

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Thursday 21 May 2026 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"> 19 March 2026 OPEN 	APRC 25/26 4A (OPEN)
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	Industrial Action: Variations to Academic Regulations and Policies For discussion	APRC 25/26 4B
4.2	Appointment of APRC Vice-Convener For approval	Verbal item
4.3	Proposed amendments to Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27 To approve	APRC 25/26 4C
BREAK		
4.4	Proposed amendments to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27 To approve	APRC 25/26 4D
4.5	Internal Moderation Guidance For approval	APRC 25/26 4E
4.6	Minor Addition to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy For approval	APRC 25/26 4F
4.7	Board of Examiners Review – Consistent Application of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy For Discussion	APRC 25/26 4G
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		

5.1	<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:</p> <p>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	
7.	<p>Date of 2026/27 dates (provisionally)</p> <p>All meetings hybrid and 2-5pm– venue TBC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2026 • November 2026 • January 2027 • March 2027 • May 2027 	

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Thursday 19 March 2026 at 2:00pm
Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

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

1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Convener welcomed Lindsey Fox as a new member of the Committee, noting that Lindsey has replaced Amanda Fegan on the Committee due to Amanda taking up a seconded role within Strategic Change.</p> <p>The Convener noted apologies for the meeting and confirmed that Rebecca Shade was in attendance as a substitute member for Victoria Buchanan.</p> <p>Members were informed that the meeting was taking place exclusively online as Charles Stewart House had been closed for the week on health and safety grounds.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>For approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 January 2026 <p>The following corrections were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend Professor Ruth Andrew’s title from “Director of Postgraduate Research” to “Dean of Postgraduate Research”. • Charlotte Macdonald from the Advice Place was in attendance as opposed to Clair Halliday. • In section 4.3, Linda Kirstein’s title should read as “Professor”, not “Dr”. <p>The Convener noted that a query had been received from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) relating to the action recorded under section 3.2 regarding maintaining effective records in EUCLID of periodic supervision. It was clarified that this action relates not only to international students for visa purposes, but to all postgraduate research (PGR) students to help support with concession requests and to prevent legal challenges in instances where engagement has not been recorded. Supervisory calendar appointments in Outlook are not a sufficient means of recording engagement as there is a risk of losing this data in instances where colleagues leave the University. Members were informed that, as per the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, students must maintain contact with their supervisor at least twice in every three-month period. It was noted that, while aligning this process for international and non-international is beneficial, colleagues should be cognisant of the increased workload this could entail for supervisors. Some members highlighted the benefit of students recording their own notes during meetings with their supervisor, as well as replicating the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)’s approach of recording engagement for both research and taught students across the other two Colleges.</p> <p>The Committee otherwise approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026.</p> <p>Action: College Deans of PGR to discuss the implementation of recording supervision within EUCLID for all PGR students with relevant College committees and the Doctoral College.</p>
3.	<p>3.1 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convener’s communications: There were no Convener’s communications to share with the Committee. • Actions Log: <u>New and expectant mother risk assessment</u> There was an action on Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) to contact Health and Safety (H&S) about the approach to risk assessment for students who are pregnant or new mothers. Members were informed that this is now complete. H&S

	<p>provide guidance documents on their web pages about the risk assessment process. Risk assessments are carried out locally within Schools or departments. Local H&S Coordinators may be able to provide advice about the process, however H&S stated that it is important that a colleague who is familiar with the student and the demands of their studies undertakes the assessment, similar to a workplace, where the relevant manager completes it.</p> <p>3.2 Report of Convener’s Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End Dates for Semester 2 2026/27 and 2027/28 Student Records flagged that the Semester Dates web page listed the final day of Semester 2 2026/27 and 2027/28 as being a Saturday. This is consistent with what had been approved by APRC, but is out of line with the established precedent, with Semester 2 previously ending on a Friday. The Convener approved an amendment to the dates for each academic year to finish on a Friday. • Student Discipline Committee (SDC) Membership The Convener approved a substitution of a member of the SDC from CMVM, with Dr Martin Simmen replacing Professor Lorna Marson. • Summary of Approved Concessions Approved via Convener’s Action 2025/26 (since previous meeting on 22 January 2026) The Convener noted that 16 concession requests had been approved and 1 rejected. Further details below of approved requests were outlined to members. <p>In regard to requests for concessions to permit the award of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) after admission, the Convener noted that the relevant School has introduced a process to prevent future concessions of this nature being submitted. It was further noted that the proposed amendment to PG DRPS 45 within Paper C would remove the need for a concession to allow reinstatement following exclusion due to debt.</p>
<p>4. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS</p>	
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27 For discussion and recommendation to Court</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, AQS. In terms of the approval process, it was highlighted to members that Degree Regulations are formally approved by University Court as a “Resolution”. Following discussion at APRC, AQS will submit a draft Resolution to Court at its 20 April 2026 meeting. Court will consult with Senate in May 2026, before considering a final Resolution at its 15 June 2026 meeting.</p> <p>An overview of the proposed changes to the Regulations for 2026/27 was provided to the Committee, with many of the proposed changes seeking to harmonise the undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) regulations. The key proposed changes and their rationale were outlined in brief to members, notably around: Authorised Interruption of Study (AIS); optional study abroad and passing Year 2 courses; withdrawal, exclusion and readmission.</p> <p>The Head of Academic Policy, in relation to regulation 28, clarified that the proposed change communicates some of the logistical constraints around optional study abroad and students undertaking resit assessments for Year 2 courses within the summer exam diet. The</p>

	<p>proposed amendment does not cover the criteria for selection for optional study abroad as this is not required within the regulations.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the proposed amendments to withdrawal and exclusion under regulation 33. A member highlighted that the proposed text relating to readmitting students is inconsistent with the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure in relation to eligibility for readmission for students who had either been excluded due to non-engagement, or under the Support for Study process. It was noted that there is an intentional gap, but that the proposed regulation and the procedure are not incompatible with one another. The Convener noted that in some instances, such as those relating to the Support for Study policy, there is potential for significant improvement for student wellbeing around potential readmission. However, this would not be the case in other instances and would create risk for the University. A member further noted that any substantive gap could lead to practice becoming subjective and inconsistent, however the production of relevant guidance could help address this.</p> <p>In terms of the proposed change to the regulation 87 specific to the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVM&S) programme, it was queried where the position which prevented two years of interruptions being taken consecutively had arisen from. Although it was unclear if this was an external stipulation, it was highlighted to members that this is subject to highly exceptional cases and that individual requests for two consecutive years of interrupted study could still be submitted to APRC for consideration as a concession. Members were informed that exceptions being very unlikely to be considered on the BVM&S programme in the case of prolonged or repeated academic failure was based on dialogue with the School of Veterinary Studies around the likelihood to succeed following two years of interruptions. A member highlighted that this was also the case for students on the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) programme, as well the financial implications that two consecutive years of interrupted study would pose for funded students. The Committee agreed to the Head of Academic Policy's suggestion that the penultimate sentence of the regulation be removed.</p> <p>The Convener summarised that, while the point around the potential subjective interpretation and lack of consistency in the implementation of regulation 33 was taken into account, the approach to take forward the wording as proposed was supported on the basis that supplementary guidance be provided and for the regulation to be kept under review during 2026/27. The Committee's support for the suggestion to remove the penultimate sentence of regulation 87 was noted and the Convener highlighted that this could be reviewed again and amended as necessary next academic year.</p> <p>The Committee subsequently supported the recommended changes to the UG regulations for submission to University Court on the basis of the points summarised by the Convener above.</p>
4.2	<p>Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27 For discussion and recommendation to Court</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, AQS.</p> <p>An overview of the proposed changes to the Regulations for 2026/27 was provided to the Committee. Particular focus was provided around: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and its removal where an exit award is made; alignment with PG DRPS 60 regarding RPL for a course or courses taken previously which are on the Degree Programme Table for the programme they are joining; AIS.</p>

	<p>A member queried, with regard to regulation 45, whether an institutional viewpoint could be considered regarding a maximum time limit for students becoming ineligible to be reinstated onto Doctoral and MPhil programmes. Benchmarking of other higher education institutions has indicated that this time limit is generally around 24 months. It was noted that, from a practical perspective, the current approach requires Colleges to consider reinstatement within this context on a case-by-case basis. It was further noted that there has been no evidence in practice of Colleges being required to reinstate a student despite their judgement to the contrary on the basis of the existing wording of the regulation. The Head of Academic Policy noted that introducing a maximum time specification is reasonable given that there is an equivalent in place at undergraduate level, however concern was raised in applying this now as it has not been consulted upon. It was subsequently suggested that this proposal be consulted on next academic year in order to seek achieving greater consensus across the University.</p> <p>In terms of the proposed change to regulation 16 regarding the removal of RPL where an exit award is made, a member highlighted that there is some ambiguity in the second sentence, particularly in cases whereby UG students take courses that overlap between UG and PGT, who then subsequently progress onto the MSc programme. It was noted that this is not currently prohibited and the Convener highlighted that there is a shared research methods course within a School in CAHSS which is mandatory and therefore RPL is required for students who undertake more than one MSc programme within the School.</p> <p>The Committee subsequently supported the recommended changes to the PG regulations for submission to University Court and requested that reinstatement time limits, under regulation 45, be consulted upon next academic year.</p>
4.3	<p>Taught Assessment Regulations Resit Proposal For discussion and approval</p> <p>The paper was introduced by the CAHSS Dean of Students, Dr Lawrence Dritsas. The Vice-Convener took over chairing responsibilities for this item as the Convener co-authored the proposal.</p> <p>It was outlined to the Committee that the proposal seeks to amend Taught Assessment Regulation (TAR): Resit Assessment, whereby marks at pre-Honours resits, unless those undertaken as a first attempt through approved Exceptional Circumstances (EC), should incur a maximum mark of 40. In terms of recent consultation within CAHSS, members were informed that the proposal re-emerged during the routine updating of the TAR this year. This was brought to the CAHSS College Education Committee in February 2026 and a revised proposal approved for consideration by APRC. Members subsequently noted the key points of rationale behind this proposal, such as it being common practice across the HE sector and to help prevent a perception amongst students of inherent unfairness within the current resit system.</p> <p>The Convener highlighted CAHSS's discussions around adopting pass/fail as an alternative to capping at 40, however it was noted that further investigation has indicated that within the University's Assessment and Progression Tool (APT), either a 0-100 marks or pass/fail marking scheme can be applied across a course but a different approach at first sit and resit cannot be used. Pass / fail would also not support the ranking of students applying for study abroad. Members were informed that Directors of Quality and Directors of Teaching within CAHSS have subsequently voiced their support for a numerical mark being provided for resit assessments, however they would also want students to receive what their true mark would have been, had it not been capped at 40, alongside relevant feedback.</p> <p>In considering the proposal, the following points were raised by members:</p>

- A mark of 40 is commonly perceived as a fail by students and could cause issues on programmes with elevated hurdles. In order to help avoid students becoming discouraged and to encourage strong performance during resit assessments, could the resit mark instead be capped at 50? The need to better understand students' motivations within this context was noted.
- The true mark versus the capped mark, as well as instances where the resit becomes a null sit, is required to be communicated clearly to students. It was noted that the face-value true mark could be provided to students alongside the feedback provided to students, as this is routine practice for students who receive late submission penalties.
- Students will still be required to meet the learning outcomes of a course in order to pass it, irrespective of the grade that they receive.
- It was clarified that, as this would involve a TAR change, it would be applicable across the whole University. The proposal was shared with Directors of Teaching and Directors of Quality across all three Colleges.
- Feedback received from some Senate members highlighted that some benchmarking may not be directly comparable, as other institutions offer resits at Honours level. It was noted that considerations around capping at pre-honours and honours relate to overall assessment strategy which transcends the scope of this paper.
- Do other institutions who cap resit marks have similar issues around non-attendance?
- In some cases, elevated hurdles are in place for a reason such as a requirement for professional accreditation. It was noted that CAHSS are seeking to reduce elevated hurdles where possible and that, should this proposal be approved, wording in the TAR should clarify that programmes with external requirements around hurdles would not be subject to additional approval to opt out of capping resit marks at 40.
- A member suggested that capping at 40 risks communicating the wrong message to students, as it could suggest that a narrow pass is sufficient when in fact students should be seeking to obtain higher marks in order to build strong foundations for studying at Honours level. It was noted that marks at pre-honours do not impact Honours degree classification.
- Capping at 40 may serve to reduce performance-related pressure on students.
- A reason why APT does not sufficiently support resits is due to the level of discretion exercised around resit assessments. This discretion needs addressed and the University could be more prescriptive in this context to help systematise the resit process within APT.
- There is potential discrepancy between points 6 and 7 in the paper. Point 6 raises poor performance during resits, however point 7 highlights the potential for resitting students to obtain higher marks than their peers who completed at the first attempt. Is there data to support these points or is this speculative? It was noted that it has proven very difficult to obtain good quality data regarding resits within CAHSS. Data to help articulate the existing issues around the resit diet as it currently operates would be highly valuable.
- CMVM raised the need to look at resits as a whole. Concern was noted around the practicalities in implementing this cap, which could be perceived as punitive by students, as it would create operational challenges for APT, additional workload for teaching offices, and may lead to higher EC applications. It was noted that increased EC applications could be viewed positively if students who are entitled to them are making use of them.
- There is a lack of clarity around a wider University review of resit assessments, therefore incremental enhancements should be sought in the meantime. It was suggested that the wider review around resits ought to be escalated within the University.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially being able to replace individual failed components with an entire course pass at course level via resit lacks fairness. <p>In summarising, the Vice-Convener noted that it would be beneficial for Colleges to identify existing elevated hurdles and review whether they are a necessary requirement. It was also suggested that the Committee request that Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG) establish a working group to produce recommended actions against key issues, relating to the resit diet, including potential capping, raised in discussion of this item and how these are taken forward more broadly across the University. The need to understand the data requirements and the scope of new exam timetabling software in providing relevant granular data should be examined</p> <p>The Committee did not approve the proposal; however, it was suggested that the steps noted above, in consultation with Senate Education Committee, be undertaken prior to the 2026/27 review of the TARs and the potential resubmission of this proposal to APRC.</p> <p>Action: Colleges to discuss and identify data requirements around resits and submit the requirements to the Academic Registrar within Registry Services for scoping.</p>
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Late Exceptional Circumstances – Handling of Accepted Cases For discussion and approval</p> <p>The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy, AQS and Katy McPhail, Head of Student Record Operations within Registry Services.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it considered and endorsed proposals for a revised approach to the handling of Late EC cases at its meeting in January 2026 and that the proposed approach has since been approved by Senate at its March 2026 meeting, for implementation from May 2026.</p> <p>Members were informed that there are different options with regard to what instruction or advice is given to Schools about when to process accepted Late EC cases. These options were discussed with colleagues from Schools and Colleges at two consultation sessions in February 2026, with further feedback received via email. While a high level of feedback was received, opinions among colleagues were starkly divided between the two options (option A and option B). Members were subsequently notified of details and key points of feedback for each option. The Committee further noted the proposal to approve option B in order to best ensure consistency and fairness for students, with it being highlighted that the consistent management of staff workload only being achievable via option B. Members were further informed that whichever option is adopted will be reviewed at a later date to ensure that it is a sustainable approach moving forward.</p> <p>In discussion of the proposed options, the following points were raised by members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member noted a concern raised by some Senate members that the University would be asking professional service staff to carry out work around late ECs during what is notionally time commonly used for annual leave. Do the proposed timings facilitate annual leave to be taken between the exam diet and the commencement of the following semester? The Head of Student Record Operations noted that the workload relating to late ECs would be expected to coincide with existing work around Boards of Examiners for continuing students, and should not extend beyond the end of June. • In terms of option B, what are the implications around publishing results and awards? It is administratively challenging to republish based on retrospective EC applications and could lead to degrees awards being issued that subsequently need changed. It

was suggested that, should option B be agreed, awards should not be published for those students who has submitted a late EC application.

- CMVM noted preference for option B, highlighting that it will not likely impact many of their programmes.
- Within the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), concern has been raised across teaching offices around the expectation of publishing results which are subject to change. A collective decision should be made whether to publish or not publish results for students with late EC submissions, regardless of whether option A or B is selected. Schools should not decide on this in order to prevent inconsistency.
- Consistency in student experience and when advising students is welcomed.
- The Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) did not indicate a preference for either option but highlighted that they wish to be actively involved with this project moving forward. Concern was noted from DLSS that this proposal may lead to an increase in complaints due to indirect discrimination towards students with conditions that limit the capability to complete work on time.
- Clear communications to students and staff in Schools with regard to any agreed changes and relevant dates is required. In terms of a communications plan to students, work is underway with the EC team to ensure messaging remains consistent with information that is routinely circulated goes out in line regarding ECs.
- A member suggested that explicit messaging is required for both graduating and continuing students who submit late EC applications. For graduating students, it should be highlighted that they may not graduate with their cohort regardless of the outcome of their EC application.
- In terms of Schools being aware of which students have a live EC case, it was clarified that Schools will have access to this information at the point of submission, not when it is validated. Schools will therefore have awareness of which students will be impacted by the 15th June publication date.
- A member highlighted that the risks of publishing results and awards which are subject to change as a result of ECs are higher than not publishing. Consistency in practice would be best reached if the University does not publish in cases of late EC applications, and that this process is managed via clear communication to staff and students.
- It was noted that there is a lack of data provision regarding the volume of cases handled within Schools under the existing “retrospective” EC process. Data regarding the new late EC process will be captured moving forward for review and evaluation purposes.
- With regard to the mechanism for the review of whichever option is agreed, issues will be addressed as and when they arise and will be incorporated within a wider review of Board of Examiner project work.

The Committee subsequently **approved** option B on the following basis:

- Schools must not publish awards or course results for any student before the late EC deadline has passed (8 June 2026);
- Where a student has submitted a late EC application, their affected course results and any award decision will not be published until any outcome has been determined for their late EC case.

The Convener raised the requirement of clear communications around this and a subsequent review. The Convener further noted that if a change in student behaviour relating to ECs is witnessed, such as increasing gap between student demographics, then this will need to be addressed as part of future review activity. Option B should be implemented with the involvement of the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) and in alignment with the UK Equality Act (2010).

	Action: Committee Secretary to add the review of the revised approach to the handling of Late EC cases to the APRC forward agenda for semester one in 2026/27.
5.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION / NOTING
5.1	<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:</p> <p>To note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curriculum framework arising from Learning and Teaching Workstream • Scheduled review of policies
6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>No items of any other business were raised.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 21 May 2026, 2-5pm, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House</p>	

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 May 2026

Industrial Action: Variations to Academic Regulations and Policies

Description of paper

1. This paper asks the Committee to approve temporary variations to academic policies and regulations in response to disruption caused by industrial action.
2. Specifically, it proposes that the Committee activates Taught Assessment Regulations 70 (Significant Disruption: concessions and standards) and 71 (Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards) and considers a suite of variations proportionate to the disruption.
3. As detailed by Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71, the paper then asks the committee to approve specific regulation variations which are intended to minimise the impact of the current disruption on students while maintaining academic standards. Many of the variations proposed are more tightly constrained than have been implemented in previous periods of disruption, this reflects lessons learned through previous periods of disruption including how previous mitigations have impacted subsequent student experience.

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
Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.	Y
Act with delegated authority from the Senate on matters of student conduct and discipline.	
In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches while supporting and encouraging variation where this is beneficial, particularly if it is in the best interests of students.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

4. The paper asks the Committee to:
 - a. Note the update on the industrial action (see paragraphs 5 to 10);
 - b. Confirm that it agrees to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 70 (Significant Disruption: concessions and standards) (see paragraph 32)
 - c. Confirm that it agrees to activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71 (Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards) (see paragraph 33)
 - d. Decide whether to approve a suite of variations to academic regulations and policies (see paras 34 to 108 and Annex A). These exceptional measures would take effect immediately, and remain in place until no later than the end of session 2025-26 (including the 2026 summer assessment period).
 - e. Note the action requested of [Senate](#) in Paper H (to be discussed and approved on 19 May 2026):
 - i. Any exceptional variations to regulations put in place by APRC under delegated authority must be accompanied by an explicit rationale for how those variations maintain academic standards. A summary of the variations and the accompanying rationale should be presented to the next ordinary meeting of Senate.
 - ii. To support data-informed governance, Boards of Examiners should be required to log each use of any exceptional variations, in a consistent format that will enable University-wide analysis. A report on the data should be presented to the next ordinary meeting of Senate.

Background and context***Industrial Action***

5. Industrial action, called by the University and College Union Edinburgh (UCUE), has, is and will, cause disruption to the assessment of students and will impact the running of upcoming Boards of Examiners. The aim of any steps taken by the Committee would be to mitigate the academic impact on students of the industrial action, and ensure the consistent treatment of students, while maintaining academic standards and the value of the University's awards. The use of any temporary variations by Boards of Examiners is only to be considered when Boards have exhausted all other available options.
6. During previous periods of industrial action and other forms of significant disruption (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic), the Committee has approved temporary variations to academic policies and regulations in order to provide Schools and Colleges with additional options for mitigating the disruption, where it judged that doing so would be compatible with maintaining academic standards. As in previous rounds of disruption, the use of any temporary variations by Boards of Examiners is considered an exceptional measure and is only to be considered when Boards have exhausted all available options.

7. The proposed variations have been developed in consultation with Colleges and Schools via the University's Academic Contingency Group (ACG), which also includes representation from Edinburgh University Students' Association. Feedback as part of planning for a potential Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), including reflections on the experience of previous industrial action at the University of Edinburgh, was also provided by each School via Heads of Schools and Directors of Professional Services. A group of Heads of Schools also provided detailed further comment on plans.
8. The University of Edinburgh branch of the University and Colleges Union (UCUE) took strike action from:
 - Monday 8 to Friday 12 September 2025
 - Monday 17 to Wednesday 19 November 2025
 - Monday 30 March to Friday 3 April 2026
9. Members of UCUE also undertook Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) from 20 June to 11 December 2025 and are currently undertaking continuous ASOS which commenced on 30 March 2026.
10. UCUE announced a Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) from 1 May 2026. The MAB will continue until the disputes are settled, UCUE calls off the boycott, or at the end of the industrial action ballot mandate. The MAB will be continuous throughout the mandate period and there is no known end date for the action. The MAB covers all marking and assessment processes that contribute to summative assessment decisions for students, whether final (i.e. graduation) or interim (i.e. progression decisions).

Action to date to mitigate the impact of the industrial action on students

11. The University's Academic Contingency Group (ACG), which includes representatives of Colleges, the Students' Association, and relevant professional services, has monitored the impact on students of the current industrial action, and has reminded Schools and Colleges of options for mitigating the impact on students within normal academic policies and regulations.

Academic Standards and Academic Judgement

12. As a University we are required to seek to minimise disruption to our students' studies while maintaining academic standards. Academic Standards are "Standards that institutions set and/or maintain for the award of academic credit or qualifications."¹

¹ https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaas/reviewing-he-in-scotland/tqer-guide-for-institutions.pdf?sfvrsn=ea49bc81_7

13. The Quality Assurance Agency's UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott: Advice for QAA Members – June 2023 Update² "...outlines approaches that QAA Members may choose to adopt during this period of industrial action to support the maintenance of academic standards and ensure that students can progress in their studies, including graduating with the award they have earned." The Advice recognises that during such action "...institutions need to make clear their approach to progression/classification and decide what level of adjustments or alternative arrangements they need to make for marking in order to generate a minimum set of marks on which they can make reliable decisions regarding student performance and award." It lists a number of potential measures to support student progression and award.
14. In response to a submission to the Scottish Quality Concerns Scheme about potential impact on standards and the management of quality arising from the use of adjustments to regulations in response to 2022/23 MAB at the University of Edinburgh the Quality Assurance Agency undertook a Concern Scheme Assessment in June and July 2023. The outcome was that there was no case to answer. The QAA found "...no evidence of risk to academic standards arising from the activation of mitigations to respond to MAB..." and [considering the number and proportion of students impacted] was "...of the view the University is using adjustments only where there is sufficient evidence to support awarding."
15. In the context of the report of the Tertiary Peer Review of the University of Glasgow, which has resulted in the Scottish Funding Council commissioning a National Review of Awarding Arrangements, the following are relevant:
 - a. The importance of consistent application of University-level academic regulations and policies and the availability of evidence to demonstrate this; and
 - b. The demonstration of learning outcomes for decision-making, rather than a percentage of assessment being completed.
16. **In summary, the University can apply variations to its academic regulations and policies in times of disruption in order to mitigate impact on students. The variations proposed in this paper have been developed in the context of QAA Advice, previous variations applied during the COVID-19 pandemic and the marking and assessment boycott in 2022/23, sector practice and external requirements. Decisions on student outcomes should be made through the consistent application of variations approved by the Committee in line with its terms of remit. The risk to academic standards does not arise from the adjustments themselves (as these have been previously considered appropriate by QAA), but from a failure to apply our taught assessment regulations and agreed adjustments to them consistently and transparently.**

² https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/news/ucu-marking-and-assessment-boycott-advice-for-qaa-members.pdf?sfvrsn=17aead81_10

17. During normal operation, Boards of Examiners regularly exercise their academic judgement when making decisions about outcomes for specific students. Such Board judgements will remain paramount should a Board be required to apply any of the variations proposed in this paper.
18. In the context of a Board of Examiners, academic judgement is bounded by the approved regulations, policies, and programme requirements, and must be exercised consistently and transparently within these. Academic judgement is considered the informed, expert evaluation made by qualified academics about a student's performance, the standard of work, and the interpretation of academic criteria. This is critical in the assessment and marking of work. Academic judgement does not permit departure from approved assessment regulations and policies.
19. Consistent with the principles included in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes, is the expectation that academic judgement is exercised consistently across students and within the agreed policies and regulations of the University. Agreed variations should therefore be applied in a manner consistent with how students would be treated under normal circumstances (for example those with valid exceptional circumstances). For example, where a component of assessment could ordinarily be excluded from the calculation of course grade due to valid exceptional circumstances, this provides a relevant precedent for how to treat that component if it has been disrupted by industrial action.
20. Taught Assessment Regulation 71.10 states that where Boards of Examiners receive new information (for example numeric grades for a course where such information was not originally available) they must review the status of previous decisions. During previous periods of disruption, the University has operated a policy of non-detriment, meaning that if assessment decisions, reached using agreed policy variations, were revisited considering new information, any change of decision could not lead to a worse outcome for a student than had been previously awarded. Not adopting a position of non-detriment could have a substantial impact on student experience, should students act in good faith based on an initial decision, and then find that decision is negatively revised later. Set against this, feedback from previous periods of disruption is that the operation of non-detriment has led to some students progressing when their performance did not merit this and that has resulted in a poor student experience. ACG notes that the extent of variations proposed this time is less extensive than during the MAB of 2022/23 and it is therefore appropriate to expect that the impact of any non-detriment clauses will be less than in previous periods of disruption. The discussion below explicitly addresses situations where non-detriment should apply (in contrast to previous periods of disruption which were accompanied by a blanket expectation of non-detriment).
21. Given the objective of maintaining academic standards, and the need for Boards of Examiners to have robust evidence to support any decisions they make, it may not be possible to mitigate the impact of missing marks through the application of

the variations where there are insufficient marks available to support reliable progression and award decisions. To minimise the likelihood of this occurring, all reasonable steps should be taken to mitigate the impact on students through the reallocation of marking responsibilities, with priority given to courses, including core and compulsory courses, where the application of the variations would be insufficient to enable progression and award decisions to be made securely.

22. In support of this approach, the University reserves the right to reallocate marking duties where necessary to maintain academic standards and protect the student experience. TAR 70.3 states that: "All forms of assessment, such as examination scripts and course assignments, are the property and responsibility of the University, not of individual examiners or markers. They therefore must be accessible to the University when required." In addition, under TAR 3, the Head of School is responsible for the appointment of markers and may therefore make alternative arrangements for marking where necessary to ensure the completion of assessment processes.
23. For the avoidance of doubt, the variations described in this paper are only to be used where a lack of assessed work means that the standard regulations cannot be applied. Wider efforts to minimise the amount of work impacted by the Marking and Assessment Boycott would therefore be expected to reduce the need for these variations to be applied.
24. Reflecting transparency of decision making, the need for an audit trail relating to the use of any approved variations, and the Senate paper mentioned in paragraph 4, Boards of Examiners will need to record when any variations are applied, or any occasions where a variation might have been applied but they chose not to; in the latter case an explanation should be recorded.

Discussion

25. The impact of action held to date has led to significant amounts of disruption to teaching and assessment in some specific areas, but more limited or no impact in other areas. This has included the loss of scheduled teaching activities, and, in a relatively small number of cases, the cancellation of assessment activities (for example, presentations) that were scheduled for strike days.
26. Based on feedback from Colleges and Schools, it is anticipated that the overall impact of industrial action, including the MAB, on the assessment of Semester Two courses is likely to be considerable. It is expected that there will also be significant impact on the consideration of progression and award decisions. It is unlikely that Boards of Examiners will be able to take adequate steps to mitigate this impact on students without additional options.
27. The ACG advises that there is a strong case for activating additional variations under Taught Assessment Regulation 70: Significant Disruption: concessions and standards, and putting in place temporary variations to academic policies and

regulations, which would assist Schools to conduct Boards of Examiners over the coming period, whilst maintaining academic standards.

28. The ACG advises that there is a strong case for activating Taught Assessment Regulation 71: Significant Disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards and putting in place temporary variations to academic policies and regulations, which would assist Schools to make progression and award decisions over the coming period, whilst maintaining academic standards.
29. Paragraphs 34-108 outline specific variations to regulations that would support the operation of Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71.
30. In the case of activation of both Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71 ACG suggests that any approved variations run until the end of the 2025/26 Academic Year, including consideration of the summer resit diet.
31. ACG reaffirms that any variation from normal practice, which a Board of Examiners takes as a result of the activation of Taught Assessment Regulations 70 or 71, should only occur when all options, normally available to a Board, have been considered. The academic judgement of Boards of Examiners will remain central, and the maintenance of academic standards (as can be argued to be maintained through the specific variations proposed below) remains a key principle of decision making.
32. **The ACG requests the Committee formally activate Taught Assessment Regulation 70. Is the Committee content to do so?**
33. **The ACG requests the Committee formally activate Taught Assessment Regulation 71. Is the Committee content to do so?**

Specific Variations to Academic Policy and Regulations Associated with the Activation of Taught Assessment Regulations 70 and 71

34. The ACG recommends the following specific policy and regulation variations be activated to mitigate against the escalated impact of industrial action which includes a MAB.
35. The following variations will only be applied where their use does not interfere with the award of professional accreditation. Where variations cannot be applied due to professional accreditation reasons, Boards of Examiners will be required to minute the details of why this is the case, with supporting evidence as appropriate.

Remove the requirement to consult External Examiners when setting examination papers (Annex A, Point 1)

36. The ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:

- a. While there has been limited evidence of disruption to External Examiner arrangements to date, it is possible that it becomes a more substantive issue with the confirmation of a MAB.
- b. It is expected that papers for the May diet have been set, however there may be some resit papers needed in August which will normally require review by External Examiners.
- c. While it is important to ensure that Schools set appropriate and accurate examination papers, there is no reason to think that temporarily removing the requirement to involve External Examiners in setting one particular type of assessment creates any risk to academic standards, as long as Schools are utilising robust internal peer review processes for examination papers.

37. The ACG recommends that this variation apply on the following basis:

- a. In the absence of normal arrangements, the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners must ensure that there has been robust internal (auditable) scrutiny of examination papers, involving at least one member of academic staff with expertise in the relevant discipline (in addition to the member of staff that has prepared the examination paper). In the event that the Convener is not available to approve these arrangements for internal scrutiny, the Head of School has the power to appoint an alternate member of staff to this internal moderation role.

38. The ACG requests the Committee recommend to Senate Quality Assurance Committee to temporarily amend External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 1. Is the Committee content to do so?

Changes to Moderation of Marking (Annex A, Point 2)

39. ACG considered the possibility of using unmoderated marks to support the award of course credit (a proposal requested by some Schools). Internal moderation is part of the University's QA processes and the waiving of this requirement poses a threat to our maintenance of academic standards. No variations to the regulations around moderation are therefore requested. Colleagues in Academic Quality and Standards will work with College Offices to ensure Schools are aware of what existing regulations require in terms of internal moderation, and that required expectations are maintained throughout any disruption.

40. ACG recommends a variation to the requirement that a sample of work from courses be reviewed by an External Examiner prior to marks been confirmed by a Board of Examiners.

41. In past periods of industrial action, review by External Examiners has been replaced by the appointment of "internal-externals" (academics from a different discipline within the University) who have fulfilled the role of oversight of quality of work.

42. ACG notes that experience of internal-external arrangements, during past periods of industrial action, has been mixed; notably in terms of the ability to identify colleagues with suitable expertise to review work. Furthermore, most of our teaching will have been reviewed by External Examiners on previous occasions, and that feedback is typically consistent over time. Therefore, ACG deems that the use of internal-externals for most courses on this occasion is not necessary.
43. APRC has previously considered, and approved, concessions for specific Boards of Examiners to allow course marks to be approved without External Examiner review, notably in January and May of 2023.
44. ACG recommends that the variation to allow Boards of Examiners to confirm course marks, not reviewed by an External Examiner be subject to all the following conditions (consistent with previous concessions approved by APRC). This variation will only be used where it is clear that all of the following apply:
- a. There is no External Examiner available to review the course (for instance because they have resigned).
 - b. The course was reviewed by an External Examiner last time it ran (and that occurred within the last two academic years), and no issues were raised.
 - c. The structure of the assessment remains consistent with how the course was assessed when it was last reviewed by an External Examiner.
 - d. There has been robust internal (auditable) moderation.
45. Where a course does not meet the above criteria, marks must only be confirmed where the work has been reviewed by an internal-External Examiner.
46. The Convenor of the Board of Examiners is responsible for appointing Internal-External Examiners. Where the Convenor is unable to undertake this role, the Head of School will make appropriate arrangements.
47. Internal-External Examiners are expected to be based in a different School from the course they are reviewing. Where an appointment, not consistent with this criteria, is required approval from the relevant College Office must be sought.
48. Internal-External Examiners should be provided with a sample of work, and other course materials, consistent with what would normally be provided to an External Examiner,
49. **The ACG requests the Committee recommend to Senate Quality Assurance Committee to temporarily amend External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 2. Is the Committee content to do so?**

Changes to the operation of Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes – relaxation of quorum requirement and External Examiner involvement (Annex A, Point 3)

50. The ACG recommends variation to these regulations for the following reasons:

- a. The MAB will be continuous over the summer examination period and will cause significant disruption to the operation of Boards of Examiners. It is highly likely that Boards will need to modify their operation during this time to mitigate against the impact of the MAB.
- b. The Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes outlines the membership requirements for Boards of Examiners. It is likely that in many cases Boards will not be able to operate in line with the regulations, and the ACG recommend a variation to specific regulations to allow Boards to take place during this time. In many cases, Schools would need to move rapidly to make these changes once they are clear about the impact of the MAB on the operation of Boards scheduled to take place during this time.
- c. In all cases, where Boards of Examiners can take place as normal and in line with existing regulations, then Boards will take place in the usual way.

The ACG recommends a variation to the following regulations:

- d. Handbook for Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes 4.18 and 4.19 outlines the quorum requirement for Boards of Examiners and Undergraduate Progression Boards. Boards to be permitted to take place with a minimum of two internal examiners participating alongside a Board Convener. Board of Examiner Conveners will only allow Board meetings to go ahead where not only will the Board be quorate under the adjusted requirements, but it will have sufficient expertise and participation of those with key roles in order to make robust decisions.
- e. External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy 37,38 and 45 to allow Boards to take place without the participation of an External Examiner. Where the External Examiner is available, their involvement in the Board should be sought. While there has been limited evidence of disruption to External Examiner arrangements to date, it is possible that it becomes a more substantive issue if the industrial action continues. Therefore, a requirement for External Examiners participation could impede Schools from taking appropriate action to mitigate the impact on students.

The ACG recommends the variation apply on the following basis:

- f. Schools can only use this temporary arrangement to address disruption to Boards of Examiners associated with the industrial action. They can only do so if they are satisfied that all students on a cohort, or a particular part of the cohort, would be disadvantaged unless the variations were applied.
- g. In the absence of normal decision-making arrangements, Schools must secure approval from the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. In the event that the Convener is not available, the Head of School will appoint an alternative member of staff to this role.

- h. Academic Quality and Standards will provide Schools with instructions on how to manage decision-making and communications where required.
- i. In previous periods of disruption, a regulatory variation was sought to allow substitute internal examiners to be appointed to a board without formal approval from the relevant College Office. The need for College-level approval of such appointments no longer exists (paragraph 4.20 of the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes now states that approval should be given by the relevant Head of School). As such, no concession is required.

51. **The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses as presented in Annex A, Point 3, and approves the role of Internal-External examiners defined above. Is the Committee content to do so?**
52. **In addition, The ACG requests the Committee recommend to Senate Quality Assurance Committee to temporarily amend External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 3. Is the Committee content to do so?**

Changes to the weighting of components of assessment of courses – allow Schools to make changes after the start of a course without the approval of College or consultation with students and External Examiners (Annex A, Point 4)

53. The ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:
- a. Where industrial action to date in 2025-26 has caused disruption to teaching and assessment activities, and it is likely that Schools will need to modify assessment arrangements to ensure that students are not assessed on content that has not been adequately covered due to industrial action, or to mitigate impact on an assessment which was subsequently found to have been affected. Where it is not possible to mitigate the impact through changing the design of individual assessment tasks, the appropriate approach to mitigating these impacts would be for Schools to change the weight of or discount components of assessment. In many cases, Schools would need to move rapidly to make these changes once they are clear about the impact of the industrial action.
 - b. The proposed variation is consistent with existing powers of Boards of Examiners (who can reweight components due to issues with assessment processes or for individual students with valid exceptional circumstances). The purpose of the variation is to expedite that process, with a presumption that consultation will occur if possible.
 - c. While Taught Assessment Regulation 13 allows Schools to change weightings of components of assessment, it requires them to consult both students and External Examiners, and secure College-level approval, before doing so. These arrangements would not be compatible with agile decision-making. While the Committee could consider variations to these

normal consultation and decision-making processes on a case- by case-basis, that would in itself prevent Schools from taking rapid decisions where required, and would be unmanageable were decisions required on a large number of individual cases.

- d. Consulting students about changes would not be necessary where teaching and assessment has been disrupted for all students in a cohort or sub-cohort, and none would be disadvantaged (in terms of course results) as a result of the changes. This is on the basis that the change is being made in the interests of the students and it would therefore be reasonable not to have to consult with them.
- e. While there has been limited evidence of disruption to External Examiner arrangements to date, it is possible that it becomes a more substantive issue if the industrial action continues. Therefore, a requirement to consult External Examiners could impede Schools from taking appropriate action to mitigate the impact on students.

54. The ACG recommends that the variation apply on the following basis:

- a. Schools can only use this temporary arrangement to address disruption to teaching and assessment associated with the industrial action. They can only do so if they are satisfied that all students on a cohort, or a particular part of the cohort, would be disadvantaged unless the weighting of the relevant component is reduced or removed.
- b. When assessing the need to change the weighting of components of assessments in the event of disruption to relevant teaching and assessment, Schools must consider whether doing so would allow the students to demonstrate attainment in relation to all learning outcomes (including professional and accreditation body requirements, if relevant).
- c. Taught Assessment Regulation 71 provides Boards of Examiners with guidance that where less than four-fifths (80%) of the weighted assessment is available it is unlikely that the Board will be able to determine a mark. However, consistent with existing practice with regards to handling exceptional circumstances cases, QAA guidance issued during the Marking and Assessment Boycott of 2023, and the findings of the recent QAA Review of Assessment Practices at University of Glasgow, there is no expectation that Boards will award a numeric grade simply because x percent of the assessment associated with a course has been completed. The demonstration of learning outcomes remains the paramount consideration.
- d. Schools can change the weightings of components of assessments (including removing a component altogether) for the entire cohort (in the event that all students' preparations for the assessment will have been disrupted) or for a particular part of the cohort (in the event that part of the cohort has been disrupted but another part has not).
- e. In the absence of normal decision-making arrangements, when making changes during the delivery of the course, Schools must secure approval from the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. In the event that

the Convener is not available, the Head of School has the power to appoint an alternative member of staff to this role.

- f. While they would not be required to consult students and External Examiners, Schools must nonetheless inform both students and External Examiners of any changes to the weightings of components.
- g. Academic Quality and Standards will provide Schools with instructions on how to manage decision-making and communications.
- h. Existing EUCLID functionality does not easily allow Schools to edit the weightings of components of assessment for courses (including disregarding components altogether) after marks have been entered into the system for a course instance. Student Systems will provide instructions to Schools on how to manage relevant arrangements within EUCLID, and on a suggested process to ensure consistency of approach intended to prevent operational errors which could lead to the processing of incorrect marks.

55. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 13 as presented in Annex A, Point 4. Is the Committee content to do so?

Changes to the Award of Pass/Fail Grades (Annex A, Point 5)

56. The ACG recommends a variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 35: Common Marking Scheme, to temporarily relax the requirement for Boards of Studies to have approved the operation of assessment on a Pass/Fail basis, and to permit the award of Pass/Fail at Honours level.

57. The ACG recommends variation to these regulations for the following reasons:

- a. The MAB will be continuous over the examination period and will cause significant disruption to the operation of Boards of Examiners. It is highly likely that Boards will need to modify their operation during this time to mitigate against the impact of the MAB.
- b. It is possible that a Board may not have the complete information required to determine a reliable numerical mark, even after making changes to the weighting of components of assessment. In this situation, the Board may be content that a student has demonstrated sufficient achievement for credit to be awarded for a course on a pass/fail basis.
- c. Boards will only award credit on a pass/fail basis where they believe they have sufficient information for such judgements to be robust, particularly at the pass/fail boundary. Where a Board does not believe it can be confident in its judgement in this regard it can opt to defer its decision on that course until further information becomes available.
- d. Should an exam Board decide to award credit on a pass/fail basis, and subsequently further assessment information becomes available, the Board will revisit its original decision and will award a numeric grade if it is confident it now has robust evidence to do so.

- e. Should a student have received a pass grade at an earlier exam Board, and the subsequent calculation of a numeric grade would otherwise indicate a fail outcome, the original award of course credit will be maintained. This represents a specific, and limited, operation of the non-detriment principle. Since a Board of Examiners should only be awarding pass/fail credit where they are confident they have robust evidence to do so, the extent to which such an outcome is likely to occur in practice should be very limited.

58. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 35 as presented in Annex A, Point 5. Is the Committee content to do so?

Variation of the progression requirements for Undergraduate students.

59. The ACG recommends variations to Undergraduate progression requirements for the following reasons:

- a. Due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott there is the possibility of a significant impact on the availability of course results required by Progression Boards to enable them to reach a decision in line with normal regulations.
- b. In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board will consider a student's progression under normal regulations.

Pre-Honours (Annex A, Point 6)

60. The ACG recommends a variation to allow the award of up to 40 credits worth of Credit on Aggregate for non-core or non-compulsory courses at pre-honours (amending Taught Assessment Regulation 51). This proposal represents a more restricted variation than has been requested in previous periods of disruption (where Credit on Aggregate was potentially available for core and compulsory courses). This reflects experience from periods of disruption where progression of students, who have not demonstrated the required achievement in core/ compulsory courses, has led to poor student experience (and academic outcomes) in future years.

61. ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:

- a. The reduction of credits that a student is required to achieve for progression is intended to mitigate the volume of disruption experienced by students, and which has the potential to lead to a high level of course results being unavailable for Boards to reach decisions in line with the existing regulations.
- b. At pre-honours level, University regulations mean that students who have not passed a course can only gain the associated credit through completing resit assessments (or taking an additional course). Allowing pre-honours students to be awarded credit where an optional course is missing a grade due to industrial action should help minimise the impact of action on

student progression, while ensuring that knowledge and skills core to the degree being studied are still demonstrated.

62. ACG recommend that the award of Credit on Aggregate at pre-honours would occur subject to all the following conditions.
- a. The student has passed at least 80 credits (out of 120).
 - b. The student has achieved an average of at least 40% across all courses for which a numeric grade is available
 - c. The course, being considered for Credit on Aggregate, does not have a grade (either numeric or pass/fail) due to industrial action.
 - d. The student has attempted the course.
 - e. The affected course is **not** noted in the relevant DPT as core or compulsory for the student's current degree programme (i.e. courses which must be taken and passed).
 - f. The course is **not** required for meeting professional or statutory body requirements
 - g. Credit on Aggregate must also be awarded in cases where the above are met, but the student has been awarded "null sit" due to exceptional circumstances (in order to prevent students with valid exceptional circumstances receiving a less favourable outcome than students who completed the course but whose performance when/if graded would result in a fail).
63. Where a course does not meet the criteria specified above, Credit on Aggregate should not be awarded, and the student will be handled through normal processes, for instance through the offering of a resit opportunity.
64. Where, even after the application of the above, a Board does not have a complete profile of marks then the progression decision will be deferred.
65. Where, after a progression decision is made, course grades are revised (including becoming available where Credit on Aggregate was previously awarded), the Progression Board will meet and revise its decisions as appropriate.
66. If Credit on Aggregate has been awarded at a previous Board, and subsequent information indicates the student should not have received credit for that course, the previous award of credit will be maintained. This represents a specific, and limited, operation of the principle of non-detriment. The scope of this variation is less than the equivalent in 2022/23 (which was accepted as part of the QAA concern consideration), with focus on optional courses limiting the relevance to core knowledge and skills for a student's degree programme. Therefore, the impact of non-detriment with regards to this variation is expected to be highly limited.
67. **The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 51 as presented in Annex A, Point 6. Is the Committee content to do so?**

Variations to the eligibility for Credit on Aggregate at Honours and PGT level.

68. In these cases, the overall level of Credit on Aggregate remains unchanged (40 credits per 120 attempted credits). The proposed variations clarify that Credit on Aggregate can be awarded where a course outcome is unavailable due to industrial action, and that calculations of eligibility for Credit on Aggregate should be based on courses for which a numeric grade is available.
69. None of the proposed variations remove the requirements for students to meet programme specific requirements (where these exist, and are documented in DPTs or Programme Handbooks). This marks a change from previous periods of disruption where regulations were updated to remove these requirements except in cases related to professional accreditation. ACG considers that cases where industrial action has impacted the ability of students to meet programme specific progression/awarding requirements are best handled on a case by case basis (allowing the desire to support positive student outcomes to be balanced against the maintenance of academic standards). Where industrial action has impacted the ability of students to meet programme specific requirements, Boards of Examiners must notify the relevant College Office to consider what mitigation may be appropriate.

Honours (Annex A, Point 7)

70. The ACG recommends a variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 52 to allow the award of Credit on Aggregate where industrial action means no course outcome is available.
71. In contrast to the equivalent variation approved in 2022/23, this variation does not change the overall level of Credit on Aggregate a student can receive under the normal regulations (which remains at 40 credits per year, compared to 60 in 2022/23).
72. While the award of up to 60 credits worth of Credit on Aggregate was accepted during the QAA concern, ACG reflected that the increase in use of Credit on Aggregate caused some students to struggle in future years, and is potentially less justifiable given the renewed sector-wide focus on the robustness of assessment and award.
73. Maintaining the existing maximum level of Credit on Aggregate, also helps limit the potential for the use of non-detriment to undermine our academic standards (since the amount of credits which can benefit from any non-detriment is lower than 2022/23)
74. ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:
- a. Explicitly extending the criteria of courses that can be awarded Credit on Aggregate to include courses where industrial action means no course grade

is available should help provide certainty for students on their progression status.

- b. Maintaining 40 credits as the maximum amount of Credit on Aggregate that can be awarded in a given academic year, helps ensure academic standards are maintained and minimises the risk of students progressing without the knowledge required for successful future study.
- c. University regulations do not allow final year students to take additional credits and this variation is intended to minimise the circumstance where students are carrying credits into their final year of study.

75. ACG recommends that the variation be applied subject to the following constraints:

- a. In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board must consider a student's progression under normal regulations. The variation is an exceptional measure which Boards should only consider when they have exhausted all other options.

76. ACG recommend that the award of Credit on Aggregate for honours courses, where industrial action means no course outcome is available, would occur subject to the following conditions:

- a. The relevant Board of Examiners has established that a pass/fail grade cannot be awarded.
- b. The absence of a course grade is due to industrial action. The affected course is eligible for Credit on Aggregate in normal circumstances; where any exclusion is defined in relevant programme documentation.
- c. The student has achieved an overall average of 40% across courses for which a numeric grade is available.
- d. Credit on Aggregate must also be awarded in cases where the above are met, but the student has been awarded "null sit" due to exceptional circumstances (in order to prevent students with valid exceptional circumstances receiving a less favourable outcome than students who completed the course but whose performance when/if graded would result in a fail).

77. Where, after a progression decision is made, course grades are revised (including becoming available where Credit on Aggregate was previously awarded), the Progression Board will meet and revise its decisions as appropriate.

78. If Credit on Aggregate has been awarded at a previous Board, and subsequent information indicates the student should not have received credit for that course, the previous award of credit will be maintained. This represents a specific, and limited, operation of the principle of non-detriment. The scope of this variation is less than the equivalent in 2022/23 (which was accepted as part of the QAA

concern consideration). Therefore, the impact of non-detriment with regards to this variation is expected to be highly limited.

79. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 52 as presented in Annex A, Point 7. Is the Committee content to do so?

Changes to the progression requirements for Postgraduate Taught students (Annex A, Point 8).

80. The ACG recommends variation to the Postgraduate progression requirements to allow progression where some expected numeric grades may be unavailable.

81. ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:

- a. As a result of the Marking and Assessment Boycott there is the possibility of significant impact on the availability of course results required by Progression Boards to reach a decision in line with normal regulations.

82. ACG recommends that the variation be applied subject to the following constraints:

- a. In all cases, where a Progression Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the Taught Assessment Regulations, then the Board must consider a student's progression under normal regulations.
- b. Students have passed at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50 in each of those courses
- c. Any course receiving Credit on Aggregate as a result of this variation must be eligible for Credit on Aggregate in normal circumstances.

83. Where the above criteria is not met, the Exam Board should defer the progression decision, with the student conditionally progressing to their dissertation.

84. ACG recommends:

- a. Where Credit on Aggregate is awarded for a course which has no outcome due to industrial action, the progression decision will be revisited should relevant marks become available at a later date, and student outcomes updated as required
- b. In instances where the variation to the progression requirements has been applied, the classification of the Masters award will be undertaken using a minimum of 80 taught credits, alongside any dissertation related requirements.
- c. If Credit on Aggregate has been awarded at a previous Board, and subsequent information indicates the student should not have received credit for that course, the previous award of credit will be maintained. In such cases, where the variation to the progression requirements has been applied, the

same calculation applied for progression must be applied when calculating a student's eligibility for the final award to ensure consistency of outcome for the student

85. Point c above represents a specific, and limited, operation of the principle of non-detriment. The scope of this variation is equivalent to 2022/23 (which was accepted as part of the QAA concern consideration), and consistent with the normal requirement for students to achieve a minimum of 80 taught credits with a grade of 50%. Therefore, the impact of non-detriment with regards to this variation is expected to be highly limited.

86. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 56 as presented in Annex A, Point 8. Is the Committee content to do so?

Changes to the requirements for making Undergraduate award and classification decisions.

87. The ACG recommends variations to Undergraduate award requirements for the following reasons:

- a. There may be instances where Course Boards of Examiners have awarded a pass/fail grade for a course where a numeric mark would normally be returned.
- b. To mitigate against the impact of a student having received a pass/fail grade in a course where a Board would normally have a numeric grade on which to base its award decision.

88. ACG recommends this variation operates subject to the following constraint:

- a. Where an Award Board has a full profile of marks available to reach a decision in line with the existing Regulations, then the Board must consider a student's award as normal.

Award of Undergraduate Ordinary and General degrees (Annex A, Point 9)

89. The ACG recommends a temporary variation to allow students being assessed for the award of a General or Ordinary degree to be eligible for up to 40 credits of credits on aggregate, where the availability of course credits is impacted by industrial action (amending Taught assessment Regulation 53).

90. ACG recommends this variation in order to ensure consistency between this cohort of students and the wider University population. In normal circumstances, students on General or Ordinary degrees are entitled to resit opportunities akin to those offered to pre-honours students. This variation therefore ensures consistency of treatment with student considered in paragraphs 59-67 above.

91. ACG recommends that the operation of this variation be subject to the following constraints:

- a. Where a full profile of marks is available, the Board of Examiners must consider the student's award as normal.
- b. Consistent with the proposed variation for the award of credit at pre-honours level, Credit on Aggregate is not to be offered for courses which are defined as core/compulsory for the degree being awarded.
- c. Credit on Aggregate will only be awarded where the course outcome is unknown, due to industrial action, at the time of the awarding Board of Examiners.

92. ACG recommends:

- a. Credit on Aggregate must also be awarded in cases where the above are met, but the student has been awarded "null sit" due to exceptional circumstances (in order to prevent students with valid exceptional circumstances receiving a less favourable outcome than students who completed the course but whose performance when/if graded would result in a fail).
- b. Where Credit on Aggregate is awarded for a course which has no outcome due to industrial action, the award decision will be revisited should relevant marks become available at a later date, and student outcomes updated as required
- c. If Credit on Aggregate has been awarded at a previous Board, and subsequent information indicates the student should not have received credit for that course, the previous award of credit will be maintained. This is a specific, and limited, operation of the non-detriment principle. It is consistent with the position in 2022/23 (which was subject to a QAA Concern consideration and deemed appropriate).

93. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 53 as presented in Annex A, Point 9. Is the Committee content to do so?

Award of Undergraduate Honours (Annex A, Point 10)

94. The ACG recommends a variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 54 to allow the award of Credit on Aggregate where industrial action means no course outcome is available.
95. In contrast to the equivalent variation approved in 2022/23, this variation does not change the overall level of credit on aggregate a student can receive (which remains at 40 credits per year, compared to 60 in 2022/23).
96. While the award of up to 60 credits worth of Credit on Aggregate was accepted during the QAA concern, ACG reflected that the increase in use of Credit on Aggregate is potentially less justifiable given the renewed sector-wide focus on the robustness of assessment and award.

97. Maintaining the existing maximum level of Credit on Aggregate, helps limit the potential for the use of non-detriment to undermine our academic standards (since the amount of credits which can benefit from any non-detriment is lower than 2022/23)

98. The ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:

- a. The variation to these regulations is intended to support Boards to make robust decisions to allow students to graduate from their programme in line with expected timelines
- b. Explicitly extending the criteria of courses that can be awarded Credit on Aggregate to include courses where industrial action means no course grade is available should help provide certainty for students on their progression status.
- c. Maintaining 40 credits as the maximum amount of Credit on Aggregate that can be awarded in a given academic year, ensures academic standards are maintained and minimises the risk of students progressing without the knowledge required for successful future study.
- d. The altered requirement for credits on aggregate is intended to mitigate against the impact of receiving a pass/fail grade in a course which the Board would normally expect to return a numerical mark. In these cases, the requirement to achieve an overall average of 40% across 120 credits has been relaxed, however a student must achieve an average of 40% across the courses which return a numeric mark
- e. The classification calculation for these awards is to be undertaken using courses which return a numeric grade.

99. ACG recommend that the award of additional Credit on Aggregate at honours would occur subject to the following conditions.

- a. The relevant Board of Examiners has established that a pass/fail grade cannot be awarded.
- b. The absence of a course grade is due to industrial action. The affected course is eligible for Credit on Aggregate in normal circumstances; where any exclusion is defined in relevant programme documentation.
- c. The student has achieved an overall average of 40% across courses for which a numeric grade is available.
- d. Credit on Aggregate must also be awarded in cases where the above are met, but the student has been awarded "null sit" due to exceptional circumstances (in order to prevent students with valid exceptional circumstances receiving a less favourable outcome than students who completed the course but whose performance when/if graded would result in a fail).

100. Where the Board has sufficient credits to award a degree, but an incomplete mark profile, the Board may consider whether it has sufficient information available to classify an award on the information available and, where the Board believes it is reasonable and robust to do so. There is no minimum credit requirement on which to base a classification decision, however Boards must be

satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of performance at the required level to justify a particular classification. This is an existing requirement which aligns with normal regulations.

101. Where Boards have exhausted all available options, it may consider awarding a degree without a classification, in line with Undergraduate Degree Regulation 59. The Board would be required to revisit the classification decision when it determines that sufficient credits are available to classify the award in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 64.
102. Where a Board has determined that an award cannot be made either under existing regulations or by utilising the exceptional measures in place, then the Board may establish that no award can be made. The Board would be required to revisit the decision when it determines that sufficient information is available to revisit the decision in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 64.
103. Where, after an award decision is made, course grades are revised (including becoming available where Credit on Aggregate was previously awarded), the Board of Examiners will meet and revise its decisions as appropriate.
104. If Credit on Aggregate has been awarded at a previous Board, and subsequent information indicates the student should not have received credit for that course, the previous award of credit will be maintained. This represents a specific, and limited, operation of the principle of non-detriment. The scope of this variation is less than the equivalent in 2022/23 (which was accepted as part of the QAA concern consideration). Therefore, the impact of non-detriment with regards to this variation is expected to be highly limited.
105. **The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 54 as presented in Annex A, Point 10. Is the Committee content to do so?**

Award of PG Certificate and Diplomas (Annex A, Point 11)

106. ACG recommends a variation to Taught Assessment Regulation 57 to bring the requirements for award of PG Certificates and PG Diplomas in line with the variation (above) with regards to progression on MSc programmes; specifically excluding courses for which no numeric grade is available from Credit on Aggregate calculations.
107. ACG recommends this variation for the following reasons:
 - a. This will mitigate the possibility of inequality of treatment between PGT students with identical profiles as a result of the exit award for which they are registered.
 - b. It addresses a concern identified during the industrial action of summer 2023, that student exiting with Certificates or Diplomas were disadvantaged relative to those gaining an MSc; which raised equality concerns.

- c. It is consistent with the APRC decision detailed in APRC22/23 11B.
- d. ACG recommends that this variation operate subject to any constraints applied to the variation for PGT progression.

108. The ACG requests the Committee temporarily amend Taught Assessment Regulation 57 as presented in Annex A, Point 11. Is the Committee content to do so?

Resource implications

109. The application of variations, where they are needed, will have significant workload implications for staff in Schools and Colleges, for Academic Quality and Standards staff, and for staff involved in making the decisions. These activities would be temporary and this paper does not attempt to quantify them given the uncertainty regarding the extent to which it would be necessary for Schools to operate them. Although the activities are temporary, there are knock on effects even after a period of industrial action has concluded, with potential impacts on processes such as course pre-enrolment and other start of semester activities. There are also resource implications for students should variations not be applied in relation to re-assessment, additional travel and further study. Although these proposals aim to mitigate the impact of industrial action on student progression and awards, it is anticipated that the University will see an increase in student appeals related to academic outcomes; resourcing to ensure these are addressed in a timely manner will be required.

Risk management

110. The paper aims to support the Committee in managing the dual risks arising from industrial action: ensuring that students are able to progress and receive awards, while maintaining academic standards in line with institutional requirements and external expectations. A key risk to academic standards is not in making variations to our Taught Assessment Regulations (as this has been tested and confirmed by QAA previously), but in failing to apply any agreed variations consistently. This paper supports the Committee in managing this risk appropriately. There is risk that some students (especially graduating students) may be negatively impacted in terms of graduate employment should the variations not be applied, placing our students at a disadvantage relative to other graduating students that are not affected by a MAB. There is also risk associated with the additional administrative processes required to implement the variations in a short lead time which require resource and expertise.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

111. Not applicable.

Equality & diversity

112. Were the University not to provide Schools with the appropriate range of options for mitigating the impact of industrial action on students, it is likely that there would be an adverse impact on particular cohorts or sub-cohorts of students on courses. It is possible that this could have a disproportionate impact on specific categories of students who may be more likely to experience other

forms of disruption to their assessments or who may require particular forms of adjustments in relation to those assessments, for example students with disabilities.

113. An Equality Impact Assessment for variations to academic regulations and policies due to industrial action has been completed and will be published on the [University's website](#)

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

114. Academic Quality and Standards will communicate to Schools and Colleges regarding any variations to normal policies and regulations and develop supporting instructions for implementation.
115. Subject to recommendation by the Committee, Academic Quality and Standards will coordinate an electronic meeting of Senate Quality Assurance Committee to seek approval of the variations to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.

Author

Academic Quality and Standards

14 May 2026

Presenter

Lucy Evans (Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students) and Tina Harrison (Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement))

Freedom of Information Open

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.

Annex: - Proposals for Temporary Variations to Academic Policies and Regulations

Deletions are shown with ~~strike through~~. New text is highlighted in **Underlined Bold**

1 *Setting Examination Papers – Remove the Requirement to Consult External Examiners*

Taught Assessment Regulations:

NB Taught Assessment Regulations no longer detail the responsibilities of the External Examiner. Taught Assessment Regulations refer to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy. Therefore, no variations to Taught assessment Regulations are required.

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

10. The College appoints a Course External Examiner to each course. The Course External Examiner is expected to:

c) review and approve, if appropriate, ~~all assessment materials and~~ assessment criteria for the courses examined

~~40. External Examiner(s) must review and approve draft examination papers. Draft examination papers should be accompanied by model answers, where applicable and appropriate, or solutions and the marking schemes to be applied.~~

2 *Changes to Moderation of Marking – Remove the Requirement for External Examiners to Review All Assessments*

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

10. The College appoints a Course External Examiner to each course. The Course External Examiner is expected to:

d) ~~scrutinise a representative sample of all assessed work across each of the courses examined in order to judge whether marks are fairly and consistently applied to students across the courses, and whether~~

~~markers are applying the marking scheme consistently and using the full range of marks where justified;~~

3. Changes to the Operation of Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes – Relaxation of Quorum Requirement and External Examiner Involvement

Taught Assessment Regulations:

NB Taught Assessment Regulation 39 now just directs to the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Course and Programmes. Therefore, no variation is requested to the Taught Assessment Regulations.

Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Course and Programmes:

~~4.18 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, but is not required to participate in the meeting of the 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.~~

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:

~~37. In order to be quorate, at least one External Examiner must participate in and approve the decisions of the Board of Examiners.~~

~~38. External Examiners must participate in all Board of Examiners meetings relevant to their appointment.~~

~~45. The Programme External Examiner approves jointly, as a member of the Board, the decisions of the Board of Examiners regarding students'~~

~~programme outcomes, including award and classification. The Programme External Examiner confirms that these decisions are taken in line with University regulations and published criteria.~~

4. Changes to the Weighting of Components of Assessment of Courses – Allow Schools to Make Changes After the Start of a Course Without the Approval of College or Consultation with Students and External Examiners

Taught Assessment Regulations:

13. Passing a course or degree programme requires attainment of the learning outcomes and may require a specified level of performance or attendance in some or all components.

13.3 Boards of Studies and the relevant College Committee approve the assessment and satisfactory performance requirements for courses and degree programmes before their delivery. Individual course elements and options available to students can change and there are annual changes to degree programme tables and course availability. However, the approval of the relevant College Committee must be obtained if it is exceptionally necessary to ~~change the weighting of assessment of a course after students have entered it; or to change progression, classification or award requirements for a programme after students have entered their honours years or a postgraduate programme.~~

~~(a) Before approval can be given, written evidence of the results of consultation with the students must be submitted. Every student affected needs to be informed of the changes and given the opportunity to comment. The expectation is that the College will not approve changes in the face of significant student objections, unless changes are compelled by external factors.~~

~~(b) The relevant external examiners must also be informed. and consulted.~~

~~(c) Students may be given alternative course options, where this is possible. The expectation is that course assessment requirements will not change after students are registered on it.~~

5. Changes to the Award of Pass Fail – Enabling the Award of a Course Level Pass Where a Numeric Grade was Expected

Taught Assessment Regulation 35:

The final mark, grade, result and award and classification decision must be expressed using the relevant Common Marking Scheme: www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

~~35.3 Where the relevant Board of Studies has approved the operation of assessment for a course on a Pass/Fail basis, Boards of Examiners may award credit for the course without awarding a mark or grade under the Common Marking Scheme. Courses whose assessment operates on a Pass/Fail basis are permitted during the pre-Honours stage of undergraduate Honours programmes, or on non-Honours undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes. Courses with Pass/Fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption.~~

6. Changes to Progression Requirements for Undergraduate Students – Pre-honours – Providing Exam Boards with Greater Flexibility Where course marks are unavailable due to industrial action

Taught Assessment Regulations:

51. To progress to the next year of study and into honours, students must meet the requirements for progression which are specified in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study and degree programme tables. www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

If a profile of marks is incomplete due to industrial action, and if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more in the available credits with a numeric grade, then they will be awarded Credits on Aggregate for the courses affected by industrial action providing those courses are not:-

b) **designated core or compulsory for their programme; or**

b) **required for meeting professional or statutory body requirements.**

7. Changes to the Progression Requirements for Undergraduate Students – Honours - Providing Exam Boards with Greater Flexibility Where Course Marks are Unavailable due to Industrial Action

Taught Assessment Regulation 52:

The Undergraduate Progression Board has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the next year of honours study.

- a) pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
- b) have an overall average of 40% or more ~~for the 120 credits~~ **across credits, taken in the relevant honours year, for which a numeric grade is available;**
- c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook.

Where an incomplete profile of marks is available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits~~ **over credits with an available numeric grade**, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for **courses that are either failed, or the failed courses where industrial action means no course outcome is available, providing the award Credit on Aggregate would normally be available for the course concerned.**

8. Changes to the progression requirements for Postgraduate Taught students - providing Exam Boards with greater flexibility where course marks are unavailable due to industrial action

Taught Assessment Regulation 56:

For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project or dissertation component, students must pass the assessment requirements of the taught stage at an appropriate level at the first attempt before progression to the dissertation. In order to progress to the masters dissertation students must:

- a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
- b) attain an average of at least 50% **for courses with an available numeric grade** for the ~~120 credits of study examined~~ at the point of decision for progression; and
- c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits~~ **over credits with an available numeric grade**, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for **courses that are either failed, or the failed courses where industrial action means no course outcome is available, providing the award Credit on Aggregate would normally be available for the course concerned.**

For programmes where the taught and project or dissertation components are taken in parallel, or where there are not identifiable taught and research project or dissertation components, the requirements for progression are determined at programme level, stated in the Programme Handbook.

9. Changes to the Requirements for Making Undergraduate Award and Classification Decisions - Ordinary and General Degrees - Providing Exam Boards with Greater Flexibility Where Course Marks are Unavailable due to Industrial Action

Taught Assessment Regulations:

53. Students registered for an Ordinary or General (non-Honours) degree may be awarded the degree if they satisfy the requirements in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study.

When all the marks for the taught components of the final year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the available credits with a numeric grade then they will be awarded up to 40

credits on aggregate for any courses missing a outcome due to industrial action.

10. Changes to the requirements for making Undergraduate award and classification decisions - Undergraduate Honours - providing Exam Boards with greater flexibility where course marks are unavailable due to industrial action

Taught Assessment Regulations:

54. The Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can be awarded a classified honours degree. To graduate students must:

- a) pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 10 or above in their final honours year; and
- b) have an overall average of 40% or more for ~~120 credits of final honours~~ **across credits, taken in the final honours year, for which a numeric grade is available**; and
- c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme.

Where an incomplete profile of marks is available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits~~ **over credits with an available numeric grade**, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for **courses that are either failed, or the failed courses where industrial action means no course outcome is available, providing the award Credit on Aggregate would normally be available for the course concerned.**

11. Changes to Award of PG Certificate and Diplomas - providing Exam Boards with greater flexibility where course marks are unavailable due to industrial action

Taught Assessment Regulations:

57. In order to be awarded the certificate students must:

- a) pass at least 40 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- b) **attain an average of at least 40% over credits with an available numeric grade** for the ~~60 credits of study examined for the certificate~~; and
- c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named certificate that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded the diploma students must:

- a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- b) **attain an average of at least 40% over credits with an available numeric grade** for the ~~120 credits of study examined for the diploma~~; and
- c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named diploma that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme or diploma are available, if the student has achieved a mark of at least 40% in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more ~~over the full 120 credits~~ **over credits with an available numeric grade**, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses, up to a maximum of 40 credits. For a certificate, a maximum of 20 credits may be awarded on aggregate

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 May 2026

Proposed amendments to Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27

Description of paper

1. This paper contains proposed amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations for 2026/27. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the proposed changes.

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. For discussion and approval.

Background and context

3. The Degree and Assessment Regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that enhancements can be made on a cumulative basis.
4. In December 2025, all Colleges were invited to consult Schools regarding proposals for changes to the Regulations, with the intention of identifying any necessary updates due to changes in related policies or practices, and to address any errors or lack of clarity. Consultation in Schools is generally led by relevant office-holders (e.g. Directors of Teaching, Directors of Quality, Teaching Organisation Managers), and can include discussion at School or College committees. Colleges collate proposals and comments on the regulations from Schools and provide these to Academic Quality and Standards in February. Where these represent necessary and uncontroversial clarifications to regulations, proposed amendments are drafted. Where proposals require further consultation, or may be controversial, Academic Quality and Standards carry out further consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Schools via Colleges), or may bring a standalone paper to APRC to discuss the issue. In drafting proposed amendments regarding some aspects of the regulations, Academic Quality and Standards consulted with other relevant stakeholders, including Disability and Learning Support Service, Legal Services, Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, Student Immigration Service.

Discussion

5. APRC is invited to discuss the draft amendments to the Taught Assessment Regulations for academic year 2026/27. Appendix 1 includes only those regulations for which there are proposed amendments.

Key Changes to Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27

6. The table below provides information about the proposed changes to the regulations for 2026/27. Links within the regulations to other information and changes in terminology have been updated as necessary. Other minor changes to wording are included in Appendix 1.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
19 Reasonable adjustments	<p>19.1 has been amended to clarify that adjustments will <i>in most cases</i> be determined in advance by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). The new 19.2 explains that there may be urgent or serious situations where there is a need to apply adjustments for a student with an imminent assessment, before a student can meet DLSS. A link is provided to guidance on the DLSS web pages about Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases.</p> <p>This amendment has arisen from work in response to the Bristol (Abrahart) case, and is designed to ensure that the University meets its anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities.</p> <p>19.7 previously suggested that students were required to provide medical evidence to receive support from DLSS with temporary injuries or impairment. This has been removed, as it is not generally required by DLSS. This should be of benefit to students, as it removes a barrier to seeking support from DLSS in these circumstances.</p>
21 Language of assessment: Gaelic	<p>Amended to reflect new Scottish Languages Act 2025. Legal Services have confirmed that the new legislation does not affect the University's position regarding assessment of work submitted in Gaelic.</p>
25 Examination timetable	<p>Amended to clarify expectations relating to adjustments to assessment where a student requests this due to religious observance. The regulation retains the existing position that decisions relating to adjustments to timetabled examinations for religious observance or performance sport are made by the relevant College Dean and Convener of the Board of Examiners. Additional guidance is provided about cases involving religious observance, stating that:</p>

	<p>“Colleges and Schools are encouraged to take steps to avoid a significant delay in assessment, i.e. to the next diet, or the resit diet, for example by the use of an alternative exam paper, or an alternative form of assessment.”</p> <p>Such a delay in assessment may be unavoidable in some cases, and it is understood that providing an alternative exam paper or an alternative form of an assessment has resource implications for staff. However, taking steps where possible to avoid significantly delaying assessment supports the University’s obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and mitigates the risk of perceived discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.</p>
<p>27 Resit assessment</p> <p>27.4</p> <p>27.6</p> <p>27.9</p> <p>27.12</p>	<p>Amendment to clarify that visa-holding students on Ordinary and General degree programmes are also subject to restrictions regarding the permitted number of assessment attempts.</p> <p>Amended to state that students may be offered the opportunity to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed, where a specific mark (above the normal pass mark) is required for progression. Some programmes require higher marks in specific courses for progression than the usual pass mark of 40. Allowing students to resit where they have achieved a mark of 40, but not achieved the required level, will benefit those students who may be able to demonstrate the required level to progress at a further attempt.</p> <p>Amended to clarify that the requirement that all assessment attempts for a given course must take place across no more than two academic sessions (unless the relevant College has applied a concession), even where one or more attempts have resulted from null sits granted due to Exceptional Circumstances.</p> <p>Amended to clarify that null sits count towards the maximum permitted number of attempts for PGT dissertations or research projects, in line with Regulation 58.</p> <p>Amended to simplify the position regarding visa-holding students’ access to a fourth assessment attempt. It remains the case that visa-holding students cannot have a fourth attempt at assessment, where</p>

	<p>there have been no Exceptional Circumstances (ECs) affecting their previous attempts. The UKVI position is that all assessment attempts – including any undertaken following null sits due to ECs – count towards the permitted three attempts. However, it remains the case that additional attempts may be permitted where ECs have been accepted, as is the case for non-visa-holding students under Regulation 27.9.</p> <p>The previous wording, which allowed for additional attempts where ECs had been accepted, but no null sit had been awarded, has proven redundant and confusing for Schools, given that a null sit would always be the appropriate outcome where additional assessment was required and ECs had been accepted. The removal of this wording simplifies the position and provides greater clarity for Schools. The Student Immigration Service have confirmed that the amendment to the wording creates no additional risks in terms of the University’s compliance with requirements as a visa sponsor.</p>
<p>30 Academic misconduct</p>	<p>Amended to clarify that allegations of academic misconduct will be handled in line with the University’s Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure. This reflects the existing approach.</p>
<p>37.2 Final marks</p>	<p>Amended to add reference to the requirement for Boards of Examiners to apply penalties determined under the Code of Student Conduct, where these are relevant to the decisions of the Board. This reflects the existing provisions under the Code, whereby Student Discipline Officers or the Student Discipline Committee may apply an academic penalty in cases relating to academic misconduct.</p>
<p>47 Publication of results</p>	<p>47.4 has been deleted, with relevant content incorporated into 47.2, for clarity. Moved content has been amended to clarify that students’ results may not be released via email. The previous wording stated that results may not be released “informally via email”, which led to confusion as to whether formal email communication of results was acceptable. The amendment mitigates the risk of results being communicated using informal channels, which could be more likely to lead to errors.</p>

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Resource implications

- 7. Any resource implications associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

Risk management

- 8. Any risks associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

- 9. The proposed amendments do not contribute to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

- 10. Any equality and diversity implications associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

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

- 11. Academic Quality and Standards will communicate approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies. Academic Quality and Standards will also cover any changes to regulations in Boards of Examiners briefings and other relevant briefing events for staff in Schools and Colleges.

Author

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Head of Academic Policy and
Regulations
Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information Open

Taught Assessment Regulations

Academic Year 2026/27



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Summary

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, expressing in practical form the academic goals and policies of the University.

These regulations:

- (i) replace the previous undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment regulations;
- (ii) set out the rules which must be followed in taught student assessment; and
- (iii) provide links to other sources or guidance and related regulations.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide. They apply to assessment of **all** taught full-time and part-time students, studying degrees, diplomas and certificates at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 7 – 12 which are awarded for credit at the University of Edinburgh. They apply to undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates studying taught components. The regulations apply to undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessment for courses assessed in the current academic year.

Contact

academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Version Approved: 22.05.2025	Effective Date: 15.09.25	Equality impact assessment:	Last Reviewed: 22.05.25	Next Review: 2025/26
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Approving authority

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Student Appeal Regulations, Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Policies for Boards of Examiners and Progression Boards, Examination Hall Regulations, External Examiner for Taught Programmes Policy, Exceptional Circumstances Policy, DRPS Glossary of Terms, Student Systems guidance for staff: www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/

Alternative format

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

Keywords

Assessment regulations, examination, examiners, Board of Examiners, common marking scheme, Convener of the Board, progression, degree classification, degree award



Taught Assessment Regulations

Academic Year 2026/27

Regulation 19 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

Application of the regulation

19.1 Reasonable adjustments ~~must~~ will in most cases be determined in advance by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). They are recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments by the DLSS, which communicates the Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's Student Adviser, the School's Coordinator of Adjustments, relevant Course Organisers, and Registry Services (if examination adjustments are recommended) and other relevant areas.

19.2 In urgent or serious situations, where there is not sufficient time for a student to be referred to DLSS in advance of an imminent assessment, Schools may apply adjustments before a Schedule of Adjustments is in place. The Disability and Learning Support Service provides guidance for staff on Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases.
Guidance on Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases

19.23 The School's Coordinator of Adjustments (CoA) has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments, in conjunction with Course Organisers. The Coordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School.

19.34 The Coordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the DLSS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the Schedule of Adjustments the DLSS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.

19.45 The DLSS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support:
-Disability and Learning Support Service
www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/students/support-we-provide

19.56 Reasonable adjustments can be made for a variety of assessment methods, depending on the needs identified and recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments, e.g. assessed coursework, take-home examinations, online examinations, invigilated examinations. The DLSS supports students in the preparation and review of their Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their Schedule of Adjustments covers all types of assessment methods relevant to their courses. For example, if a student discovers that an aspect of their course is likely to have an impact on their support needs, they should contact the DLSS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their Schedule of Adjustments.



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19.67 Arrangements can be made via the DLSS for students with temporary injuries or impairments, e.g. broken arm or leg, ~~on the submission of relevant medical information~~. Students should contact the DLSS as soon as possible to allow the DLSS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.

Regulation 21 Language of assessment: Gaelic

Dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

Application of the regulation

- 21.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the ~~Gaelic Language (Scotland)~~ Scottish Languages Act 2005/2025.
- 21.2 Candidates who wish to submit a dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the dissertation.
- 21.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 25 Examination timetable

Students are only permitted to sit examinations at the times and in the venues that are detailed on the relevant examination timetable.

Application of the regulation

- 25.1 Examinations may be scheduled outside normal University teaching hours.
- 25.2 Students who believe that religious reasons or participation in elite-level sport prevent them from completing an assessment (including examinations) at the scheduled time or venue should contact their Student Adviser and Student Support Team.

Where the case relates to a centrally-scheduled examination, it ~~Their case~~ is considered by the relevant College Dean (and Registry Services ~~where it relates to~~



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a centrally-scheduled examination) in consultation with the Convener of the Board of Examiners. The College Dean is empowered to offer the student an opportunity to sit the examination at a different time or location, or to complete an alternative form of assessment.

In cases involving religious observance, staff must be mindful of the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Colleges and Schools are encouraged to take steps to avoid a significant delay in assessment, i.e. to the next diet, or the resit diet, for example by the use of an alternative exam paper, or an alternative form of assessment.

Guidance regarding steps to take where religious observance affects participation in other activities as part of a programme study is provided on the University's web pages.

Religious Observance Guidance

Further information regarding flexibility which may be offered to students taking part in elite-level sport is provided in the [Performance Sport Policy](#).

- 25.3 A student who is permitted to appear for examination at a time other than that prescribed may have to sit a specially prepared examination paper or alternative method of assessment.
- 25.4 If examinations are disrupted, for example due to adverse weather conditions, then Boards of Examiners may decide to use an alternative assessment method, rather than rescheduled examinations, to assess the learning outcomes.
- 25.5 Other than online assessment and assessment opportunities offered via Registry Services, students are not allowed to sit examinations away from Edinburgh.

Regulation 27 Resit assessment

The number of assessment attempts students are entitled to for each course depends upon the type of programme the student is taking and the SCQF level of the course.

Honours undergraduate students are entitled to:

- four* assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 7 and 8;
- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

*Visa-holding students are subject to restrictions regarding assessment attempts. See 27.12.



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Undergraduate students on Ordinary and General degree programmes are entitled to:

- four* assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

*Visa-holding students are subject to restrictions regarding assessment attempts. See 27.12.

Visiting undergraduate students are entitled to:

- two assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

Taught postgraduate students are entitled to:

- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless specific Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Application of the regulation

- 27.1 Boards of Examiners must publish the requirements for resits for those courses that they are responsible for. Boards must take the same approach to resits for all students on a particular course, except where a student's previous attempt is a null sit.
- 27.2 Boards of Examiners must set requirements at resit that are as demanding as those made of students at the first attempt.
- 27.3 Boards of Examiners will inform students who are required to undertake resit assessment of the format of their resit assessment. Resit methods need not be the same as those used to assess the learning outcomes at the first attempt, but all relevant learning outcomes must be assessed. Resit arrangements must give students a genuine opportunity to pass the course. Boards of Examiners choose between two options to achieve this:
- (a) Carry forward any component of assessment (coursework or examination) that has been passed already and require the student to retake the failed element;
 - (b) Set an assessment covering all learning outcomes for the course, and weight this as 100% of the course result.
- 27.4 Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed, unless the relevant Board of Examiners has permitted this under exceptional circumstances by granting a null sit for the attempt that the student has



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passed (see 27.9), or where a specific mark (above the normal pass mark) is required for progression.

- 27.5 Where students (including visiting students) are entitled to more than one assessment attempt, these will consist of the initial assessment attempt and a further assessment attempt in the same academic session, followed where required by a further two assessment attempts in the next academic session. Where a student is undertaking a resit attempt in the year following the one in which they initially took the course, their School will determine whether they undertake the course on an assessment-only basis, or with attendance. There may be PSRB requirements which mean that fewer than four assessment attempts are permitted.
- 27.6 The first sitting and any subsequent attempts must take place over no more than two academic sessions – excluding any periods of authorised interruption of study - unless the relevant College grants an exemption. This regulation applies even where one or more attempts have resulted from null sits due to Exceptional Circumstances.
- 27.7 Non-attendance or non-submission is considered an assessment attempt.
- 27.8 Some Honours programmes require students to pass specified courses at the first attempt in the first or second year in order to progress to Junior Honours. Any such requirements will be specified in the Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook for the relevant programme.
- 27.9 Where an assessment attempt has been affected by Exceptional Circumstances, a Board of Examiners may declare this attempt a null sit. Null sits do not count towards the maximum number of permitted attempts, except in the case of postgraduate dissertations or research projects (see Regulation 58). In line with 27.5, where a null sit has been declared for an initial assessment attempt, a further assessment attempt must be offered during the same academic session. Where a student receives a lower mark in a subsequent assessment attempt than that achieved in the attempt declared as a null sit, they will be awarded the higher mark for the relevant assessment.
- 27.10 Re-assessment attempts are not generally permitted for courses at SQCF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students since Honours and taught postgraduate programmes permit the award of credit on aggregate (see Taught Assessment Regulations 52, 54, 56, 57). Where resits are permitted for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, any classification decision must use the result obtained on the first attempt.
- 27.11 The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee decides whether a programme may offer resits which are required for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements for courses at SCQF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students. This decision is based on a case proposed by the relevant College.



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- 27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control have restrictions on their entitlement to resit or retake any part of their programme more than twice (i.e. a total of three attempts) as a result of being in the UK on a Student visa. In line with Regulation 27.9, null sits awarded due to Exceptional Circumstances may allow for additional attempts. ~~Students on a Student visa can only take a fourth assessment attempt where they have valid exceptional circumstances (in line with the Exceptional Circumstances Policy), and specific additional conditions are met (as outlined below).~~
- ~~— If a student on a Student visa does seek a fourth assessment attempt, they should apply for this via the exceptional circumstances process. Where the student has valid exceptional circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners will determine what action to take. Where the Board of Examiners decides to award the student a null sit for the affected assessment attempt, this will not count as one of the four assessment attempts; null sits for any previous attempts are also not counted towards the total permitted attempts. Where the Board does not award a null sit, but wishes to offer the student a fourth assessment attempt, they may only do so where:~~
- ~~— i) the student has provided satisfactory independent evidence of their circumstances;~~
- ~~— ii) the circumstances that had disrupted the student's previous attempt(s) have been mitigated or no longer apply.~~
- ~~— The Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations. It is able to support students on Student visas should permission to undertake a fourth assessment attempt affect their visa status (for example, by requiring an extension), and can also support students to understand their immigration status in the event that they are not granted a fourth assessment attempt.~~
- 27.13 If repetition of the in-course assessed work is not possible outwith semester time, the student, with the permission of the relevant Head of School, may be allowed to repeat any coursework on its own in the following year. Students who do not receive such permission may be permitted by the relevant Head of School to repeat the course, including examination, in the following year.
- 27.14 The full range of marks offered by the relevant Common Marking Scheme is available at resit assessment. Resit marks are not capped.
- 27.15 Where a degree programme's Honours classification is based on the final year only, students are permitted four assessment attempts for courses in non-final years.
- 27.16 In the case of collaborative degrees, where not otherwise stipulated in the collaborative agreement, any permitted resit attempt must be within two years of the first attempt.



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27.17 Students on the Access Programme and the International Foundation Programme in the Centre for Open Learning are entitled to two assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7.

Regulation 30 Academic misconduct

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken. [Allegations of academic misconduct will be handled in line with the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure.](#)

[Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure](#)

Application of the regulation

- 30.1 Marks or grades can only be given for original work by students at the University. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or one's own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, may be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to deceive. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription, or if it involves the use of essays or answers produced by another individual or service. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.
- 30.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.



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- 30.3 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proof-readers should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Proof-reading and use of translation services may constitute academic misconduct where it includes rewriting or rewording of the student's original work. Guidance on the use of proofreading is available:
[Academic Misconduct Proofreading Guidance](#)
[Academic misconduct](#)
- 30.4 Students must be careful when using Generative AI tools to help with their assessments. The use of Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT or others) to generate an assignment (or part of an assignment) and submit this as if it were one's own work, without adequate referencing, will be regarded as academic misconduct and treated as such. Programme and/or course handbooks will provide additional guidance in cases where AI tools might form part of an assessment task. Further guidance on the use of Generative AI tools can be found at: [Guidance for working with Generative AI \("GenAI"\) in your studies](#)
- 30.5 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.
- 30.6 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic [Services Quality and Standards](#) website.
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct [Academic Misconduct](#)
- 30.7 Exam hall regulations can be found at:
[Examination Regulations](#)

Regulation 37 Final marks

Boards of Examiners confirm marks as final in the minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting. A Board of Examiners must not revise marks agreed as final by a previous Board of Examiners (except in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 64).

Application of the regulation

- 37.1 For undergraduates and postgraduate students, the Board of Examiners agrees marks as final in the year in which they are obtained.
- 37.2 The Board of Examiners is required to apply any penalty determined [under the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure by the College Academic Misconduct Officer \(CAMO\) or School Academic Misconduct Officer \(SAMO\), or under the Code of Student Conduct](#). The Board cannot adjust the penalty or apply any additional penalty for the offence. Following the application of the penalty, if the



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student has valid Exceptional Circumstances relating to the affected assessment the Board will follow Regulation 43 of the Taught Assessment Regulations. Further information can be found in the [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#).

- 37.3 The Board of Examiners for final year students is responsible for determining the award of degree. The Board of Examiners, in determining final classifications and awards, may exercise discretion by taking into account exceptional circumstances. See taught assessment regulation 43.
- 37.4 The Board of Examiners approves a single mark for each component of assessment for which final marks are to be released; marks for components of assessment are not rounded. The final component marks are used by the Board of Examiners when determining the overall result for the course. Rounding is only applied to final course marks (see regulation 63).
- 37.5 Students are informed of the status of the marks released and are reminded that the Board of Examiners, in determining the final marks or award, may have exercised discretion by taking into account additional relevant information.



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Regulation 47 Publication of results

Students will be notified of their assessment results and their progression status. Students have the right to exclude their name and/or final award results from being publicly announced.

Application of the regulation

- 47.1 Concessions from the following application of the regulation on Publication of results require the approval of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) based on a case presented by the relevant College.
- 47.2 Students are officially notified of their results (including course marks, progression and programme outcomes or awards) via EUCLID Student View. This may be supplemented by the communication of assessment component results via virtual learning environments. Results are entered on to students' records by the relevant School. Students' results (including assessment component and course marks, programme and progression outcomes) may not be released over the telephone or via email.
- 47.3 The host School of the degree programme is responsible for overseeing the communication of all undergraduate award and final programme results and all taught progression decisions. The host School of the course is responsible for overseeing the communication of all final course results to the students on the course. Students will be notified in advance of the date on which they can expect to hear their results.
- ~~47.4 Students' results (including assessment component and course marks, programme and progression outcomes) may not be released over the telephone or informally via email. Students only receive their results via formal communication channels.~~
- 47.~~5~~4 There should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme.
- 47.~~6~~5 The host School will communicate a clear plan of action to each student when the student has failed an assessment that is required. This applies to final course results and some "in course" assessments where a pass is required. The communication is to take account of the student's progression and/or award status.
- 47.~~7~~6 Each School will provide a general statement on their website describing their local process, indicating to their students how they should proceed in the event of failure.
- 47.~~8~~7 Where a student has failed a summative assessment (either "in course" or "final") and a resubmission or retake is required and permitted, the host School ensures that the student is provided with timely academic feedback, guidance and support prior to their re-assessment.



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47.98 The Head of the host School, or their designated representative, has responsibility for ensuring that, where a student has failed their programme of study at the final stage, the student is supported in a timely and personal manner. If appropriate, an offer of a private consultation may be made.

47.109 Once a final award, final degree programme or final course result and progression decision has been agreed by the Board of Examiners and other relevant bodies, then Schools may contact students who have failed before the decision is published in EUCLID Student View. Schools should not give informal indications about the final award, final degree programme or final course result or progression decision in advance of the decision of the Board of Examiners and/or other relevant bodies. See regulation 46.4 for the release of provisional marks.

47.110 Where there is a requirement to confirm pass lists to a Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the assessment results should not be collated and sent until the results of individual assessments have been made available to the student.

47.1211 If students attend the graduation ceremony their names and degrees are included in the graduation programme. The Registry Services team is responsible for the final award listing in the graduation ceremony programme (if the student registers their intention to graduate in person) and the listing in the press (students may opt out of this listing).

Regulation 58 Resubmission of postgraduate dissertations or research projects

Students may be permitted to resubmit the dissertation or research project in line with the provisions of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy where a student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness, accident or circumstances beyond their control (58.1-58.2).

Students are also entitled to one resubmission of the dissertation or research project for postgraduate Masters programmes where the student has achieved a mark of 45 to 49% at the first attempt (58.3-58.9). Where the dissertation or research project consists of more than one assessment component, students are entitled to resubmit where the overall course result is 45% to 49% (see 58.6 for further information).

Students will not be permitted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project more than twice (i.e. a total of three submission opportunities, including the initial submission), even where Exceptional Circumstances have been accepted.

Application of the regulation



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- 58.1 Where a student is granted the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project due to exceptional circumstances, the Board of Examiners will be responsible for providing the student with a statement which outlines the deficiencies in requirements to bring their original submission to reach Masters level, and agreeing an appropriate deadline and appropriate supervision. The student will be granted a null sit for their first attempt, and the recorded mark for their revised dissertation or project will not be capped. Paragraphs 58.3 to 58.8 do not apply to students granted the opportunity to resubmit their dissertation or research project due to exceptional circumstances.
- 58.2 Students who have been granted an opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project due to exceptional circumstances will be permitted one further resubmission under this regulation (with reference to paragraphs 58.3 to 58.9), provided they meet the eligibility requirements.
- 58.3 Where a student receives 48 or 49% for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt, they may be considered as a borderline candidate for the award of the Master's degree, in line with published information regarding consideration of borderline cases (see Regulation 44.1).
- 58.4 Since the concept of borderlines (see Regulation 44) does not apply to the threshold for entitlement to resubmit a dissertation or research project, Boards of Examiners are not able to permit students with marks of 43 or 44% at the first attempt to resubmit their dissertation or project unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- 58.5 Students who achieve a mark of 45 to 49% for the dissertation or research project at the first attempt as a result of a marking penalty, either for late submission or for academic misconduct, are entitled to one resubmission, in line with this regulation.
- 58.6 Where the dissertation or research projects consists of more than one component of assessment, and the overall course mark is 45-49%, the Board of Examiners will determine which components of assessments must be resubmitted.
- 58.7 The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project with a statement which outlines the deficiencies in requirements to improve their original submission to reach Masters level. The student is also entitled to receive further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one occasion before resubmission. The student must include with their revised dissertation a statement outlining the changes made to the previous submission. This statement will not be marked.
- 58.8 The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their original result. Extension requests and exceptional circumstances submissions in relation to this deadline will be handled in line with provisions outlined within the Taught Assessment Regulations



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and the Exceptional Circumstances Policy. Where exceptional circumstances affect the resubmission, Boards of Examiners are permitted to offer a further resubmission under the Exceptional Circumstances Policy, if they consider this appropriate. The mark for a dissertation resubmitted under these circumstances will be capped at 50%, in line with Regulation 58.910.

- 58.9 Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the mark they had received for their first attempt will be treated as final and they will be considered for a relevant exit award.
- 58.10 If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at Masters level, the student will be awarded the Masters degree. The recorded mark for the revised dissertation or research project will be capped at 50%.
- 58.11 For MBA programmes students are entitled to one resubmission of the Capstone Project where the student has achieved a mark of 40 to 49% at the first attempt. The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised Capstone Project, which will be two months from the first meeting meeting/communication with the supervisor to complete the work. Since the concept of borderlines (see Regulation 44) does not apply to the threshold for entitlement to resubmit a Capstone Project, Boards of Examiners are not able to permit students with marks of 38 or 39% at the first attempt to resubmit their Capstone Project unless exceptional circumstances apply. Regulations 58.1-3 and 58.5-9 also apply.

Regulation 61 Award of credit from other universities

~~Boards of Examiners confirm~~ The Head of College may recognise the award of credit from other universities ~~which is used for use~~ in the award of a University of Edinburgh degree.

Application of the regulation

- 61.1 ~~There are two types of credit from external bodies: recognition of prior credit at admission, determined by Colleges against published criteria; and recognition of external learning whilst on programme. Information about recognition of prior learning is provided in the Degree Regulations~~ The recognition of credit from other institutions is covered by the Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Postgraduate Degree Regulations
Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study.

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THE UNIVERSITY
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Regulation 64 Status of decisions

Decisions by a Board of Examiners, once certified in writing, are final. In exceptional circumstances a Convener of the Board of Examiners can reconvene the Board to review a decision.

Application of the regulation

- 64.1 A Board of Examiners may, at the request of any of its members or member of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light, or if any error having a material bearing on that decision, or an error in the written certification of that decision, has been made. A member of the Board may request a review but it is the Convener who must review the decision in the light of any new significant information or error. Therefore it is the Convener, and not a member of the Board, who decides whether to reconvene the Board. Where the significant information presented would constitute exceptional circumstances under the Exceptional Circumstances Policy, the Board of Examiners ~~should only consider this information where it believes that there is a good reason why the student did not make the information available in advance of the Board's original decision~~ can only reconvene where the case has been accepted by the Exceptional Circumstances service; or upheld as an academic appeal; or where a request to review a decision voluntarily has been received from the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals. Requests for review of decisions that are more than ~~two~~ yearsone year after the publication of the decision of the Board will not be accepted.
- 64.2 If the Board is satisfied that there are grounds for varying the decision, the Board shall report its decision to Student Systems.
- 64.3 Where an error is discovered in the ~~assessment or~~ marking of any ~~examination or any component of an examination~~ assessment or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any ~~examination or any component thereof~~ course or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and that whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Where such an error affects degree award or classification, the School should contact the relevant College and Academic Services for approval before notifying the student of any change. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.



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- 64.4 Where an investigation under the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures has found evidence of misconduct in the assessed work of a student following graduation and a penalty has been applied under the Code of Student Conduct, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned, in accordance with the penalty applied.
- 64.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning examinations.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**21 May 2026****Proposed amendments to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27****Description of paper**

1. This paper contains proposed amendments to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for 2026/27. A “Key Changes” section is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the proposed changes.

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. For discussion and approval.

Background and context

3. The Degree and Assessment Regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that enhancements can be made on a cumulative basis.
4. In December 2025, all Colleges were invited to consult Schools regarding proposals for changes to the Regulations, with the intention of identifying any necessary updates due to changes in related policies or practices, and to address any errors or lack of clarity. Consultation in Schools is generally led by relevant office-holders (e.g. Heads of Graduate Schools, Graduate School Managers), and can include discussion at School or College committees. Colleges collate proposals and comments on the regulations from Schools and provide these to Academic Quality and Standards in February. Where these represent necessary and uncontroversial clarifications to regulations, proposed amendments are drafted. Where proposals require further consultation, or may be controversial, Academic Quality and Standards carry out further consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Schools via Colleges), or may bring a standalone paper to APRC to discuss the issue. Draft amendments to these regulations were discussed with the Doctoral College Operations Group at a meeting in March 2026, with feedback incorporated into the final versions presented here.

Discussion

5. APRC is invited to discuss the draft amendments to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for academic year 2026/27. Appendix 1 includes only those regulations for which there are proposed amendments.

Key Changes to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27

6. The table below provides information about the proposed changes to the regulations for 2026/27. Links within the regulations to other information and changes in terminology have been updated as necessary. Other minor changes to wording are included in Appendix 1.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest	Amended to clarify the authority of the College Postgraduate Committee to determine appropriate mitigation where potential conflict of interest is identified, including rejecting nominations of Examiners, or – by exception – substituting previously-appointed Examiners. This is consistent with the authority of the College under Regulation 3. A link to Doctoral College guidance about managing potential conflict of interest has also been added.
10 Reasonable adjustments	<p>10.1 has been amended to clarify that adjustments will <i>in most cases</i> be determined in advance by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). The new 10.2 explains that there may be urgent or serious situations where there is a need to apply adjustments for a student with an imminent assessment, before a student can meet DLSS. A link is provided to guidance on the DLSS web pages about Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases.</p> <p>This amendment has arisen from work in response to the Bristol (Abrahart) case, and is designed to ensure that the University meets its anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities.</p> <p>10.7 previously suggested that students were required to provide medical evidence to receive support from DLSS with temporary injuries or impairment. This has been removed, as it is not generally required by DLSS. This</p>

	should be of benefit to students, as it removes a barrier to seeking support from DLSS in these circumstances.
12 Language of assessment: Gaelic	Amended to reflect new Scottish Languages Act 2025. Legal Services have confirmed that the new legislation does not affect the University's position regarding assessment of work submitted in Gaelic.
13.3 Progression review	Amended to clarify that part-time students (like full-time students) undergo a review each year. This reflects existing expectations.
14.4 Annual progression review recommendation	Amended to state that a student who has a Schedule of Adjustments in place which allows additional time to prepare for or undertake assessment will be offered more than three months to complete a repeat progression review, in accordance with the terms of their Schedule of Adjustments. This reflects existing practice, and supports the University in meeting its obligations to disabled students under the Equality Act 2010.
21.1 Oral examination	Amended to state that approval from the relevant College is required where the oral examination will be held more than three months after submission of the thesis. This change seeks to prevent situations where there is a significant delay in the scheduling of an oral examination for a student. Such a delay can be detrimental to students, both in terms of their likelihood of performing to the best of their ability in the oral examination, and in preventing them from pursuing the next stage in their careers.
22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation	
22.3	This clause has been deleted, since it was covered within 22.1.
22.4	Amended to clarify that students whose outcome is a full submission for an MPhil under 22(h) will be expected to adhere to the standard MPhil word limit. This is appropriate

	<p>because, unlike the award of MPhil under 22(f) or 22(g), the student is given a substantial period of up to 12 months to revise the thesis, so it is reasonable to expect them to meet the standard requirements for the MPhil.</p>
24.5 MPhil: examiner recommendation	Deleted as now covered in 22.4.
36.3 Committee recommendation	<p>Deleted the reference to students being asked to accept or decline an alternative award, where this is offered following an oral examination. There have been isolated cases where a student has not responded to contact about an alternative award, where it was unclear what steps should be taken.</p> <p>In the event that a student were to initially decline an alternative award, there is a risk that they may subsequently change their position and request that an award be made, possibly after a number of years. This would be challenging to respond to, depending upon the nature of records retained.</p> <p>Where an alternative award is offered which is lower than the student's intended award, this can be an unwelcome decision for students. However, students would retain the discretion not to include reference to any award they have received on their CV or in other relevant contexts.</p>
44 Final version of the thesis	<p>Amended to state that a student who does not submit their final electronic thesis within one month of the approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award will be excluded from study with no award being issued. There have been rare cases involving students failing to submit the final version of their thesis for a considerable period of time. Such cases are difficult and time-consuming for staff to monitor. Communicating a deadline for submission will help to reduce the likelihood of significant delays in submission.</p> <p>In the event that a student is unable to submit the final version of their thesis within this period due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. ill health), the College may allow an extension to support this. Where a student is excluded, having failed to submit the final version of their thesis, but subsequently contacts the University seeking to submit this, the College has the authority to reinstate them to do so, under Postgraduate Degree Regulation 45.</p>

50.5 MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award	Added an additional clause to clarify that, for MSc by Research programmes overseen by a Board of Examiners within a School (usually those containing a proportion of taught credit), the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to the operation of borderlines apply to decisions regarding award and classification.
52.3 MSc by Research degrees: distinction	
53.2 MSc by Research degrees: merit	

Resource implications

7. Any resource implications associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

Risk management

8. Any risks associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. The proposed amendments do not contribute to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

10. Any equality and diversity implications associated with the proposed amendments are covered in the Key Changes table, above.

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

11. Academic Quality and Standards will communicate approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies. Academic Quality and Standards will also cover any changes to regulations in Boards of Examiners briefings and other relevant briefing events for staff in Schools and Colleges.

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Freedom of Information Open



Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2026/27

Summary

The assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, articulating the academic goals and policies of the University.

These regulations:

- (i) replace the previous Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
- (ii) set out the rules which must be followed in research assessment for Research Degrees; and
- (iii) provide links to other sources of guidance or related regulations.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

These regulations are University-wide and apply to all postgraduate research degrees at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework levels 11 and 12. The regulations apply to work submitted for assessment during the current academic year. They relate to all research degrees listed in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk.

More detail is given in the document.

Contact

academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Document control

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Approving authority	Academic Policy and Regulations Committee				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Student Appeal Regulations, Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, DRPS Glossary of Terms				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk				
Keywords	Assessment, assessment regulations, degree award, examination, examiners, progression, research assessment, oral examination, viva				



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Regulation 7 Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No member of University of Edinburgh staff, Internal Examiner, External Examiner, or Non-Examining Chair 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.

Application of the regulation

- 7.1 If there is a potential conflict of interest, the College Postgraduate Committee will be consulted, and will determine appropriate mitigating action, where necessary. In line with Regulation 3, the College Postgraduate Committee is empowered to reject nominations for Examiners, or, by exception, to require substitution of Examiners.
- 7.2 The Doctoral College has produced guidance on managing potential conflict of interest in the nomination of Examiners.
Guidance on Nominating Examiners for Postgraduate Research Degrees and Managing Conflicts of Interest
- 7.23 The University's Policy on Conflict of Interest is also relevant:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/conflict_of_interest_golden_copy_oct_2022.pdf Conflict of Interest Policy



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Regulation 10 Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessments for disabled students.

Application of the regulation

10.1 Reasonable adjustments ~~must~~ will in most cases be determined in advance by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). They are recorded in the student's Schedule of Adjustments by the DLSS, which communicates the Schedule of Adjustments to the student, the student's supervisor, the School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments, and other relevant areas.

10.2 In urgent or serious situations, where there is not sufficient time for a student to be referred to DLSS in advance of an imminent assessment, Schools may apply adjustments before a Schedule of Adjustments is in place. The Disability and Learning Support Service provides guidance for staff on Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases.

[Guidance on Implementing Adjustments in Urgent Cases](#)

10.23 The School's Co-ordinator of Adjustments has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Schedule of Adjustments. The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with academic colleagues who are responsible for putting the adjustments in place in the School. In the case of oral examinations, the supervisor is responsible for communicating relevant adjustments to the chair of the oral examination.

10.34 The Co-ordinator of Adjustments will liaise with the DLSS should any adjustments require further discussion, clarification or alteration. If there are any amendments to the Schedule of Adjustments, the DLSS will communicate these and ensure that the student is informed.

10.45 The DLSS provides examples of reasonable adjustments, deadlines and support:

[Disability and Learning Support Service](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/students/support-we-provide)
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/students/support-we-provide>

10.56 The DLSS supports students in the preparation and review of their Schedule of Adjustments. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their Schedule of Adjustments covers all types of assessment methods relevant to the programme. For example if a student discovers that an aspect of their programme is likely to impact on their support needs, they should contact the DLSS as soon as possible in case any amendment is required to be made to their Schedule of Adjustments.

10.67 Arrangements can be made via the DLSS for students with temporary injuries or impairment, ~~on the submission of relevant medical information~~. Students should contact the DLSS as soon as possible to allow the DLSS to determine any relevant adjustments and support.



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Regulation 12 Language of assessment: Gaelic

Theses, research projects and dissertations submitted for assessment and examination may be submitted in Gaelic.

Application of the regulation

- 12.1 The University of Edinburgh wishes to accord Gaelic equal respect with English under the terms of the ~~Gaelic Language (Scotland)~~ Scottish Languages Act 2020.
- 12.2 Candidates who wish to submit a thesis, research project or dissertation in Gaelic should seek approval to do so as early as possible, and certainly not later than by the end of the first year of full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) in the case of Doctoral and MPhil students. Approval must be given by the appropriate College Committee, which must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made for supervision and examination, including the availability of both internal and external examiners suitably qualified to read and examine the thesis, research project or dissertation.
- 12.3 Where such approval is given, in addition to the standard requirements, the thesis, research project or dissertation should also include a summary (of approximately 1500 words) written in English, summarising the main arguments, and an abstract in English must also be produced. Where Examiners' reports are completed in Gaelic, these must be translated into English before submission to the Board of Examiners. Any costs associated with this should be borne by the relevant School.

Regulation 13 Progression review

The first progression review will take place for all students within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. The student must participate in a meeting and may be required to make a written submission and/or prepare an oral presentation. Progress in the subsequent years (at 9 to 12 months) is assessed until the thesis is submitted. The online progression report form must be completed.

Application of the regulation

- 13.1 Guidance on the procedure for the progression review is included in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/code-of-practice>



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- 13.2 It is expected that progression reviews are normally held early within the 9 to 12 month period, to allow time for a repeat review if this is required.
- 13.3 There are similar procedures for full-time and part-time students, ~~and with~~ reviews of part-time students ~~will also take taking~~ place within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment, ~~and annually thereafter~~. Part-time students will not be expected to have made as much progress as full-time students within ~~this time each review period~~. Exceptionally, the first progression review may be postponed, with permission from the College. The postponement must be no longer than six months for full-time and part-time students.
- 13.4 Colleges/Schools may also have additional requirements, for example 10-week review.
- 13.5 Schools must ensure that students are aware of how the progression review will be conducted.

Regulation 14 Annual progression review recommendation

The Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors will make one of the following recommendations after the annual review:

- (a) confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;
- (b) a repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;
- (c) for part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;
- (d) registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;
- (e) registration for a postgraduate taught degree (for example MSc) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;
- (f) exclusion from study.

The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee is responsible for making the progression decision, having considered the recommendation of the Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School.

Application of the regulation

- 14.1 If the outcome of the annual review is 14(b) then the three month period starts from the date of issue of the progression decision to the student.
- 14.2 If there are doubts about a student's ability to complete a PhD successfully then option (d) must be considered. If there are serious doubts as to the student's research capability, then options (e) or (f) must be considered.



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14.3 The [Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study](#) applies.

14.4 Where a student required to undertake a repeat progression review under 14 (b) has a Schedule of Adjustments in place (see Regulation 10), they may be offered more than three months to complete the repeat progression review, in accordance with the terms of their Schedule of Adjustments.

Regulation 21 Oral examination

The examiners will hold an oral examination to assess a student's doctoral or MPhil thesis. Oral examination may be used as part of the assessment process for other research degrees.

Application of the regulation

- 21.1 The expectation is that the oral examination will be held within three months of submission of the thesis. Approval from the relevant College is required where the oral examination will be held more than three months after submission of the thesis.
- 21.2 The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the examiners are assessing jointly whether the thesis and the student's defence of it satisfy the requirements and regulations for the award of the degree.
- 21.3 Where there is a non-examining chair, they will chair and attend for the duration of the oral. Where a non-examining chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 3.)
- 21.4 Supervisors may attend the oral examination, with consent of the student and examiners, but will not participate in or comment during the oral examination. Supervisors must leave the examination room with the student and do not participate in the examiners' discussion and decision on recommendations.
- 21.5 The (oral) examination procedure of practice-led PhDs can include exhibitions, performances and other events, elements and processes.
- 21.6 The professional doctorate oral examination may cover any part of the degree programme.
- 21.7 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation to make to the College Postgraduate Committee, indicate their recommendation to the student. The examiners must stress, however, that their recommendation is not final but will form the basis of the Part II report (see regulations 22-24). Receipt of the Part II report by the student from the College



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constitutes formal notification of the decision and beginning of any additional period of study set by the examiners.

Regulation 22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses, as identified by the examiners, must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis needs work above and beyond editorial corrections or minor weaknesses in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, and this work may require further supervision. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the



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Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner(s) (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MPhil.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements; but the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil; or
- (g) **Award MPhil following Minor Corrections.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil except for stated minor corrections in the thesis. The student should be invited to carry out the specified minor corrections as indicated by the examiners. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (h) **Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis may satisfy the requirements for the degree of MPhil if stated deficiencies in the thesis are remedied. Accordingly, the student should be invited to resubmit the thesis in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners for the degree of MPhil. The revisions should be completed within a further period which must not exceed 12 months; or
- (i) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements or the requirements of the MPhil. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (j) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree requirements.



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Application of the regulation

- 22.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 22 (d), (e) and (h).
- 22.2 Where a student receives a recommendation (b), (c), (d), (e), (g), or (h), but does not meet the requirements specified by the examiners by the given deadline (see Regulation 9), this will result in a fail".
- ~~22.3 A student presenting a thesis under Regulation 22 (h) may not subsequently be permitted to resubmit the thesis under Regulation 24 (e).~~
- 22.43 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 22.54 Where a student is offered the award of a different degree under (f), (g) or (i) above then the original word limits for the offered degree are set aside. Where a student is required to resubmit for an MPhil under 22 (h), the standard MPhil word limit will apply.
- 22.65 Where the examiners' recommendation is (j), the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.
- 22.76 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d), (e) or (h) may be considered for an exit award.

Regulation 24 MPhil: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award MPhil.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree of MPhil as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see www.drps.ed.ac.uk/) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without undertaking



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any further original research. These corrections to the thesis must be completed within a specified period of not more than three months and are, subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (a) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (b) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the MPhil and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (g) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

Application of the regulation



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- 24.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once in line with 24 (d) and (e).
- 24.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 24 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 24.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 24.4 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under (d) or (e) may be considered for an exit award.
- ~~24.5 Where the student is offered the award of an MPhil as an exit degree, having originally submitted for a doctorate, the MPhil word count will be set aside.~~



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Regulation 36 Committee recommendation

The College Postgraduate Committee must *either* confirm the examiners' recommendation and transmit it to the Senatus without further comment *or* for stated reasons make a different recommendation to the Senatus, including, where appropriate, assessment by different examiners.

Application of the regulation

36.1 The Committee, on receipt of a recommendation by the examiners, must consider whether it appears to be adequately justified in the light of the full reports by the examiners, and may make further inquiry of the examiners and the student's supervisor(s).

36.2 If the Committee receives reports by the examiners indicating disagreement as to the appropriate recommendation, it may recommend to Senatus that the recommendation of one of the examiners be accepted in preference to that of the other. The Committee may require that a further report on the thesis be obtained from some other examiner or examiners, *or* that the assessment of the thesis be conducted from the beginning by different examiners.

~~36.3 If the Committee is offering an alternative award to that for which a student had originally submitted (for example MPhil as an exit award for PhD submission), the student must either agree or decline to accept the alternative award.~~

36.4~~3~~ If the Committee varies the recommendation of the examiners for the degree, the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

Regulation 44 Final version of the thesis

The student is required to submit the final version of the thesis to the College Postgraduate Office.

Application of the regulation

44.1 Degrees are conferred upon receipt of the final version of the thesis and following approval by the Senate at graduation.

44.2 The final version of the thesis must be submitted within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their thesis to the College Postgraduate Office. See:



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www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/graduations.

A student who fails to submit their final electronic thesis to the College Postgraduate Office within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award will be excluded from study with no award being issued.

- 44.3 Final submission must be notified by the College Office to Student Systems as soon as possible. Graduation deadline information is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates
- 44.4 Students are responsible for submitting the final version of their thesis in electronic form.
- 44.5 Further details on the submission of theses are available in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students* and from the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA) at <https://era.ed.ac.uk/>.

Regulation 50 MSc by Research degrees: requirements for award

In order to be awarded the degree of MSc by Research, students must pass at least 180 credits' worth of courses. This may include the award of credits on aggregate for up to 40 credits. Where credit on aggregate is offered, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations (under "Postgraduate assessment progression") apply.

Where marks are awarded for assessment on MSc by Research degrees, these must be expressed using the postgraduate common marking scheme:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme>

Application of the regulation

- 50.1 In each Common Marking Scheme, Colleges and Schools may amplify, but not alter, the overall description of grades.
- 50.2 For some MSc by Research programmes the examiners may award a mark or grade, merit or distinction.
- 50.3 There will be no progression hurdle to proceed to the research project or dissertation.
- 50.4 Where a mark is awarded for the research project or dissertation, this must be passed at a minimum of 50%. Failure to achieve this standard will automatically result in no award at MSc level being made.



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50.5 For MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to borderlines will apply.

Regulation 52 MSc by Research degrees: distinction

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with distinction. Different criteria for the award of distinction may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Distinction.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with distinction, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation

- 52.1 Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of distinction.
- 52.2 The postgraduate common marking scheme can be found at:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme>



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52.3 For MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to borderlines will apply.

Regulation 53 MSc by Research degrees: merit

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with merit. Different criteria for the award of merit may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Merit.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with merit, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

Application of the regulation



Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2026/27

53.1 Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of merit.

53.2 For MSc by Research degrees for which the responsibilities of the College Postgraduate Committee are carried out by a Board of Examiners within a School, the provisions of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to borderlines will apply.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 May 2026

Internal Moderation Guidance

Description of paper

1. This paper seeks approval for proposed guidance for Schools regarding internal moderation of marking for students' assessed work.

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
Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. For approval.

Background and context

3. The [Taught Assessment Regulations](#) (TAR) state in Regulation 31, that:

“The marking of all components of assessment must be subject to moderation in a way that is appropriate to the discipline, the nature of the assessment, and the credit weighting of the component of assessment.”

The application section of the regulation goes on to give a small amount of information about methods of moderation; marking adjustments resulting from moderation; record-keeping regarding moderation; responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and Course Organisers regarding moderation; and standard-setting.

4. Until 2017, the University also published a guidance document – Principles of Internal Moderation – which included more information regarding expectations for Schools. From the 2017/18 academic year, this guidance document was removed and replaced by the current content in TAR 31, with some supplementary guidance published on the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) web pages. In early 2024, the IAD web content was removed, following concerns raised by the Directors of Teaching Network that its content was in conflict with the content in the regulations, and was proving difficult to implement. The removal of this guidance has left the University in a position where insufficient institutional guidance is being provided to Schools regarding the

moderation process. The University's [Self-Evaluation and Action Plan](#) also references a commitment to reviewing institutional moderation practices.

5. The proposed Moderation Guidance (Appendix 1) was initially drafted by Professor Tina Harrison (Deputy Vice-Principal, Students (Engagement)), making use where appropriate of content from the previous IAD guidance developed by Professor Susan Rhind and Dr Neil Lent. An initial draft of the guidance was considered by the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group in April 2025,¹ with a further draft considered in September 2025. Based on the feedback provided by the Group, a further draft was produced, which was circulated to the Colleges in February 2026 for discussion with Schools at College Education Committees, with some Schools also sending written feedback. The version presented for approval incorporates feedback provided via this process.

Discussion

6. APRC is invited to approve the proposed Internal Moderation Guidance provided in Appendix 1. The guidance is not mandatory policy, but includes reference to mandatory expectations set within the TAR, and the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes. Where these mandatory expectations are referenced, they are expressed using “must” or “required”.
7. Based on the feedback received from Schools and Colleges as part of the consultation process, some key changes were made to the guidance, relative to the draft previously circulated. These include:
 - **Double marking of some oral assessments (3.2; 3.9).** Schools commented on the practical challenges related to recording presentations and other assessments in all cases. The guidance allows for two (or more) markers to carry out marking, rather than using sampled moderation based on recordings.
 - **Small components of assessment (3.5; 3.15).** Some Schools noted the difficulty of moderating some small components of assessment, for example those relating to participation, and more generally questioned the proportionality of moderation for very small components. The guidance states that, for components contributing 10% or less to the overall course mark, moderation may consist of checking the distribution of marks for each marker, and confirming that a consistent approach has been taken between markers. This approach is proportionate to the impact upon course outcomes of marks for these components, and should not place undue workload demands upon staff in Schools.
 - **Role of Guaranteed Hours and Casual staff in moderation (5.1).** The guidance removes the previous prohibition on Guaranteed Hours and casual staff acting as moderators, and instead states that, where such staff take part in the moderation process (including double-marking), they should do so under the supervision of other academic staff, for example as part-of moderation of a team-marked assessment. This approach

¹ The Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group is a sub-group of Senate Education Committee. It includes the Deans of Education from each College, as well as representative Directors of Teaching from Schools, and EUSA representatives.

avoids the need for a change in approach in some Schools (with the resource implications such a change would entail), while providing sufficient assurance that moderation standards will be maintained.

- **Moderation and the three-week feedback turnaround (6.2).** Some Schools had expressed concern about the appropriateness of the minimum sample sizes for moderation, and about the impact of coursework extensions on the ability to start the moderation process. The guidance has been revised to remove minimum numbers of assignments for samples, focusing instead on what the sample must cover. The statement that a sample could be taken once 60% of the submissions from the cohort have been received has been revised to 50%. This change should not present undue risk, given the expectation that a further sample should be taken, in the event that this is necessary to meet the expectations for the coverage of the overall sample for the component.

Resource implications

8. The guidance reflects the existing expectations set out in the TAR, and in the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes. As such, it should not create additional demands for Schools. Section 7 of this paper notes some amendments to the draft guidance which have been made in order to take account of existing practice within Schools.

Risk management

9. The internal moderation process is the primary means through which the University ensures that students' results for assessment are fair and consistent, and appropriately reflect their performance against relevant learning outcomes. It is vital to ensure that Schools are provided with adequate guidance to ensure that this process is carried out robustly. Section 7 of this paper notes some risks relating to elements of the guidance, but regards these risks as mitigated to an acceptable extent.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

10. The proposed guidance does not contribute to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

11. A robust and consistent approach to internal moderation ensures that students receive fair and appropriate outcomes for their assessed work, which are not influenced by bias of any kind.

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

12. Should the guidance be approved, Academic Quality and Standards will publish this for use from the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year. The guidance will also be referenced in the annual New and Updated Policies email communication to Schools and Colleges, and in briefing sessions for staff involved in Boards of Examiners.

Author

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Presenter

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Freedom of Information Open



Internal Moderation Guidance

Purpose of Guidance

This guidance is designed to support Schools in implementing the requirements regarding moderation of assessment, which are defined within the [Taught Assessment Regulations](#) (31) and the [Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes](#). The guidance provides information regarding when moderation is expected to be undertaken, who has responsibility for overseeing it and carrying it out, and the methods of moderation which are used within the University.

Scope: Guidance is not Mandatory

The guidance includes reference to mandatory expectations set within other regulations and policies. These are expressed using “must”, or “required”, with reference to the relevant regulation or policy.

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Document control

Dates	Version Approved: X.X.XX	Effective Date: X.X.XX	Equality impact assessment: X.X.XX	Last Reviewed: X.X.XX	Next Review: 2029/30
Approving authority	Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taught Assessment Regulations• Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes• Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk				
Keywords	Moderation, assessment, marking				



Internal Moderation Guidance

1. What is moderation?

1.1 Moderation refers to a range of processes for reviewing assessments, marking and feedback to ensure they are fair, reliable and aligned with academic standards.

1.2 Moderation is separate from the setting and marking of assessments and occurs before any review by External Examiners of a sample of assessed work.

2. When is moderation required?

2.1 Moderation is required for all components of summative assessment, irrespective of the SCQF level of the work or the credit weighting of the assessments (TAR 31).

2.2 Moderation is not required for assessment that is purely formative (i.e. the result does not contribute to the overall mark for the course), although it is good practice to operate processes to ensure consistency of marking and feedback of formative assessment.

Phase 1: Following Marking

2.3 For each component of summative assessment, the marks and feedback must be moderated, using an appropriate form of moderation (see Methods of Moderation), as agreed by the Board of Examiners (TAR 31).

2.4 The purpose of moderation at this stage is to ensure:

- Marking outcomes are fair, valid and reliable;
- Assessment criteria have been applied consistently;
- Marking rubrics have been applied consistently;
- Inconsistencies between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed;
- Feedback given is appropriate and helpful to students.

2.5 All outcomes from this phase of the moderation process should be documented.

Phase 2: Board of Examiners

2.6 Boards of Examiners are responsible for ensuring the appropriate operation of moderation processes and must confirm that moderation has taken place as expected (TAR 31.4).

2.7 If a mark or grade adjustment is required following moderation due to a systemic issue having arisen, the Board of Examiners will approve an appropriate method of mark adjustment (see section 7 B.).



Internal Moderation Guidance

2.8 Boards of Examiners must keep clear records of the operation of the occurrence and the outcome of moderation processes (TAR 31.3), and publish explanatory information to students about any mark adjustment or scaling that has been applied on a cohort basis (TAR 31.2).

2.9 Boards of Examiners must also review the outcomes of students' assessments across related courses (for example, Honours level courses in a subject area) in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been applied consistently (TAR 31.5). For example, a Board of Examiners could review mark profiles for courses with similar components of assessment and similar student cohorts.

3. Methods of moderation

3.1 The University recognises three main methods of moderation: double marking; sampled moderation; standardised assessment checking. Schools may choose to employ additional moderation methods over and above these standard approaches where this is considered appropriate, or required by a professional or accrediting body, and agreed by the relevant Board of Examiners. The anonymity of individual students is expected to be maintained throughout the moderation process (TAR 32).

A. Double Marking

3.2 The University requires any single item of assessment equivalent to 40 credits or more to be double marked (TAR 31.1). Double marking may also be appropriate for some forms of oral assessment, such as presentations, practical assessments, etc. (see section 3.9).

3.3 Some dissertations and capstone projects are equivalent to fewer than 40 credits. Where a substantial assessment of this kind at Honours and PGT level (i.e. contributing towards degree classification) has been marked by the staff member responsible for supervising the student, it is expected that double marking should be carried out.

3.4 Double marking involves two markers independently marking the same piece of work. Each marker records their own mark and comments separately, then compares their marks and resolves any differences to produce an agreed mark and feedback. If markers cannot agree, a third marker will be appointed to enable a final decision to be taken.

3.5 For all other items of assessment contributing more than 10% towards the overall course result, unless otherwise stipulated by professional bodies, sampled moderation is required, except where standardised assessments are used.

B. Sampled Moderation

3.6 For the majority of assessments (contributing more than 10% towards the overall course mark), sampled moderation will be appropriate. This requires a moderator reviewing a specified proportion of marked assignments. Where multiple markers are involved in marking an assessment, the moderator should ensure the sample includes



Internal Moderation Guidance

work from different markers, and should also review the distribution of marks for all assessments by each marker.

3.7 In general, the moderated sample should comprise 10% of the total number of assignments, with the final sample size determined by the spread of marks and number of markers involved. For courses with small cohorts (e.g. 50 or fewer students), a minimum of five assignments may be appropriate, including examples from the higher and lower ends of the mark range. The sample should include (where available) examples of assignments from each of the grade bands, including examples of fails.. If a team of markers is involved, the moderation sample should also include examples from each marker to check that they are all taking a consistent approach.

3.8 The moderator should review the marks and feedback comments for each assignment in the sample, and check that marking and feedback for the sample is consistent with the relevant common marking scheme, grade descriptors, marking criteria and the marking rubric. Moderators are not required to produce a second mark for the sample of assignments.

3.9 In cases where assessment does not involve production of written work or other physical/digital artefacts (e.g. assessment of presentations, performances, laboratory or other practical performance), moderation should be incorporated either by:

- i. Each student's live performance being assessed by (a minimum of) two markers (this is required for oral assessments constituting 50% or more of the components on a course – see TAR 23); or
- ii. The moderator having access to an audio or video recording of the event, applying the same sampling approach as specified above.

3.10 The review of a sample of work in tandem with evidence of the distribution of marks – overall, and for each for each marker – may result in a concern that the common marking scheme has not been applied consistently. The moderator may require that further assignments are added to the sample, where this would assist them in determining whether the marking is appropriate.

3.11 If a moderator is not satisfied that the marks and/or feedback are appropriate, they should discuss this initially with the Course Organiser in the first instance, who should liaise with the marker(s) concerned and recommend any necessary adjustments to the marks and associated feedback. Moderators should not recommend changes to individual marks (unless there is an error specific to an individual mark, e.g. in the addition of marks for sub-components). Any adjustments or remarking should be applied to all relevant students (e.g. all the students who attempted the assessment; all the students marked by a particular marker; all marks within a specific grade boundary), not just those in the moderation sample.

C. Standardised/Objective Assessment



Internal Moderation Guidance

3.12 Standardised or objective assessments are administered, scored and graded in a consistent manner for all students, such that the results can be compared objectively, reducing the potential for bias or subjective evaluations. Examples of such assessments include (but are not limited to) Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), computer-based assessments, some types of quantitative assessments.

3.13 In the context of such assessments, moderation may take the form of procedural checking, ensuring marks have been applied correctly, rather than academic judgement. The degree of checking should be proportionate to the weighting of the assessment.

3.14 Where marking is undertaken by computers (for example, for MCQs), the Course Organiser should ensure manual checks are in place to confirm that the software is functioning correctly, and provide assurance of this to the moderator. Item analysis statistics should also be reviewed by moderators to check for any anomalies e.g. where correct answers have been marked as incorrect.

D. Small components of assessment

3.15 For small assessment components, contributing 10% or less to the overall course mark, moderation may consist of checking the distribution of marks for each marker, and confirming that a consistent approach has been taken between markers.

4. Who is responsible for organising and supervising moderation?

4.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate conduct of marking and moderation processes prior to the Board. The Board of Examiners must approve an appropriate form of moderation for each component of assessment, and any approach taken to marking adjustments in the event of systemic issues. Schools must ensure information is published for students regarding the approach to internal moderation for each of their courses (TAR 31.7).

4.2 Programme Directors/Subject Heads (or equivalent) are responsible for appointing moderators to undertake the moderation activities for each assessment.

4.3 Course Organisers are responsible for supervising moderation for the assessments for their courses.

5. Who can moderate?

5.1 Moderators should be members of University of Edinburgh academic staff with relevant subject expertise. Where Guaranteed Hours or casual staff take part in moderation (including double-marking), they should do so under the supervision of other academic staff, for example as part-of moderation of a team-marked assessment.

5.2 Moderators should be independent of the marking process. However, where multiple markers are involved in marking an assignment, it is appropriate for them to moderate



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each other's marking. Where an individual member of staff has marked all, or a large proportion of submissions for an assessment, moderation should be carried out by another, independent member of staff

6. Moderation and the three-week feedback turnaround

6.1 Summative assessments must be internally moderated before marks are released to students. To facilitate the timely return of feedback, whilst not compromising academic standards, moderation can commence prior to all assessments being submitted (e.g. where there are outstanding submissions due to agreed extensions and extra time adjustments).

6.2 For sampled moderation, where 50% or more of submissions are received by the deadline, a single sample proportionate to the total cohort may be sufficient. However, where the proportion of submissions is substantially lower than 50%, or where the initial sample does not adequately capture the range of marks or markers, moderation may need to be undertaken in stages, involving a further sample from later submissions. This approach ensures that marking is applied consistently across work submitted at different times.

7. Outcomes from moderation of marking

A. Routine marking adjustments

7.1 Where the moderation process identifies discrepancies in marking – either between different markers, or between marks awarded and relevant marking criteria/rubrics – this may result in routine marking adjustments.

7.2 As described in the Methods of Moderation section above, minor discrepancies between markers regarding similar levels of student performance should be resolved by discussion, and adjustments applied to the mark(s) affected as agreed. Where marks are adjusted, consideration must always be given to the impact upon the marks for the cohort as a whole (TAR 31.2).

7.3 If significant discrepancies are noted between markers, a further sample should be reviewed. The moderator should determine whether this further sample indicates a consistent pattern of variation, and agree on a course of action with the Course Organiser, which may include a full review of all marks awarded by the initial marker.

B. Systemic issues

7.4 Occasionally, systemic issues arise in assessment. For example:

- An issue in the delivery of teaching or assessment affects students' abilities to achieve the best outcome in an assessment;

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- An assessment (or part of an assessment) is believed to have been calibrated inappropriately, i.e. it was too difficult or too easy for students at the relevant level of study.

7.5 Where issues of this nature are identified, a moderator/Director of Teaching/Head of Subject Area, may recommend any necessary adjustments to the marks and associated feedback. These should be discussed with the Convener of the Board of Examiners, who may also liaise with the relevant External Examiner. Adjustments may include re-marking using the same or a different marking scheme, re-weighting components or sub-components (e.g. individual exam questions), or scaling the assessment component marks. This process should, where possible, take place before provisional marks are issued to students. Where changes are proposed to marking schemes, or to the weighting of components of assessment on a course, Schools must follow the steps outlined in TAR 13.3, which include appropriate consultation with students.

7.6 Where systemic issues have arisen, these should be reported to the relevant Board of Examiners, along with the details of any steps taken to mitigate them. The Board should also be informed of any steps taken to prevent recurrence of systemic issues in future years.

7.7 Where a review of outcomes across similar courses identifies substantially different mark profiles, the Board of Examiners should investigate whether there is an issue in the marking for a course. If an issue is identified, the Board of Examiners may recommend adjustments as outlined above. However, where a Board is confident that the marks for each assessment on each course fairly reflect students' performance against the learning outcomes, they should avoid making marking adjustments to assessments, irrespective of any substantial difference in mark profiles across courses.

C. Scaling

7.8 Scaling should only be undertaken where systemic issues have arisen affecting assessment, as above. The decision to apply scaling will be taken by the relevant Board of Examiners. Where a specific course is subject to scaling in consecutive years, the relevant Board of Examiners should take steps to investigate and address any issues affecting assessment on the course for future years.

7.9 Scaling is the process of applying an arithmetic adjustment to the marks obtained during the marking process, so that the marks which result after scaling is applied more accurately reflect student learning and achievement against the assessment component or module learning outcomes. As such, scaling is a criterion-referenced process, rather than a norm-referenced process. This means that scaling should not be undertaken merely to obtain a desired mean mark for an assessment component or for a course overall. However, evidence of performance by the same cohort of students in other courses at the same level may provide useful information for a Board of Examiners considering the extent of any scaling to be applied. Scaling must be undertaken with clear sight of the learning outcomes of the piece of assessment in mind.



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7.10 Scaling should take place at the end of the moderation process but before marks are finalised. Scaling should only be applied to the marks for components (or sub-components) of assessment that have been affected by an issue, rather than to overall course marks.

7.11 When scaling is undertaken, the reasons and mechanism for each instance of scaling must be documented in the minutes of the Board of Examiners that confirms it, along with proposed actions to address the issues arising in the process of assessment that led to scaling being undertaken. Students affected by scaling must be informed of the scaling that has taken place, along with a general description of the reasons for scaling (TAR 31.2).

8. Documenting outcomes from the moderation process

8.1 Schools must maintain records that show how the moderation process has operated, including showing the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks / grades, including any decisions that marks or grades should not be altered. This record should be made available to External Examiners, and be retained for any internal quality monitoring.

8.2 Template forms are available for recording moderation.

8.3 Where systemic issues are identified, the relevant Board of Examiners minutes should record the action taken.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

21 May 2026

Minor Addition to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy

Description of paper

1. This paper proposes a minor addition to the core content required in course and programme handbooks, as specified in the Programme and Course Handbook Policy.
2. This supports Strategy 2030 by enhancing the quality of the student experience and by supporting user-friendly and efficient processes that encourage student participation and engagement in feedback across their course, programme and the wider institution. It also allows progress on an institutional priority set out in our Self Evaluation and Action Plan, which forms part of our external quality assurance requirements.

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.	
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.	
Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.	X
Act with delegated authority from the Senate on matters of student conduct and discipline.	
In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches while supporting and encouraging variation where this is beneficial, particularly if it is in the best interests of students.	
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	

Action requested / recommendation

3. Approval of a minor addition to the policy from Academic Year 2026/27.

Background and context

4. In the National Student Survey (NSS) 2025, 84.3% of our students said they feel they have the right opportunities to provide feedback and 71.5% said they feel their opinions are valued by staff. However, only 51.4% said it is clear how their feedback is acted on.

5. The University of Edinburgh consistently remains at the bottom of the rankings in both the Russell Group and Universities UK in the Student Voice NSS theme.
6. Student Voice has been identified as an institutional priority and is included in our Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). Work is ongoing through the Student Voice Framework Project.
7. Including a requirement to communicate changes brought about following student feedback is part of building a stronger culture around student voice.

Discussion

8. The policy currently includes 'Student Feedback' as core content for handbooks. It says: *"Detail the opportunities available for students to provide feedback on their experiences and how they will be informed of action taken in response to feedback provided."* In addition, it links to the Student Voice Policy.
9. It is requested that the following is added to the existing content: *"Handbooks must also include examples of changes made to the course/programme within the past 1-3 years in response to student feedback"*.
10. This addition will require all relevant staff to reflect on what changes they have made to their course or programme in response to student feedback, and if they have not, encourage them to consider how to do so in future. It will also help to set, from the outset of the course or programme, an expectation that students see their feedback can have a meaningful impact.

Resource implications

11. Minor, with a small amount of time required for relevant staff to add this content to handbooks ahead of the next academic year.

Risk management

12. Student Voice, and particularly students feeling their feedback is acted on, remains an area of poor performance for the University, which damages the student experience and carries reputational risk. This change is a small, but meaningful, addition which can help to mitigate this risk.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. N/A

Equality & diversity

14. N/A

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

15. Boards of Studies have formal approving power over course and programme handbooks, which allows this change to be communicated to Boards and disseminated from there.

16. It is acknowledged that some handbooks for AY26/27 may already have been finalised, and so there may be a slightly longer transition period for this section to be added to all handbooks.
17. The Student Voice team within Registry Services intend to review a selection of handbooks in the next academic year to ensure adherence to this part of the policy, and to further inform the continuous improvement of the Student Voice Framework and new Student Voice Policy.

Author

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Freedom of Information OPEN

29/04/2026

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**21 May 2026****Board of Examiners Review – Consistent Application of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy****Description of paper**

1. This paper seeks discussion and decisions on scenarios which relate to the application of the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Policy and what is considered sufficient mitigation at Course and Programme level. An APRC decision on these scenarios would provide more consistent decision making and application of the EC Policy.

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
In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches while supporting and encouraging variation where this is beneficial, particularly if it is in the best interests of students.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. This paper provides a list of Exceptional Circumstances scenarios and asks APRC to discuss and determine an approach to the application of the EC Policy which would aid Board of Examiners in their decision making and provide the best academic outcome to students.

Background and context

3. The EC process provides a mechanism whereby students can inform the University of circumstances beyond their control which have had a significant adverse impact upon their performance in a summative assessment (or multiple assessments). The process operates in line with the [EC Policy](#). Students can apply using the EC system for consideration of their circumstances by providing information about their nature and impact, and including supporting evidence. The EC service within Registry Services assesses applications to determine whether they meet the criteria within the EC Policy and can therefore be accepted. Where cases are accepted, they are passed to Schools for action by Boards of Examiners. Boards apply one or more of the actions set out in the Policy in order to mitigate the impact of the student's circumstances on their course or programme outcomes.

4. Decisions regarding outcomes under the EC policy are made based on the principle of the “best academic interest” of the student. This is defined in the policy as follows:

“Boards will apply whichever outcome(s) leads to a student achieving the best possible course or programme result, provided that this is consistent with the Board being satisfied that it has sufficient evidence of attainment of relevant learning outcomes (see 10.5), or of performance at the required level in the programme (see 10.6.2).”

5. The outcomes available to Boards of Examiners include the ability to disregard marks for EC-affected components of assessment when determining final course results (10.5d), and to exclude ratified course results for EC-affected courses when calculating programme-level averages for classification and award (10.6b).

Current approach to Course Decision Trees

6. The Course Decision Trees developed and piloted as part of the Board of Examiners Project have been designed to be compliant with the principle of “best academic interest”. In supporting the student’s “best academic interest”, the Decision Trees have also been designed to:
 - a. Apply mitigation at the component or course level wherever possible, as opposed to simply deferring action up to the programme level;
 - b. Avoid the use of “null sits” and reassessment, where this is possible, and compatible with the achievement of required learning outcomes.

With regard to applying mitigation at the course level wherever possible, this is based on the understanding that mitigation at course level, e.g. by the disregarding of component marks when calculating course results, has less of an inflationary impact upon final degree outcomes than excluding course results for classification purposes. It is also beneficial to students insofar as it allows them to retain a transcript of course results that better reflect their performance, had they been unaffected by ECs, rather than having several course results on their record which are known to be unreliable.

7. The desire to minimise the use of null sits relates to two key factors. First, that it may not be desirable to overload students already known to be struggling with ECs with additional assessment, where it can be demonstrated that they have met required learning outcomes. Second, that attendance data indicates that a very high proportion of students granted resit attempts due to null sits for ECs do not attend these. This suggests that students often do not consider it necessary or desirable to reattempt their assessments. The administrative burden involved in offering such reassessments is considerable, even where they are not taken up by students.

Issues arising from Board of Examiners Pilot

8. The piloting of course-level decision trees as part of the Board of Examiners project has highlighted a number of scenarios where there is considerable variation in approach between Schools, and where the EC Policy does not prescribe a specific approach. The scenarios relate primarily to the interaction between outcomes applied at course and programme level in individual cases, and the question of what constitutes adequate mitigation in a given case. In order to ensure consistency in application of the policy, these scenarios are presented to APRC below for direction in consistent application of the policy.

Discussion

9. The key scenarios identified during the pilot of the course decision trees in January/February 2026 are outlined below. APRC is requested to consider the questions posed in relation to these, and to determine the desired approach in each case.
10. The scenarios refer to “School thresholds” for disregarding components of assessment where ECs apply. It is understood that some Schools operate agreed thresholds (e.g. 50%) for what proportion of components on a course may be disregarded due to ECs, while other Schools leave it at individual Boards’ discretion to determine what proportion of components may be disregarded.

Scenario A:

The student has ECs against some components of assessment and the affected components are within the School threshold for disregarding components at the course level. The course learning outcomes have already been met by achieving pass marks in the components of assessment unaffected by ECs. The Board of Examiners agrees to disregard all affected components of assessment (using 10.5d) from the overall course mark.

Has sufficient mitigation been applied by the Board of Examiners at the course level or does this need further review by a subsequent Board of Examiners at the programme level?

Option 1: Discounting all affected components of assessment at course level (10.5d) is sufficient mitigation and Board of Examiners at the course level should not send this on to the Board of Examiners at the programme level for further mitigation.

Benefits:

- Reduces the risk of over mitigation and inflation of marks and/or classification.

Risks:

- Under mitigation as the Board of Examiners at the course level will not have sight of the student’s full mark profile across the programme.

Option 2: Board of Examiners at the course level should still send the overall course mark to the Board of Examiners at the programme level to review the affected course mark for progression or award.

Benefits:

- Provides the Board of Examiners at the programme level with the opportunity to review the EC affected mark to determine if any further mitigation is required, e.g. consideration for borderlines

Risks:

- Over mitigation if done at course and programme level and could lead to inflated marks and/or classification.
- Lack of consistency in how Board of Examiners take action at programme level (e.g. some may take action, but others will not).
- Additional workload for Professional Services and Academic staff to consider a case at programme level, in addition to course level.

The Board of Examiners Project Team recommends **Option 1**.

Scenario B:

The student has ECs against some components of assessment and the affected components are within the School threshold and/or meet all learning outcomes. All affected components of assessment have been considered for disregarding from the overall course mark; however, the marks of the affected components are higher than the marks for the unaffected components and it would therefore not be in the best academic interest of the student to disregard these.

Should the Board of Examiners at the course level flag the case for further consideration at the Board of Examiners at the programme level because no mitigation was applied at course level? The student's overall course mark may still be lower than other course marks without ECs, which could impact their mark and/or classification.

Option 1: Yes, the course should be flagged for consideration at the Progression Board to consider whether there is adequate and proportionate mitigation at the programme level that is in the student's best academic interest.

Benefits:

- The Board of Examiners is able to mitigate for ECs at the programme level, where mitigation was not possible at the course level. This offers students more assurance that their ECs are being mitigated and ensures more effective application of the EC policy.

Risks:

- This could be viewed as over-mitigation as the Board of Examiners at the course level determined that action at course level was not in the student's best academic interest.

Option 2: No, because the Board of Examiners were able to consider the affected components of assessment for disregarding at course level, the course should not then be flagged for consideration at the Board of Examiners at the programme level, regardless of what action took place at the course-level.

Benefits:

- Provides consistent level of course level consideration by only flagging ECs to the programme level when they have not been discounted or considered for discounting at course level.
- Ensures that the affected components do not have a detrimental effect on the course result, relative to unaffected components and avoids the need to consider the case twice.

Risks:

- That the student does not receive any mitigation for an EC affected course where some might be possible at Programme level. By not providing the Board of Examiners at Programme level the opportunity to consider the case there is a risk that there is no mitigation against the fact that the student may have performed better without the impact of their ECs.

The Board of Examiners Project Team recommends **Option 1**.

Scenario C:

The student has ECs which affect components of assessment that are above a School's threshold for disregarding components of assessment at the course level (e.g. there are ECs for all components of assessment) or the School does not have a threshold, and all components of assessment have been passed and course learning outcomes have been achieved.

Should the Board of Examiners at the course level discount components up to the School's course level threshold? If yes, should they also flag for consideration at Board of Examiners at the programme levels? If no, is this up to School discretion or should the case simply be sent to the Board of Examiners at the programme level for consideration?

Option 1: Yes, where the student has met the learning outcomes for the course, the Board of Examiners should apply mitigation by disregarding marks for components up to the School threshold, where this is in the student's best academic interest. The Board of Examiners should also flag this course to be reviewed by the Board of Examiners at the programme level to determine if any further mitigation is required, since the course result will necessarily still include marks for EC-affected components.

Benefits:

- Course level mitigation is provided which will give the student the best possible course result based on the available marks, while still acknowledging

that the course result includes component marks which may not be reliable due to ECs. This will also therefore be reviewed by the Board of Examiners at the programme level. It is also in line with the University's approach to provide as much mitigation at course level as possible.

Risks:

- Boards may feel that when all components of assessment are affected there is no reliable mark and the course should be reviewed by the Board of Examiners at the programme level only.
- Application of mitigation at both course and programme level, i.e. by disregarding components and then also potentially excluding the course result for classification purposes, could be regarded as over-mitigation.

Option 2: No, the Board of Examiners at the course level should not discount any components where all components are affected, even if all learning outcomes have been met. The Board of Examiners at the course level should take no action at course level but send the case for review by the Board of Examiners at the programme level.

Benefits:

- Provides a clear and consistent approach to the definition of an unreliable mark.

Risks:

- Boards may feel these parameters are too strict and would prefer to provide some course level mitigation where possible and this would restrict this action.
- Not providing sufficient mitigation at course and/or programme level.
- Potential to increase the volume of Null sits where students have too many courses with fails for credit on aggregate to be awarded but could have been given a pass for the course if some components had been discounted.

The Board of Examiners Project team recommends **Option 1**.

Scenario D:

A student has ECs accepted for a component (or components) of assessment which are required to be passed in order to meet the learning outcomes for a course. The student has passed the affected component(s), but the mark for the component(s) is lower than their marks for other (non-EC-affected) components on the course. The proportion of components affected by ECs is within the School threshold for disregarding components due to ECs (where one is in place).

Should the Board disregard marks for the component(s) of assessment affected by ECs?

Option 1: Yes, Schools should disregard the affected component(s) because the learning outcomes have been met and disregarding the component(s) will provide the best possible course result for the student.

Benefits:

- Disregarding the affected component will improve the student's overall course result and is therefore in their best academic interest.

Risks:

- A course result which does not include the mark for a component which is essential to the learning outcomes may be regarded as unreliable.

Option 2: No, the School should not disregard the component.

Benefits:

- Does not inflate a student's overall course mark by disregarding a component which was viewed as essential to meeting the learning outcomes.

Risks:

- Not providing sufficient mitigation where the student has passed all learning outcomes and evidenced higher marks on unaffected components of assessment. The learning outcomes themselves are pass/fail, and the School thresholds operate as a check on there being too large a proportion of components disregarded to allow for a secure mark.

The Board of Examiners Project team recommends **Option 1**.

Resource implications

11. A decision on the application of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy in these scenarios would require some adjustments to the policy guidance and would need to be clearly communicated to Schools to ensure consistency.

Risk management

12. The discussion section highlights the perceived risks related to the options presented regarding each scenario.
13. The lack of a consistent approach to handling cases under the EC policy poses a risk to the student experience. Students may perceive the process as unfair if they are aware that Schools take different approaches to what may be the same set of academic circumstances.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

14. The proposals in the paper have no impact upon these issues.

Equality & diversity

15. The application of a consistent approach to the scenarios presenting would provide benefit to all students, including those with protected characteristics.

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

16. The decisions taken by APRC regarding the desired approach in each scenario will be incorporated into the next iteration of the decision trees being developed as part of the Board of Examiners project, and the guidance associated with these. The decision trees will be presented for approval by Senate early in the 2026/27 academic year. The project team will also consider where it may be appropriate to recommend amendments to the EC policy in relation to these scenarios.

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