as there are complex circumstances where Schools extend as they feel that is the right thing to do but it may be best to withdraw them and allow readmittance.

In relation to EUCLID recording, the Committee discussed how supervisors' recording of supervision is not a uniform practice and have differing expectations within Colleges on the expectations around EUCLID filing e.g., CAHSS record every supervisory meeting, whereas CSE and CMVM supervisors may see their students in labs on a daily basis, so are not expected to record every session. The Director of the Disability and Learning Support Service supports improved record keeping on the basis of legal challenges for not providing adjustments and cases with no records makes it difficult to respond.

	<p>CSE brought a report on the PGR annual review completion data to their College Committee which successfully encouraged supervisors to ensure meetings and annual reviews are completed and recorded in EUCLID.</p> <p>Action: Colleges are asked to remind supervisors of the need to maintain effective records in Euclid of periodic supervision and all annual reviews.</p> <p>Action: Colleges are asked to advise schools of the need to keep track of student journeys to avoid the need for retrospective concession requests.</p>
4.1	<p>Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of a New Late Applications Process for Exceptional Circumstances For discussion</p> <p>The Convener clarified that Senate had voted to withdraw the delegated authority from APRC to approve any policy in relation to the Board of Examiners Project. The role of APRC is to discuss and decide whether to endorse the paper for the March Senate Meeting. This paper does not outline a policy change but a process change therefore we need to consider if the process is compliant with existing policy.</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards and Katy McPhail Head of Student Record Operations.</p> <p>Head of Academic Policy summarised that the main goal is to create a standard process to address inconsistency in the handling of what are currently referred to as retrospective Exceptional Circumstances. This inconsistency poses a significant a risk to the Student Experience. The new process puts an end to the retrospective process- which does not exist in writing - and expands the window for late ECs. Some elements of the initial proposal were consulted on but not taken forward in the final proposals.</p> <p>The process will tie the approach to decision-making for late ECs to the approach for Ground A Academic Appeals. Students may interact with either process and it is not reasonable for one process to be a “softer touch” than the other. For any applications received after the late deadline has passed, the student would be directed to Appeals. For complex cases, Appeals has the process of requesting Voluntary Consideration by Schools as an early resolution to avoid students unnecessarily going through the whole Appeals process. The intention is for the process, with Senate approval, to be rolled out for May/June. It was noted, however, that there would need to be careful handling regarding Schools who have already communicated deadlines.</p> <p>Senate Representatives fed back that members are generally supportive of the proposed approach to late ECs but there are some serious misgivings of the EC process itself particularly on the thresholds on what is considered an EC. The view on the proposal was that where the late ECs are rejected, they should not have route to appeal based on the same circumstances. Members of the APRC Committee who sit on the Appeals Committee stated that there must be a hard line on what is acceptable and if submitted with the same information this will be rejected and not processed further.</p> <p>Members of the APRC Committee who sit on the Appeals Committee stated that they foresee this process could increase the number of appeals as previously retrospective ECs were not appealable and that there is currently one case worker in the Appeals Team for 500+ appeals. The Academic Registrar updated that the Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals are cross skilling across the team to remove the pressure on single points of failure and recognise the pressure on staff.</p>

	<p>Senate Representatives requested that the word School is removed from paragraph 12 as it implies that students do not feel comfortable reporting ECs to their School. The Committee supported this change.</p> <p>The Committee discussed where late cases are accepted, what is the ask of Schools. Head of Student Record Operations noted that feedback from Schools during the consultation was that Schools may like to start the process of applying outcomes in relation to late ECs immediately. Several members of the Committee expressed the view that Schools should not try to take them forward before the publication date for course results, as this may lead to inconsistencies in the student experience. It was suggested that it would be more transparent to students if the process clearly noted that outcomes will not be processed until X date.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the previous proposal within the paper to group the Honours exam block to a three-week block to allow additional time to process EC outcomes before Boards and prevent delays to graduation. Senate Representatives noted that members were not supportive of the proposal and that students want their assessments spread out to allow time for revision. It was agreed that graduating students, as with the current process, should be made aware that submission of a Late EC application may impact their ability to graduate on time.</p> <p>CSE Representative noted that they received support from the College but commented that the proposed final deadline for late ECs is too late and that bringing the deadline 1 week forward would support School administration time to process these, with any late applications requiring a reconvened board. It was agreed that the dates could be amended, and would be subject to consultation with Schools.</p> <p>The Committee discussed students who may not be able to engage with the EC process or Late EC process. A member suggested that directing them to the Appeals Process does not seem in the best interest of the student. It was noted that if information becomes available to the School, they have the power to reconsider the decision under TAR 64 or if students are directed to the Appeals process, and it is a complex case, the Appeals Team will approach the School to discuss voluntary reconsideration under TAR 64 to prevent the student going through the full Appeals process.</p> <p>One member questioned why the prioritisation of the project would have implications on the development of PATH. The Academic Registrar explained that the staff who would support the developments to the EC system are currently working on the PATH system updates therefore resource would need to be reassigned. It was confirmed that during this period it would not impact the use of the PATH system.</p> <p>The Convener summarised that the Committee were supportive of the implementation of this process for May/June 2026 as long as deadline dates for both UG and PG are agreed following consultation with Schools. The Committee were supportive of the rigorous approach taken to cases within the Appeals process, and agreed that the late EC process must operate with the same rigour. The Committee noted the need for the volume of Appeals to be monitored following the implementation of this process. The Committee noted that the EC process, Late EC process and Appeals process must work in a way that is supportive of complex cases.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Academic Year Dates 2027/28 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2028/29 For approval</p>

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

The Academic Year dates are drafted following the model approved by Senate and published at [Academic year structure](#). It was noted the proposed dates are designed to ensure 2 weeks for the Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) Team to prepare the University buildings following the Edinburgh Fringe and there is an agreement with EUSA that exams will not be taken past 21st December.

The paper requested approval from the Committee for the academic year dates for 2027/28, which the Committee approved as provisional dates at its November 2024 meeting. The paper also requests Committee approval for the provisional academic year dates for 2028/2029.

The VP Education had passed on thoughts on this item. It was questioned if Schools were using exams effectively or whether some assessments could be in other formats. In addition, feedback from students was that they find out their exam timetable too late. The Academic Registrar noted the Timetabling Team are working towards releasing personal exam timetables earlier but there are a number of things in the chain to happen before release which they are working with Schools to shift to an earlier point.

The Committee discussed the fact that the number of exams has risen to approach pre-COVID levels. The Committee agreed that with the compressed exam diet the number of students with two exams in one day may rise however, this was not seen as an issue if the University's position is that having two exams on one day is not inherently disadvantageous. The Committee discussed that the compressed exam diet creates issues for applying reasonable adjustments and Schools should give more consideration to alternative assessments. A member suggested that students with adjustments for exams could be scheduled at King's Buildings which may ease pressure at the central service.

Action: Academic Registrar to explore using King's Buildings as a satellite campus for exams with adjustments.

The Committee discussed the disparity between the length of Semester 1 and Semester 2. It was noted that Semester 1 is 11 weeks long where the last week for UG taught material is week 10 allowing week 11 as a buffer. Within semester 1 some Schools do not offer teaching in week 6 to allow for a reading week. A student who chooses a course in Semester 2 over semester 1 receives an extra month of revision. The Committee agreed that the lack of symmetry between semesters is problematic.

Action: Academic Registrar to discuss the asymmetric academic year structure with Lucy Evans, Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students.

The Committee raised that the paper included the position from ACE was that the semester could not start on the 7th September 2026 as the festival tenants do not vacate quickly enough and the festival dates are set well in advance and cannot be amended. The Committee queried whether ACE could shorten the two weeks turnaround by, e.g., investing in more support or resource to turn University buildings around. The Committee agreed that it was too late to amend the dates for 2026/27, however, agreed that this position should be explored for the 27/28 academic year and subsequent years.

Action: Academic Registrar to discuss with ACE the possibility of starting the 27/28 academic year a week earlier than proposed.

	<p>Whilst agreeing to explore the earlier start of semester 1 for academic year 27/28, the Committee acknowledged that this would have an impact on turnaround times for resit exam results and progression decisions, as well as admissions, especially for students requiring visas.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the December 2026 exam diet dates, proposed as a 10-day exam diet contingent on 2 Saturdays. The Committee regarded it as undesirable for Professional Services staff to be asked to work two Saturdays before Christmas. In previous years where there was the same issue with the December diet, the exam diet started on the Thursday of revision week. However, the Committee were more inclined for the exam diet to start on the Wednesday and to only make use of the first Saturday. It was noted that Hanukkah 2026 is 5th -12th December 2026, which falls during the exam diet, and that some Jewish students cannot sit exams on a Saturday, therefore this would need to be considered using the provisions for religious observance in the Taught Assessment Regulations.</p> <p>The Committee recommended that the December 2026 exam diet should run from Wednesday 9th December 2026 - Monday 21st December 2027 (inclusive) and make use of one Saturday (first Saturday).</p> <p>The Committee agreed to defer making a decision regarding the academic year dates for 2027/2028, and the provisional academic year dates for 2028/2029.</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>Appointment of APRC Vice-Convener For approval</p> <p>This item was presented by the Committee Convener.</p> <p>The Vice Convener left the University earlier this year therefore the Vice Convener role is currently vacant. Professor Linda Kirstein expressed their interest in the Vice-Convener role in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no further notes of interest from members present.</p> <p>For discussion of the role of Vice-Convener, Dr Kirstein left the room. The Committee discussed and approved Dr Kirstein taking the role of Vice-Convener for the remainder of the academic year 2025/26.</p>
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance For approval</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards.</p> <p>The proposed Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance is a combination of documents that were due for review this academic year. The documents have been made into a single guidance document to support ease of use for students and staff. A consultation was conducted with Colleges and Graduate Schools who have been supportive of the proposal. Overall, the documents have been reordered and repetition removed. The new Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance will be introduced from 1st August 2026 and the existing documents will be archived.</p> <p>Members were supportive of the proposal.</p>

	<p>One member noted that the formatting guidance within the documents should be consistent with the university formatting guidance. The weblink to the accessibility formatting is included however, the document did not direct students to follow this.</p> <p>Members approved an amendment to the proposed guidance document to include wording stating that 'Students are expected to follow the guidance on accessible formatting'. With this amendment the Committee approved the document and the changes outlined in 1.2 – 4.7.</p>
5.1	<p>APRC Priorities 2025/26 – mid-year update To note</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards.</p> <p>The paper provides the Committee information on the updated priorities. The Curriculum Transformation Project is no longer an ongoing project; however, the Committee are now responding to the Learning and Teaching Workstream.</p> <p>Due to resource constraints in Academic Quality and Standards Policy Team, there has been a reprioritisation of the policy review requirements: the Degree and Assessment Regulations will be updated; the Code of Student Conduct will be coming to APRC In due course. The review of the Dual Awards Policy has been deprioritised as this policy is not heavily used.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the de-prioritisation of the Dual Awards Policy as it was noted that there are issues with Dual Awards within Colleges that need to be addressed e.g. If an assessment is submitted to the University of Edinburgh, can it be uploaded to their partner institution in their language and marked separately there.</p> <p>The Head of Academic Policy noted that the policy would not address these more specific scenarios but if the issues raised are pressing, they can be addressed in advance of reviewing the policy.</p> <p>Members discussed that the Framework for Curricula is out of date and many of the points are not adhered to e.g., not scheduling classes at the same time or no umbrella courses. It was agreed that AQS would seek to prioritise this in conjunction with the L&T workstream to align the frame work to ongoing best practices.</p>
5.3	<p>Committee Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APRC Membership • APRC Terms of Reference <p>To note</p> <p>Committee Priorities 2025/26: To note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curriculum framework arising from Learning and Teaching Workstream • Scheduled review of policies
6.	Any Other Business