

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**Thursday 24 September 2026 at 2:00pm****Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House / Teams****AGENDA**

1.	Welcome and apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve • 21 May 2026 • 7 July 2026	APRC 26/27 1A APRC 26/27 1B
3.	3.1 Matters Arising • Convener's communications • Actions log 3.2 Report of Convener's Action • Summary of approved concessions	Verbal Update
4. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
4.1	Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances For endorsement and recommendation to Senate	APRC 26/27 1C
4.2	Academic Year Dates 2027/28 and 2028/29 For approval	APRC 26/27 1D
BREAK		
4.3	Curriculum Framework revision For discussion	APRC 26/27 1E
4.4	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2026/27 For discussion	APRC 26/27 1F
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
5.1	Policies due for review in 2026/27 For noting	APRC 26/27 1G
5.2	Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees 2025/26 For noting	APRC 26/27 1H
5.3	Committee Administration:	

	• APRC Membership • APRC Terms of Reference For noting	
6.	Any Other Business	
7.	Date of next meeting Thursday 19 November, 2-5pm, Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House	

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**Thursday 21 May 2026 at 2:00pm****Microsoft Teams****AGENDA**

Present: Katya Amott Dr Adam Bunni Dr Lawrence Dritsas Lisa Dawson Dr Valentina Ferlito Lindsey Fox Myles Blaney Professor Dave Laurenson Dr Matt Bell Isabel Lavers Dr Chris Mowat Dr Kirsten Phimister Dr Emily Taylor (Convener) Kirsty Woomble Professor Gill Aitken Victoria Buchanan Lucy Evans Catriona Morley Professor James Hopgood Robin Gay	Vice President Education, Students' Association 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) Acting Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media Senate representative (CSE) Senate representative (CSE) Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) 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) 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) Dean of Quality and Enhancement (CSE) Student Voice Manager (EUSA)
In attendance: Meg Batty Professor Tina Harrison	Academic Quality and Standards Manager (AQS) Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement)
Apologies: Heather Innes Professor Linda Kirstein (Vice-Convener) Professor Ruth Andrew Charlotte Macdonald	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Dean of Education (CSE) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CMVM) Advice Place Manager, Students' Association

1.	Welcome and apologies The Convener welcomed Myles Blaney as a new member of the Committee, noting that Myles has replaced Karen Howie on the Committee due to Karen leaving the university. The Convener noted apologies for the meeting and confirmed that James Hopgood and Robin Gay were in attendance as substitute members for Linda Kirstein and Heather Innes respectively.
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting For approval • 19 March 2026 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2026.
3.	3.1 Matters Arising • Convener's communications: Thresholds for excluding courses The Convener thanked members for their comments on the electronic paper "Thresholds for excluding course results in Exceptional Circumstances". This paper, with the comments reflected, went to Senate on Tuesday 19th and was approved. Academic Year dates 27/28 The Convener noted at the January meeting the Committee did not approve the academic year dates for 27/28 and asked for scoping work to be completed on the turnaround time after the Fringe. This is still ongoing and therefore the academic year dates for 27/28 will be coming to the September meeting for approval. The Academic Registrar provided an update that conversations are ongoing but further consultation time is needed with estates and EUSA to understand the impact to the exam timetable. There were two additional actions that will also be reported on in September; - Kings Building is used for exams and data will be brought to the meeting in September to understand how it was used in the May diet in order for the Committee to discuss if the proposed use as a satellite campus for adjustment exams is still a priority. - Exploring the asymmetry of the two semesters will be brought to the September meeting with benchmarking e.g. University of Newcastle and University of Exeter have transitioned to exams after Christmas. • Actions Log: PGR recording on EUCLID Colleges have engaged with PGR Committees to establish expectations around recording supervision within EUCLID for all PGR students. Staff see the value of this and will be working towards better recording. Resit Data Academic Registrar has requested Colleges identify data requirements around resits and submit the requirements before the deadline,

	3.2 Report of Convener's Action CSE Concession A concession was approved by full Committee in September 2025 for a number of Geosciences students to progress to Year 4 carrying a compulsory course of 10 credits due to being unable to complete the fieldtrip as a result of industrial action. The Convener approved the concession to be extended by a year where students secured an industrial placement meaning they would not be able to attend the fieldtrip in academic year 26/27. Student Discipline Committee (SDC) Membership The Convener approved seven nominations for new student members of the Student Discipline Committee. Their term starts on 1st June 2026. The Convener noted the impressive quality of student submissions. Summary of Approved Concessions Approved via Convener's Action 2025/26 (since previous meeting on 19 March 2026) The Convener noted that 13 concession requests had been approved.
4. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS	
4.1	Industrial Action: Variations to Academic Regulations and Policies The paper was presented by Lucy Evans and Tina Harrison. The Convener gave context to the paper; The University is in a period of industrial action and continues to meet with UCU. However, the university has a responsibility to minimise the impact to our students' education. University regulations include the ability to apply temporary variations in order to mitigate any disruption to students receiving their awards or progression decisions. APRC's task was to recommend variation for approval to Senate who will hold an extraordinary meeting on Monday. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) were conducting electronic business concurrently to seek their approval for the External Examiners variations to recommend for approval to Senate. The Convener emphasised the importance of the paper, the work that went into it and the proposed actions which reflect our commitment to our students. The detail of the paper had been consulted on widely and took account of previous experience. The University's regulations allow us to make variations to mitigate the disruption to students. The role of APRC is to ensure that we are maintaining academic standards and working in best interest of students, so that they can progress and receive their awards in a timely fashion. Academic standards are those set by the University as an awarding body. We have applied the variations proposed previously. These have been reviewed by the QAA previously, following a concern raised with them by a member of staff. The QAA found that they pose no risk to academic standards. The proposed variations are in line with those put in place previously, but some are more tightly constrained, e.g. credit on aggregate reduced from 60 to 40 credits.

Based on the QAA's judgement of our previous approach and the current proposal being more conservative, academic standards are assured, and APRC was invited to focus on working in the best interest of our students.

The Scottish Funding Council has launched a National Review of Awarding Arrangements and we expect to be included in the process, and therefore be subject to scrutiny of our assessment and awarding processes within this calendar year. Establishing consistent practice would be consistent with the expectations of this review.

It was highlighted that the main risk is not the variations themselves, but applying the variations consistently across Schools and Colleges.

*Senate Support note – a motion passed on Tuesday 19 May will ensure Boards of Examiners document use of variations which will be reported to Senate at its first Ordinary meeting of the 2026/27 academic year.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 70.

This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary activation of Taught Assessment Regulation 71.

This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate Quality Assurance Committee and Senate approve the temporary amendment to remove the requirement to consult External Examiners when setting examination papers (Annex A, Point 1). This was subject to the instructions for Boards of Examiners clearly stating point 37a (robust internal scrutiny of papers) is a condition of using the variation.

The Convener noted that this variation is under the delegated authority of SQAC but APRC are asked for a view.

The Committee discussed the impact of removing the requirement to consult with External Examiners when setting examination papers. Members highlighted that this regulation is approaching obsolescence but is currently in place, and therefore must be considered. One member raised that many assessments have moved to in-class tests to address the impact of AI, and that these are not subject to approval by external examiners. This indicates the proposed variation is standard practice in other assessments and does not pose a significant risk to academic standards. Experience from one member as an external examiner for another university is that they do not see papers at all.

One member raised that Annex A, point 1 does not state that the variation can only be applied on the condition of point 37a, i.e. robust internal scrutiny of papers. The Committee agree to recommend the variation on the condition that the instruction provided to Board of Examiners clearly highlights point 37a is a condition of using this variation.

The Committee noted this regulation should be highlighted for removal or reviewed in due course to be expanded to cover all assessments. Accreditation bodies should be consulted through this review as they may ask for samples of external examiner input on both coursework and exams.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate Quality Assurance Committee and Senate approve the temporary amendment to External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 1. This was subject to clarification that the variation should only be enacted where the EE resignation was as a result of industrial action.

The Convener noted that this variation is under the delegated authority of SQAC but APRC are asked for a view. One member raised that the instruction advises this variation may be used where an External Examiner resigns, but felt that this should only apply where an External Examiner resigns as a result of industrial action. The existing process in place for an External Examiner resignation for reasons outside of industrial action should be followed in other cases. The Committee discussed that the standard process relies upon concessions from Colleges and APRC, and is therefore not agile enough for the current situation.

One member raised that staff may already have additional responsibilities as a result of MAB, therefore asking Schools to do additional 'internal-external' work outside of their domain is an additional resource requirement. Paper authors clarified that a staff member from another School taking on the 'internal-external' role is subject to agreed resourcing, and does not mandate someone to make themselves available.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate Quality Assurance Committee and Senate approve the temporary amendment to External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 2.

The Convener noted that this variation is under the delegated authority of SQAC but APRC are asked for a view. Following member questions, the paper authors confirmed that the expectation that Boards should operate with the adjusted quorum was a requirement, where the MAB affected normal participation of members. It was the BoE Convener's responsibility to determine and explain where the adjusted quorum would not allow the Board sufficient expertise to make decisions. The Committee requested that these two points are clearly reflected in the instructions to Boards.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses as presented in Annex A, Point 3, and approved the role of Internal-External examiners defined above.

This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B and based on the discussion on the previous variations.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate Quality Assurance Committee and Senate approve the temporary amendment to External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy as presented in Annex A, Point 3.

The Convener noted that this variation is under the delegated authority of SQAC but APRC are asked for a view. This was approved for recommendation to SQAC and Senate based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 13 as presented in Annex A, Point 4.

The Committee discussed that Boards already have the powers to amend weightings of a course and this change was specifically in the removal for the requirement to consult with students and External Examiners, and receive approval from College.

The Committee agreed to recommend the variation on the understanding that this will only apply where an assessment has not taken place and that there is therefore no prospect of marks becoming available. The variation will not apply where assessment has happened but marks are not yet available. The instructions to Boards will clarify this point.

Use of the variation must take account of any external or accrediting requirements.

A member noted the impact upon students who may be disadvantaged, e.g. where an assessment component which they were hoping would improve their course result is removed.

Members noted concerns about situations where learning outcomes are not explicitly mapped to components of assessment, and this information is only known to Course Organisers. One member noted a concern about removing the involvement of External Examiners in this process.

EUSA members requested that information about variations be reflected in the FAQs for students, with the paper authors noting that this can be discussed at Academic Contingency Group.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 35 as presented in Annex A, Point 5.

The Committee discussed the variation where normally courses are marked from 0-100 but there is not enough evidence available to provide a robust mark, but there is enough evidence to confirm that the student has passed. In this scenario, the Board may award a PASS/FAIL.

One member raised concerns regarding operationalising the variation in terms of the level of modelling that may be required of teaching offices. This may involve the use of offline spreadsheets and the higher possibility of human error. It was agreed that the Academic Contingency Group will investigate providing teaching offices with additional reporting tools to ensure consistent modelling scenarios.

One member raised that in the previous MAB, Boards had questioned what was considered a robust boundary for a Pass/Fail course. The Committee agreed where the reliable results available are above the standard pass mark of 40% for UG, then a PASS could be awarded and this would be included in the instructions for Boards.

The Committee noted that Boards and Teaching Offices may need additional time to consider student cases and considered the key dates regarding awarding and graduation. The Academic Registrar confirmed there is some flexibility in confirming awards after the award deadline, where necessary. Where an award is confirmed late ahead of graduation, there may be situations where students can still graduate but would not receive a certificate.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 51 as presented in Annex A, Point 6. This is subject to an amendment to 51b agreed that in addition to core and compulsory courses, courses which were pre-requisites to future compulsory courses are also exempt from the award of credit on aggregate.

The paper authors noted that in the previous MAB the threshold was set at 60 credits and this has been reduced to 40 credits following feedback from Schools.

The Committee noted that some courses which are pre-requisites for courses in subsequent years are not noted as core or compulsory on the relevant Degree Programme Table. The Committee agreed that in addition to core and compulsory courses, courses which were pre-requisites for future compulsory courses must also be exempt from the award of credit on aggregate.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 52 as presented in Annex A, Point 7. This was subject to information being included in the instruction document regarding conditional progression.

The Committee discussed cases where progression Boards may have information missing on core course or courses that are pre-requisites to future learning. It is the Board's responsibility to identify how critical the course is and to allow conditional progression where necessary. The Committee agreed to recommend the variation dependent on information being added to the Instruction regarding conditional progression.

APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 56 as presented in Annex A, Point 8.

This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B.

APRC agree to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 53 as presented in Annex A, Point 9.

The Committee considered the fairness of applying credit on aggregate to students in differing scenarios:

- Student is re-sitting but has not been effectively engaging therefore is it fair to award credit on aggregate;
- It is the student's last opportunity to resit but they have not previously passed the resits;
- Student does not engage in the final assessment;
- Student may be offered credit on aggregate and not a further resit opportunity;
- Student may fail the MAB-affected assessments but have 40% average for credits we have marks for therefore would still be awarded credit on aggregate.

The Committee noted that credit on aggregate can be offered to other cohorts where the assessment is affected by MAB, and agreed that to ensure fairness it should be applied to General and Ordinary Degrees. The Committee agreed that in circumstances where the student has an average of 40% for courses with numerical marks, it would be appropriate to apply credit on aggregate.

The paper authors clarified that credit on aggregate would only be applied for a MAB-affected result and not for fails due to non-engagement with assessment. The paper authors clarified that should information become available indicating the Board would have made a less favourable decision for the student, then the Board would not change this, so as not to disadvantage the student.

The Committee recommended that the regulations relating to the award of General and Ordinary Degrees should be reviewed, with consideration given as to whether to allow the award of credit on aggregate as standard.

	APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 54 as presented in Annex A, Point 10 This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B. APRC agreed to recommend that Senate approve the temporary amendment to Taught Assessment Regulation 57 as presented in Annex A, Point 11. This was based on the rationale presented in paper APRC 25/26 4B. Overall APRC members reached a unanimous decision on all items and collectively recommend the variations for approval to Senate. The proposers were asked to ensure that the paper was updated to reflect the discussion, that minor wording errors were addressed and that requested additions were made to the instructions.
4.2	Appointment of APRC Convener and Vice-Convener The Convener outlined that a motion was approved at the 19 May 2026 Senate that the Conveners for the Senate Standing Committees would be appointed via an election. Nominees would be from the members of Senate and the members of Senate would vote in the elections. Therefore, the Committee would not be appointing a Convener and would receive further information regarding the election result in due course. The Convener noted that the Vice-Convener role was not included under this motion approved by Senate which leaves a potential gap around student concession approvals. The Committee agreed the Vice-Convener role would not be appointed during the meeting as Senate Support were actively working through the next steps for the Vice-Convener role following Senate. The Committee noted the risks of not having a Convener or Vice-Convener elected and in post by 1st August to review student concessions and Convener's actions and highlighted the importance of a seamless handover.
4.3	Proposed amendments to Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27 The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy. The Committee discussed the proposed amendments, with the following points raised in the discussion: Regulation 25 Religious Observance - Committee members raised that permitting a student an alternative assessment during a resit diet, is in conflict with regulation 27.1 which states '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.' - The Committee agreed that 27.1 should also exempt cases of religious observance, the wording for which would be drafted and approved by Convener's action. Regulation 27.6 Resit Assessment - The Committee clarified that for extraordinary cases, a concession could be requested at College level to allow students to go beyond the 2 academic sessions. The intention of the addition is, alongside DRPS Regulation 2, for Colleges to apply this more stringently where not in the student's best interest to carry on.

	- The Committee discussed the need for a grace period however, it was noted that this regulation would be introduced in academic year 26/27 so would only be meaningful where a student was going into the second of their 2 academic sessions. The Committee agreed to approve the Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27, subject to the additional revisions noted above being made, and approved by the Convener.
4.4	Proposed amendments to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27 The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager. The Committee agreed to approve the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27.
4.5	Internal Moderation Guidance The paper was presented by Lucy Evans and Tina Harrison. It was highlighted that there has been an absence of guidance on internal moderation and this guidance supports effective implementation of moderation for different assessments. The documents refers to templates being made available which need to be worked on if approved. Section 3.10 There is a repetition of 'for each'. Section 3.11 The Committee clarified that the section's intent is to limit single marks changed in isolation, but agreed that it should be clarified that the expectation is that the impact of any issues upon all relevant students is considered, rather than that marking adjustments need to be made for all students. Section 5.1 It was agreed that 'other academic staff' should be amended to 'Course Organiser' as they retain oversight of the moderation process which is also listed in the responsibilities in section 4.3. It was also agreed that 'with appropriate training' should be added for guaranteed hours staff. Section 3.2 and 3.3 One member raised that some presentation assessments from courses based in industry may not be recordable due to the confidential nature. Therefore double marking methods may not be possible. One member raised where a supervisor mark must be double marked there would be instances such as lab time where it is not possible for a second marker to assess due to the significant time and expertise of lab work. The Committee were satisfied that the instructions in 3.2 and 3.3 are appropriate and could cater for examples such as those discussed. The Committee highlighted the submission of a lab book should be encouraged to enable moderation practices on lab work. It was also highlighted that lab books also support the

	investigation of allegations of academic misconduct at dissertation level where there is a perceived mismatch between the in-person knowledge and final mark. Section 5.2 It was raised that needing moderators to be independent unless there are a large number of markers penalises small teams. It was agreed 'a large proportion' was not clear and should be amended to more than 50% or a majority. The Committee discussed that a common approach could be a Course Organiser and one Teaching Assistant mark 70 students then moderate each other. Whilst the guidance is permissive of that team moderation approach, a greater level of independence is advised wherever possible. Section 7.9 Insert the link to the Registry Services, Student Systems website on scaling; Scaling marks Student Systems Student Administration Section 3.7 The Committee noted the minimum sample size of 5 is appropriate and that a maximum was removed during consultation. It was agreed it should be added that the sample size should be selected proportionally from each marker based on the overall student numbers. The Committee agreed to approve the Internal Moderation Guidance, subject to the changes discussed.
4.6	Minor Addition to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy. The Committee discussed the proposed amendments, with the following points raised in the discussion: - Due to the timeline of the addition to handbooks, the student voice examples may not be fully in place for all 26/27 handbooks. - The Programme and Course Handbook Policy is due for full review and will be completed in academic year 26/27. - Boards of Studies do not approve all handbooks so additional routes for the communication strategy may be needed. - The amendment implies that only changes should be included as examples but the Committee felt it was important to include examples that feedback was received but not changed for good reason. - The examples could be mixed but at least one should be a positive change made from feedback. The Committee agreed to approve the Minor Addition to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy subject to consideration given to instruction on mixed examples.
4.7	Board of Examiners Review – Consistent Application of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager and Beth Bicher, Policy and Regulations Subject Matter Expert – BoE Project.

	It was highlighted that several Schools piloted the EC decision tree during the January diet and the feedback highlighted different practices across School. To ensure consistent application of the EC policy the Committee is asked to consider the scenarios and evaluate what constitutes adequate mitigation. Scenario A The Committee considered the scenario and members showed support for option 1 to disregard course assessments and not to flag for consideration at programme level. To flag at programme level would be seen as over mitigation. Scenario B The Committee discussed and held mixed views. A majority of Committee members agreed with option 2 and felt if the assessment was not seen to negatively impact the student at course level it therefore would not need to be flagged for consideration at programme level. To flag at programme level would be seen as over mitigation. A small number of members agreed with option 1 as it was felt that by taking no action at course level and then not flagging for consideration at programme level it could be interpreted as no mitigation being implemented. Scenario D The Committee showed support for Option 1 as the learning outcomes were met and disregarding the assessment is in the best interest of the student. To not disregard would negatively impact the student. Due to time constraints the Committee did not have sufficient time to adequately discuss all the scenarios and hear all views from Committee members on all scenarios. It was agreed that this paper would be shared electronically to ensure that comments could be considered.
5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION / NOTING	
5.1	Committee Administration: • APRC Membership • APRC Terms of Reference The Convener noted that the 26/27 APRC membership went to Senate on Tuesday and was approved. Committee Priorities 2025/26: To note • Development of curriculum framework arising from Learning and Teaching Workstream • Scheduled review of policies The Convener noted that a paper went to Senate on Tuesday requesting to disband the Standing Committee priorities and was rejected. AQS will be reviewing the Committee priorities over the summer and will be brought to the next ordinary meeting on Senate and APRC.
6.	Any Other Business The Committee expressed its gratitude to the outgoing Convener, Dr Emily Taylor and the Vice Convener, Professor Linda Kirstein for their contributions to APRC, including their diligent and considerate handling of concession requests.

	The Committee recorded thanks to Kayta Amott, outgoing EUSA VP Education, and Dr Matt Bell and Dr Valentina Ferlito, attending their last APRC meeting as elected Senate members.
Date of 2026/27 dates (provisionally) All meetings hybrid and 2-5pm– venue TBC. • September 2026 • November 2026 • January 2027 • March 2027 • May 2027	

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 2:00pm****Teams****AGENDA**

Present: Professor Ruth Andrew Dr Adam Bunni Dr Lawrence Dritsas Lisa Dawson Lindsey Fox Professor Linda Kirstein (Vice-Convener) Professor Dave Laurenson Isabel Lavers Charlotte Macdonald Dr Chris Mowat Dr Kirsten Phimister Dr Emily Taylor (Convener) Kirsty Woomble Professor Gill Aitken Victoria Buchanan Catriona Morley Robin Gay Mike Grieve Charlotte MacDonald	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CMVM) Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards Dean of Students (CAHSS) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Head of Postgraduate Research Student Administration (CSE) Dean of Education (CSE) 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) Dean of Education (CMVM) Director, Disability and Learning Support Service (Co-opted member) Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Student Voice Manager (EUSA) Dean of Students (CMVM) Advice Place Manager (EUSA)
In attendance: Meg Batty	Academic Quality and Standards Manager, Academic Quality and Standards
Apologies: Heather Innes Lucy Evans Dr Matt Bell Joana Mends Dr Valentina Ferlito Myles Blaney	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association (Co-opted member) Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students (Co-opted member) Senate representative (CSE) Vice President Education, Students' Association Senate representative (CMVM) Acting Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media

1.	Welcome and apologies	
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	The Convener noted apologies for the meeting and confirmed that Robin Gay was in attendance as a substitute member for Heather Innes. The Convener welcomed members to the additional meeting of APRC to discuss the Edinburgh–Zhejiang Joint Education Program in Engineering: non-standard academic policy and regulatory arrangements and three other items.	
2.	Matters Arising - Convener and Vice-Convener The Convener outlined that a motion was approved at the 19 May 2026 Senate for Conveners of the Senate Standing Committees to be appointed via an election. Nominees would be from the members of Senate and the members of Senate would vote in the elections. The Principal has since sent a communication to Senate Members stating that the decision has triggered questions around governance and risk which require time to work through. In the interim, a Convener and Vice-Convener are to be appointed from among College Deans who are members of the Committee, as per the terms of reference. The Academic Registrar stated that the motion was not being disregarded or overlooked but additional time is needed to work through the institutional risks. With the need to prioritise Academic Quality and Standards resources for the National Review of Awarding Arrangements which is due to conclude in November, an update will be issued in December 2026. The following expressions of interest were rolled over from the 21 May 2026 meeting: - One note of interest for Convener role (from Professor Linda Kirstein, the current Vice-Convener) - One note of interest for Vice-Convener role (from Dr Lawrence Dritsas) There were no further notes of interest from members present. For discussion of the role of Convener, Professor Linda Kirstein left the Teams Meeting. The Committee discussed and approved Professor Linda Kirstein taking the role of Convener until such time as an election is held or until July 31st 2027, whichever comes first. For discussion of the role of Vice-Convener, Dr Lawrence Dritsas left the Teams Meeting. The Committee discussed and approved Dr Lawrence Dritsas taking the role of Vice-Convener until such time as an election is held or until July 31st 2027, whichever comes first.	Verbal Update
3. SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
3.1	Collaborative Programmes in Development For approval	APRC 25/26 5A CLOSED

	The paper was presented by Professor Ian Underwood, Director of International Research & Innovation, along with the following staff members, who attended to respond to questions from the committee: • Dr Wei Li, Senior Lecturer in Chemical Engineering, School of Engineering • Dr Elliot Crowley, Senior Lecturer and Discipline Programme Manager, Electronics and Electrical Engineering, School of Engineering • Jake Broadhurst, Senior Advisor, Edinburgh Global • Dr John Menzies, Director of Undergraduate Programmes, Edinburgh-Zhejiang Biomedical Sciences Joint Institute, Edinburgh Medical School • Prof David Laurenson, Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Engineering The committee discussed various aspects of the paper with the project team. APRC agreed that the School of Engineering should continue to develop the detail of the programmes. APRC approved the proposed methods for addressing the non-standard elements as presented in the paper. APRC expects detailed proposals regarding these non-standard elements to return to the Committee for final approval at a future date.	
3.2	Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure For approval The paper was presented by Rowena Lamb, Head of Research Governance, Compliance & Risk, Edinburgh Research Office. The previous Research Misconduct Procedure covered staff but has been expanded to include PGR students. The changes bring the process in line with the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) national standards and add in an appeal process, which is separate from the university appeals process. Under the new procedure, some investigations relating to PGR students would be moved from the Student Conduct team to the Edinburgh Research Office. If a case is upheld it may be referred to Student Conduct after the research misconduct appeals process is complete. Following any penalty from Student Conduct, the student has the right to appeal via the university appeals route (Student Appeal Regulations) and submit a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Any research misconduct in a PGR thesis would continue to be investigated under the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures. The Academic Registrar acknowledged there are risks within the current Student Conduct process and this work is encouraged to enable the Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure and Research Misconduct Procedure to work together. Case studies should be considered to ensure it is clear how the procedures will work together to uphold the quality of assessed work, student experience through the procedures and integrity of research. The Code of Student conduct and Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures are currently being reviewed. The committee raised concerns over the length, complexity and perceived redundancies within the procedure. The following points were made in relation to this concern:	APRC 25/26 5B CLOSED

- The process is highly labour intensive for staff due to the number of independent staff with relevant expertise required in each part of the process: panel at screening, panel at stage 1, and panel at appeal.
- There are redundancies in the process as the screening process is conducted like an investigation with interviews of those involved. This reads like a 2-stage investigation process and would be long and repetitive for a student to undergo.
- Stage 1 in the procedure uses a panel but the UKRIO process uses an individual at this stage. This would be more efficient.
- Whilst it is noted this is a current staff policy, and bringing PGR students in, it is not aligned to the current student procedures and may cause confusion for students.
- That a student may go through the Research Misconduct Procedure and then be referred for investigation by Student Conduct/Academic Misconduct feels onerous. The processes should be compatible so that the Investigation process does not need to be repeated by each department.
- Having a separate Appeal process to the Student Appeal Regulations is confusing for students. In addition, the grounds for the appeals process are similar but are cited the opposite way round e.g. ground A in Student Appeal Regulations is cited as Ground B in Research Misconduct Procedure. This will lead to confusion for students.

The Committee discussed the delineation between the Research Misconduct Procedures and the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure and felt that the distinction was not clear. The following points were made in relation to this concern:

- The procedures state 'any work that is externally disseminated or intended for publication, including but not limited to, a published thesis or published papers, will fall within the scope of this Policy and associated procedure' however this definition could include assessed work e.g. PGR students can publish chapters during the writing of their thesis.
- It was recommended that the procedure should simply say that any assessed work should be investigated under the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.
- It was noted that all PhD thesis are intended to be of publishable quality, therefore 'intended for publication' is not a helpful criterion for determining what falls under the policy.
- All theses are published in the Edinburgh Library Repository and clarity on whether this is considered published should be added to the procedures.
- The Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure is relevant to students after graduation; reports of misconduct received after graduation should be passed onto the relevant CAMO.

Head of Research and Governance advised that all reports of research misconduct would be triaged by the Edinburgh Research Office and the appointed named contact would consult with the CAMO. The Committee suggested that for all PhD cases it would be better placed for the report to

	be screened through the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedure first. Several committee members expressed a view that the procedure remains very staff focussed and may not include the correct people throughout the process. The following points were made in relation to this concern: - The PGR Dean should be involved in the process. - The CAMO should be involved in the 'Receipt and Initial Assessment of Allegation Stage' to identify whether the report is in relation to assed work. The CAMO should also be notified in section A6. - There are many references to HR involvement without specifying if this is relevant to students. - There are references to notifying the employer, however the procedure does not state how this differs when dealing with students, as opposed to staff. Outside of these themes, these further points were raised by the committee: - The University has a high duty of care to support students and to make our procedures clear and comprehensible. - The procedure references the Academic Misconduct Policy however this should be Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures. - The Fitness to Practice Procedure should be included in the 'Relationship with existing policies' and scoping work on whether reporting to the FTP team is needed should be carried out. - Where the Research Misconduct Procedure references external partners it assumes the NHS however, there may be professional or accrediting partners. - The procedure needs to include how the process is impacted if a student withdraws. - Concerns were raised where the outcome of an investigation may be that the research is redacted. The impact of this is not clear e.g. where this is a published Thesis, this may result in rescinding a degree. - There is no definitive list of the outcomes a student may receive which can lead to unrealistic expectations and concern for a student. - Section 13 uses the word 'material' twice with different meanings. - The University keeps data on research misconduct cases for 10 years, however the procedure does not include a time limit for reporting e.g. if reporting after 10 years the university may no longer hold data on the case. It was also queried what time frame is reasonable for a person to defend their research. The Convener summarised that the committee has significant concerns over: • the length and complexity of the process; • how the procedure interacts with the Code of Student Conduct and the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures;	
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	• The Research Misconduct Procedure and appendices are too staff focussed rather than student focussed; and • the potential outcomes/recommendations for students are not clear. The Committee did not approve the Research Misconduct Procedure, or endorse its presentation to University Executive in its current draft. The Committee requested that a revised draft be brought to a future meeting for approval.	
3.3	Student and Staff Dignity and Respect Policies For approval The paper was presented by Emma Nelson, Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals. An overview of the key changes was presented. These include: splitting the current Dignity and Respect Policy into separate staff and student policies; including a clearer definition of dignity and respect and examples; issues such as witnessing misconduct, abuse of power, online behaviour, and the reasonableness test for harassment. Consultation has included feedback from Edinburgh University Students' Association colleagues, colleagues on the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Working Group, colleagues on the Promoting Dignity and Respect Working Group and other stakeholders. The Committee agreed that the policy was a significant improvement and supported the approach of separating staff and student policies. The following points for review were given: - Consider how to communicate the different routes for reporting e.g. Student Conduct, report and support. - The current guidance does not make it clear what happens following a Report and Support Submission. This should be clearer on the website or within accompanying guidance. - The Policy includes a reasonableness test, but in a context of language regarding "zero tolerance". Care should be taken to ensure that these are understood as compatible things. - A recurrent issue seen across Schools is a small minority of students expressing unrealistic expectations regarding staff responses to email enquiries. It was requested that consideration is given to adding reference to respecting boundaries in relation to staff working hours and reasonable response times. The Committee agreed they were happy to endorse the policy for approval at University Executive.	APRC 25/26 5C CLOSED
3.4	Exceptional Circumstances Policy Updates For approval The paper was presented by Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy. The Policy updates include essential changes following the approval of the late EC process and the Senate approved proposed thresholds for	APRC 25/26 5D

	excluding course results in cases where ECs have been accepted. The wider policy is due for review in academic year 27/28. The committee discussed whether section 10.6 contradicted 10.4, as 10.4 gives recognition that a Board should satisfy itself that there is sufficient evidence of attainment, but 10.5 and 10.6 do not allow any flexibility for Boards to enact that where courses have been flagged for exclusion. It was noted that the position agreed by Senate regarding where courses must be excluded was clear, and was agreed that the two sections were not incompatible. As such, the Committee agreed that the wording proposed would stand. The committee agreed to amend the footnote for 10.6 from 'entering' to 'who enter'. The Committee agreed to amend the wording of 10.6.ii to 'total credits per year of the programme' and 'or Full-Time postgraduate taught Master's'. Some members of the Committee requested that the review of the EC policy be brought forward from 27/28 to 26/27. The Convener noted that a number of policies due for review in 25/26 had already been delayed to 26/27. The Head of Academic Policy noted that, in addition to the backlog of policies due for review, 26/27 would only be the third year of operation for the new policy, stating that it would be important to have at least three years' worth of data on the new policy, and to allow for some stability in such a crucial area of policy. The Committee approved the EC policy subject to the amended wording agreed.	
4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
4.1	Committee Administration: • APRC Membership • APRC Terms of Reference To note Committee Priorities 2025/26: To note • Development of curriculum framework arising from Learning and Teaching Workstream • Scheduled review of policies	
5.	Any Other Business	

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

24 September 2026

Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances

Description of paper

1. The paper seeks endorsement of University-level decision trees for use across Schools in determining outcomes in cases where Exceptional Circumstances (EC) have been accepted for individual students.

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. The paper asks APRC to endorse the proposed decision trees and recommend them for approval by Senate, for use by Boards of Examiners from January 2027 onwards.

Background and context

3. The Board of Examiners Review identified a number of recommendations for changes to simplify and bring consistency to our Board of Examiners processes. These were approved by the University Executive in May 2025.

Current project areas of work are:

- Exceptional Circumstances (EC) – developing standard decision trees for application of policy in Schools; aligning processes around late EC applications; institution wide agreement on levels for discounting elements of assessment.
- Results Ratification – clarification of Board Roles and responsibilities and streamlining of all Board processes; pre-results ratification, results ratification and post ratification.
- Quality – Ensuring changes do not impact the quality of our courses and programmes by recommending clear processes for Teaching Quality Review and updating policy and guidance for External Examiners.

4. 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.

5. 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)."

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).

6. The Board of Examiners review found that Boards across Schools were taking a variety of different approaches to arriving at outcome decisions in EC cases (all within the bounds of the EC policy). This was leading to inconsistency of outcome for students based upon the same academic circumstances, and to inefficiency of process, with staff in different areas being required to develop and implement a variety of approaches to reach outcome decisions. As such, the Board of Examiners project is seeking to implement University-wide decision trees in order to achieve the following benefits:

- Enable consistent and equitable outcomes for students;
- Enable consistent messaging to students;
- Increased provision of central training for EC processes;
- Reduce staff time spent working out EC outcomes;
- Enable a wider pool of staff skilled in processing EC outcomes, removing bottlenecks in processing;
- Consistency in the application of regulations.

Development of Decision Trees

7. An initial design for a set of course decision trees was developed based on examples from the eight Schools already using their own decision trees. A number of in-person and online sessions were held across summer 2025 to present the initial course decision tree designs to colleagues. These sessions

were well attended with good levels of engagement. The feedback gained was used to further develop the designs, which were then used in pilot Schools during the January/February 2026 Board of Examiners period. Based on feedback from pilot Schools following this period, the design was subject to further development, ahead of its use in the June 2026 Board of Examiners period. The current design of the decision trees takes account of further feedback provided by pilot Schools following June 2026 Boards of Examiners.

8. APRC was presented with a paper at their May 2026 meeting ([APRC 25/26 4G](#)), seeking their guidance regarding several scenarios which had arisen during the pilot phase, where the EC policy was leading to variation in approach when determining EC outcomes. Feedback provided by members at the meeting, and in writing following the meeting, has been incorporated into the design of the decision trees presented here in the following ways:

- Where a Board of Examiners at course level has disregarded marks for all components affected by ECs (e.g. two coursework assessments worth a total of 30% of the course mark) in determining a student's course mark, they will not refer the case to the relevant Programme Board for further action;
- Where a Board of Examiners at course level has not disregarded marks for components affected by ECs because they were higher than marks for other components (unaffected by ECs), they will not refer the case to the relevant Programme Board for further action;¹
- Where all (or a majority of) components of assessment for a course have been affected by ECs but the student has met the learning outcomes for the course, the Board of Examiners will disregard any components up to the relevant School threshold, where this is in the student's interest (e.g. up to 50% of components by weighting in some Schools), to determine the final course mark; the Board will also refer the case to the relevant Programme Board for potential exclusion;
- Where a student has ECs accepted for a component of assessment which is essential to meeting learning outcomes, but has passed the component, the Board of Examiners will disregard the mark for the component when determining the course mark, provided that the component is within the School's threshold for disregarding (e.g. it is a coursework assessment worth 30% of the course mark, and the School threshold is 50%).

Thresholds for excluding course results

9. At its May 2026 meeting ([S 25/26 5G](#)), Senate approved the introduction of standard thresholds for excluding course results where ECs have been accepted and referred for consideration by Boards of Examiners making decisions at programme level (e.g. award of degree, classification). In order for the thresholds to operate most effectively, these must be complemented by a consistent

¹ The views of APRC members on this issue were varied, with a majority of members who commented at the meeting voicing support for the approach outlined here, while those commenting after the meeting were more supportive of referring the case for further consideration by the Programme Board.

approach to determining which EC cases should be referred for consideration by Programme Boards, which is one of the goals of the decision trees.

10. The programme level decision trees incorporate the approved thresholds for excluding courses. Where students have a larger credit volume of courses affected by ECs than can be excluded under the thresholds, the decision trees instruct Boards to take the following actions:

- Exclude results for EC-affected courses up to the threshold, where this will improve the student's average course mark, starting with the lowest course marks;
- Offer the student null sits and the option to be reassessed for any EC-affected courses which cannot have their marks excluded in line with the threshold;
- If the student wishes to pursue the null sits this will delay the confirmation of their final award;
- If the student declines the null sits, the Board will finalise the award outcome based on the exclusion of courses within the threshold.

Discussion

Underlying Principles of Decision Trees

11. The 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”, as it is defined in the EC policy (see section 5, above). In supporting this principle, the decision trees have also been designed to:

- Apply mitigation at the component or course level wherever possible, as opposed to simply deferring action up to the programme level;
- Avoid the use of “null sits” and reassessment, where this is possible, and compatible with the achievement of required learning outcomes.

12. 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. Students also receive confirmation of their EC outcomes earlier when they are resolved at course level than when they are resolved at programme level.

13. The desire to minimise the use of null sits relates to several 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. In addition to this, offering null sits at Honours and postgraduate taught level requires staff to set and mark additional assessment (including new exam papers) where this would not otherwise be necessary. The administrative burden involved in offering such reassessments is also considerable – both within Schools and in Registry Services, even where they are not taken up by students.

14. It is also noted, however, that some students would prefer the opportunity to undertake reassessment where their original attempt has been affected by ECs, in order to demonstrate their best performance and to have this recorded on their transcript. This is discussed in further detail below.

Offering null sits where course results can be excluded

15. Where it is not possible for Boards to mitigate the impact of ECs by disregarding individual assessments at course level, the decision trees seek to minimise the number of null sits by directing Boards to exclude course results when making programme-level decisions (e.g. classification), provided the student has passed the course (or can be awarded credit on aggregate). However, the guidance around the decision trees has until now allowed for Schools to offer a null sit in some situations, rather than excluding the course result, for example where a student may be seeking a better result for a specific course because they are keen to pursue further study in an area related to that course.²
16. Where students have course results excluded from their classification calculation due to accepted ECs, the results for these courses remain on their transcript. As such, students can be concerned about results being on their transcript which may not match their perceived potential. When the EC process was introduced, consideration was given to whether EC-affected course results could be excluded from transcripts. However, this was not regarded as viable for the following reasons:

² The relevant extract from the guidance is below:

“d) Student request for null sit outcome

Where it is not possible to disregard all affected components, the decision tree defaults towards referring to Programme Board for consideration, where the student has passed the course, or may be eligible for credit on aggregate. Where a student has not been awarded a null sit outcome but has a good reason for wanting to better their mark (e.g., because they wish to pursue further study in an area related to a course), they can be awarded a null sit and allowed the opportunity to do so upon request.”

- i) Allowing students to choose whether EC-affected courses were included on their transcript would be too difficult technically to implement, and lead to significant inconsistency in the appearance of transcripts;
- ii) Defaulting to excluding EC-affected course results from transcripts would be detrimental to some students, since often results for EC-affected courses could be nearly as good as their other results, and therefore desirable to include as a demonstration of their performance across a range of courses.

17. Schools have fed back during the pilot that the guidance relating to offering students null sits where course results can be excluded has proven difficult to implement. Staff have raised concerns that offering null sits to only some students in this situation is inequitable, but also that it would be impracticable to offer this option to all students who may be eligible, especially given the tight timelines around finalising EC outcome decisions.

18. Given the challenges identified above, our recommendation to address this issue is to take the following approach:

a. Where a course result can be excluded at programme level, a null sit will not be offered in any circumstances.

- This would avoid concerns about equitable treatment of students and mitigate staff workload challenges involved with liaising with students about offering the option of a null sit during a pressurised period.³
- Some students and staff will feel that this is detrimental to students, especially since course results for EC-affected courses remain on students' transcripts. However, it may be desirable to consider excluding from students' transcripts by default only course results for EC-affected courses which have been failed (and had credit awarded on aggregate).

19. This approach remains in keeping with the primary aim of the EC policy, which is to minimise the impact of ECs upon students' final degree outcomes. Although offering a null sit (as opposed to excluding the course result) may benefit the student by allowing them to improve the course result on their transcript, it will only lead to an overall benefit for their degree outcome if the mark for their new attempt is *higher than their average mark for other courses*, rather than simply higher than their original mark for that course.

³ There are additional challenges of communicating with students with ongoing ECs, since they are often less likely to respond in a timely manner to emails or meeting requests.

20. The other options which have been considered to address this issue are provided below, with an explanation as to why they were not recommended. **APRC is asked to consider this issue and determine whether it is supportive of the proposed approach.**

b. Put in place a process and specific criteria for students to request a null sit where a course result has otherwise been excluded.

- A defined process and specific criteria would mitigate concerns around inequitable treatment of students.
- There is a risk of inconsistency of application of the criteria, unless (for example) decisions were escalated to Colleges (creating additional workload).
- Implementing such a process would create additional workload for staff in Schools (and Colleges, if escalation were required) during a very busy period.
- Timelines surrounding the process would be very tight, since students could only request a null sit once they had been informed that they had had a course result excluded.

c. Schools retain discretion to offer a null sit where the student requests this for a good reason

- This would retain the current approach, allowing Schools to offer null sits to students who have requested this.
- There is likely to be inconsistent practice between Schools as to whether null sits are offered when requested, which could lead to some students feeling that they are being unfairly treated relative to others.
- Some staff have already expressed concern about both the workload challenges involved in supporting this process, but also around the difficulty of doing so in an equitable way.
- A process based on students needing to request a specific outcome has the potential to disadvantage some students from marginalised groups, who may feel less confident about making such a request.

Structure of decision trees

21. There are four versions of Course Level EC Decision Trees to support Schools in achieving consistent outcomes for students whose EC applications have been accepted:

- Pre-Honours - course with a single component of assessment e.g., 100% exam

- Pre-Honours - course with multiple components of assessment e.g., 80% exam and 20% single piece of coursework
- Honours/PGT - course with a single component of assessment e.g., 100% exam
- Honours/PGT - course with multiple components of assessment e.g., 80% exam and 20% single piece of coursework

The decision trees walk colleagues through possible EC scenarios leading them to appropriate outcomes as outlined in the EC policy (sections 10.5 and 10.6).

22. For more complicated cases where a course has multiple components of assessment the decision trees direct colleagues to review each component affected by ECs in the first instance, to arrive at a provisional decision for each. This may include applying removal of late penalties or a null sit where a component was failed. After reviewing each component, the decision trees instruct colleagues to consider the course as a whole, across all components, in order to reach final course level outcomes. The decision trees guide colleagues to the relevant outcome(s) that should be considered depending on the scenario under review. It should be noted that the initial component outcome may change when the course is reviewed as a whole. For example, a component which is failed and awarded a null sit may be disregarded at course level outcome stage if this is compatible with meeting the learning outcomes, and any thresholds for disregarding components.
23. The Course Level decision trees lead in some situations to referral of cases for consideration by Programme Boards (under outcome 10.5b). To support these cases, there are two versions of Programme Level EC Decision Trees, which outline the application of thresholds where required:
- Undergraduate Programme Level (Progression & Award)
 - PGT Programme Level (Progression & Award)

These decision trees operationalise the approach to thresholds for excluding courses approved by Senate in May 2026.

24. The decision trees are supported by a short User Guide, which clarifies expectations regarding their use in particular scenarios. The decision trees and the User Guide are published for review by APRC members on the [Board of Examiners Project SharePoint pages](#). **APRC is asked to agree to recommend the decision trees for approval by Senate, for use by Boards of Examiners from January 2027.**

Resource implications

25. The implementation of the proposed decision trees will require an initial investment of staff time to attend training relating to their use. In their first use by staff in Schools – especially those without experience of using decision trees previously – they may in some areas lead to slower processing of EC outcomes. However, once staff gain familiarity with their use after successive Board of Examiners periods, it is anticipated that the decision trees should lead to a reduction overall in the amount of staff time spent determining EC outcomes by reducing the range of options to be considered in each individual case.
26. The resource implications relating to the use of null sits and reassessment are covered above.

Risk management

27. The current approach to determining EC outcomes is leading to a high level of inconsistency of outcome in cases between Schools. This not only risks being perceived as unfair by students, but also risks variation in academic standards across programmes. The introduction of standard decision trees will effectively mitigate these risks by ensuring consistency of outcome for students across Schools.
28. In May 2026, Senate approved the introduction of mandatory thresholds regarding the volume of credit which will be excluded due to ECs when determining students' degree outcomes. These thresholds provide an effective upper and lower limit regarding the impact of EC decisions upon degree outcomes. For the thresholds to be most effective, it is essential to have uniform decision trees in place to ensure a consistent approach regarding when course results will be referred for potential exclusion by programme Boards.
29. The paper notes at several points that Schools will continue to operate their own thresholds regarding the proportion of components of assessment that can be disregarded within an individual course where ECs have been upheld and course learning outcomes met. The absence of an agreed threshold across the University presents a continuing risk that students will experience inconsistency in outcomes for ECs at course level. However, the project team has judged that it will not be possible to implement a single threshold for disregarding components until such time as there is consistent, explicit mapping of learning outcomes to assessment components for all taught courses. Under the University's new [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) (2.1), this mapping is expected to be in place by 2028/29.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

30. N/A

Equality & diversity

31. The introduction of mandatory decision trees for EC outcomes would provide benefits to all students making use of the EC process, limiting the potential for biases of various kinds to affect decision-making, and therefore providing greater confidence that the University takes a fair and consistent approach to determining

EC outcomes across Schools. This is likely to have the greatest impact for those students who currently experience the greatest level of impact upon their studies as a result of ECs. In many cases, this is due to medical or personal circumstances which may interact with protected characteristics. The University's primary approach to supporting students with disabilities with their studies is not the EC process, but the provision of reasonable adjustments based on need assessed by the Disability and Learning Support Service.

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

32. Should APRC endorse the proposed decision trees, these will be presented for approval by Senate at their October meeting. If Senate were to approve their introduction for the current academic year, training would be provided for staff in Schools on the use of the decision trees in late 2026.

Authors

Adam Bunni

Head of Academic Policy and Regulations

Academic Quality and Standards

Joanna Divers

Business Analyst

Strategic Change Service

Presenters

Adam Bunni

Academic Quality and Standards

Freedom of Information

Open

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Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

24 September 2026

Academic Year Dates 2027/28 and 2028/29

Description of paper

1. This paper requests Committee approval for the academic year dates for 2027/28, which were approved as provisional dates at the 21 November 2024 meeting of APRC. The paper also requests Committee approval for the academic year dates for 2028/29. The paper also provides information regarding the December 2027 examination diet and seeks Committee approval on this matter.

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. The Committee is invited to **approve** the proposed academic year dates for 2027/28 provided in Appendix 1, including the proposed approach to the exam diet in December 2027 (see sections 7-13).
3. The Committee is invited to **approve** the proposed academic year dates for 2028/29 provided in Appendix 1.

Background and context

4. APRC is responsible for approving annually the academic year dates for future years. In practice, there is a very limited degree of flexibility in the Semester dates, as these are structured according to a model approved by Senate in 2009 and published at [Academic year structure](#).

Discussion

5. The Committee approved the provisional dates for 2027/28 at its November 2024 meeting. These dates are now being presented for final approval.
6. The dates for 2028/29 were presented as provisional to the committee at its 22 January 2026 meeting.

December 2027 exam diet

7. Due to constraints on when Semester 1 can start, acute challenges are experienced during certain years around the time available following the end of Semester 1 to allow for both a revision period and an exam diet of adequate length. The Exams team in Registry Services require a minimum diet length of 10 days for December exams in order to schedule a clash-free timetable. There is a longstanding agreement between the University and EUSA that exams will finish no later than 21 December.
8. At its January 2026 meeting, APRC considered a range of issues relating to the scheduling of the December 2026 exam diet ([APRC 25/26 2C](#)). The Committee approved an exam diet for December 2026 as follows:
 - The exam diet will start on Wednesday, 9th December (i.e. during the usual revision week);
 - The diet will include exams on Saturday, 12th December (but not Saturday, 19th December);
 - The diet will finish on Monday, 21st December (inclusive), and therefore consist of 10 days;
 - Schools will be asked to avoid teaching new material during the latter part of the final teaching week of Semester 1, in order to allow adequate time for revision.
9. At the January 2026 meeting, APRC deferred final approval of the 2027/28 academic year dates, and the provisional 2028/29 dates, requesting further exploration of two issues:
 - i. Whether it may be possible to start the 2027/28 academic year one week earlier than planned, in order to mitigate the issue with the December 2027 diet;
 - ii. The general issues presented by the asymmetric academic year structure.
10. Following discussion of these issues, it has not been possible to mitigate the challenges presented with the academic year dates for 2027/28. It is not possible to start the 2027/28 academic year one week earlier than planned, due to the requirement to prepare University buildings for the academic year following the conclusion of the Edinburgh festivals. As to the challenges with the academic year in general, these are recognised, but the exercise of considering whether there may be viable alternatives to this would represent a major project, for which there is not currently capacity within the University.
11. Consideration has also been given to scheduling exams beyond 21st December. The University generally remains open until 23rd December (inclusive). Extending the diet into 22nd or 23rd December would either allow the retention of more of the revision period, or a longer diet, with less impact in terms of e.g. students having two exams on the same day. However, such a measure is likely to be unpopular with students who have exams near the end of the diet, and may not wish to travel home so close to Christmas. Holding exams on 22nd or 23rd December would also be likely to present challenges with recruiting invigilators,

and with returning furniture in exam halls to their normal configuration ahead of teaching in Semester 2. As such, this option is not considered viable at this time.

12. We are therefore proposing to replicate the approach approved for the December 2026 diet in December 2027. December 2026 represents the most acute problems, as the 2026/27 academic year involves the latest possible start to Semester 1. These challenges become less acute year-on-year. For December 2027, this would therefore mean:
 - The exam diet would start on Thursday, 9th December (one weekday later than in 2026);
 - The diet would include exams on Saturday, 11th December (but not Saturday, 18th December);
 - The diet would finish on Tuesday, 21st December (inclusive), and therefore consist of 10 days;
 - Schools would be asked to avoid teaching new material during the latter part of the final teaching week of the Semester, in order to allow adequate time for revision.
13. Due to the leap year in 2028, the December 2028 diet would return to allowing for a full week of revision. This would continue to be the case until the issue would recur in 2032/33.
14. **APRC are asked to approve the proposed academic year dates for 2027/28 and 2028/29 (provided in Appendix 1), and the proposed approach to the December exam diet for 2027.**

Resource implications

15. The approach to the December diet proposed for 2027 reflects that in place for 2026. Adhering to the practice of finishing exams on 21st December mitigates some of the resource challenges highlighted in section 11.

Risk management

16. The proposed approach to the December 2027 exam diet seeks to balance the risk to students of having too little time to prepare for exams with the need to ensure sufficient time to support a clash-free timetable, and to allow student adequate time to return home before Christmas, where they wish to do so.

Equality and diversity

17. As was noted in the January 2026 paper ([APRC 25/26 2C](#)), Saturday exams conflict with religious observance for some Jewish students. There is provision in the Taught Assessment Regulations (25.2) for Schools and Registry Services to make alternative arrangements for students unable to attend an exam due to religious observance.

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

18. If the academic year dates are approved, these will be published on the University's Semester Dates web pages.

H/02/27/02

APRC 26/27 1D

Author

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and Regulations
Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni

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Appendix 1: Final Academic Year Dates 2027/28 and Final Academic Year Dates 2028/29**Academic Year Dates 2027/28**

1	13 September 2027	Welcome Week
2	20 September 2027	T1
3	27 September 2027	T2
4	04 October 2027	T3
5	11 October 2027	T4
6	18 October 2027	T5
7	25 October 2027	T6
8	01 November 2027	T7
9	08 November 2027	T8
10	15 November 2027	T9
11	22 November 2027	T10
12	29 November 2027	T11
13	06 December 2027	Revision/Exams
14	13 December 2027	Exams
15	20 December 2027	Exams
16	27 December 2027	Winter vac 1
17	03 January 2028	Winter vac 2
18	10 January 2028	Winter vac 3
19	17 January 2028	T1
20	24 January 2028	T2
21	31 January 2028	T3
22	07 February 2028	T4
23	14 February 2028	T5
24	21 February 2028	Flexible Learning Week
25	28 February 2028	T6
26	06 March 2028	T7
27	13 March 2028	T8
28	20 March 2028	T9
29	27 March 2028	T10
30	03 April 2028	T11
31	10 April 2028	Spring vac 1
32	17 April 2028	Spring vac 2
33	24 April 2028	Revision
34	01 May 2028	Exams
35	08 May 2028	Exams
36	15 May 2028	Exams
37	22 May 2028	Exams
38	29 May 2028	Summer vac 1
39	05 June 2028	Summer vac 2
40	12 June 2028	Summer vac 3
41	19 June 2028	Summer vac 4
42	26 June 2028	Summer vac 5
43	03 July 2028	Summer vac 6
44	10 July 2028	Summer vac 7
45	17 July 2028	Summer vac 8
46	24 July 2028	Summer vac 9

47	31 July 2028	Summer vac 10
48	07 August 2028	Summer vac 11
49	14 August 2028	Summer vac 12
50	21 August 2028	Summer vac 13
51	28 August 2028	Summer vac 14
52	04 September 2028	Summer vac 15

Additional notes 2027/28 - to be incorporated on the University website

Semester 1

Date	Event
13 September 2027	Welcome Week
20 September 2027	Semester 1 starts / Teaching block 1 starts
22 October 2027	Teaching block 1 ends
25 October 2027	Teaching block 2 starts
To be confirmed	Graduations
3 December 2027	Teaching block 2 ends
6-8 December 2027	Revision
9-21 December 2027	Examinations
21 December 2027	Semester 1 ends
22 December 2027	Winter teaching vacation starts
To be confirmed	University closed
14 January 2028	Winter teaching vacation ends

Semester 2

Date	Event
12-14 January 2028	January Welcome
17 January 2028	Semester 2 starts / Teaching block 3 starts
18 February 2028	Teaching block 3 ends
21-25 February 2028	Flexible Learning Week
28 February 2028	Teaching block 4 starts
7 April 2028	Teaching block 4 ends
10-21 April 2028	Spring teaching vacation
24-28 April 2028	Revision
1-26 May 2028	Examinations
26 May 2028	Semester 2 ends
29 May 2028	Summer teaching vacation starts
To be confirmed	Graduations
To be confirmed	Resit examinations

Academic Year Dates 2028/29

1	11 September 2028	Welcome Week
2	18 September 2028	T1
3	25 September 2028	T2
4	02 October 2028	T3
5	09 October 2028	T4
6	16 October 2028	T5
7	23 October 2028	T6
8	30 October 2028	T7
9	6 November 2028	T8
10	13 November 2028	T9
11	20 November 2028	T10
12	27 November 2028	T11
13	04 December 2028	Revision/Exams
14	11 December 2028	Exams
15	18 December 2028	Exams
16	25 December 2028	Winter vac 1
17	01 January 2029	Winter vac 2
18	08 January 2029	Winter vac 3
19	15 January 2029	T1
20	22 January 2029	T2
21	29 January 2029	T3
22	05 February 2029	T4
23	12 February 2029	T5
24	19 February 2029	Flexible Learning Week
25	26 February 2029	T6
26	05 March 2029	T7
27	12 March 2029	T8
28	19 March 2029	T9
29	26 March 2029	T10
30	02 April 2029	T11
31	09 April 2029	Spring vac 1
32	16 April 2029	Spring vac 2
33	23 April 2029	Revision
34	30 April 2029	Exams
35	07 May 2029	Exams
36	14 May 2029	Exams
37	21 May 2029	Exams
38	28 May 2029	Summer vac 1
39	04 June 2029	Summer vac 2
40	11 June 2029	Summer vac 3
41	18 June 2029	Summer vac 4
42	25 June 2029	Summer vac 5
43	02 July 2029	Summer vac 6
44	09 July 2029	Summer vac 7
45	16 July 2029	Summer vac 8
46	23 July 2029	Summer vac 9
47	30 July 2029	Summer vac 10
48	06 August 2029	Summer vac 11
49	13 August 2029	Summer vac 12

50	20 August 2029	Summer vac 13
51	27 August 2029	Summer vac 14
52	03 September 2029	Summer vac 15

Additional notes 2028/29 - to be incorporated on the University website

Semester 1

Date	Event
11 September 2028	Welcome Week
18 September 2028	Semester 1 starts / Teaching block 1 starts
20 October 2028	Teaching block 1 ends
23 October 2028	Teaching block 2 starts
To be confirmed	Graduations
1 December 2028	Teaching block 2 ends
To be confirmed	Revision
To be confirmed	Examinations
21 December 2028	Semester 1 ends
22 December 2028	Winter teaching vacation starts
To be confirmed	University closed
12 January 2029	Winter teaching vacation ends

Semester 2

Date	Event
10-12 January 2029	January Welcome
15 January 2029	Semester 2 starts / Teaching block 3 starts
16 February 2029	Teaching block 3 ends
19-23 February 2029	Flexible Learning Week
26 February 2029	Teaching block 4 starts
6 April 2029	Teaching block 4 ends
09-20 April 2029	Spring teaching vacation
To be confirmed	Revision
To be confirmed	Examinations
25 May 2029	Semester 2 ends
28 May 2029	Summer teaching vacation starts
To be confirmed	Graduations
To be confirmed	Resit examinations

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

24 September 2026

Curriculum framework revision

Description of paper

1. The University's Framework for Curricula document was last reviewed in 2017. This paper includes a revised version of the framework for discussion. It has been revised by the three Deans of Education working collaboratively with Academic Quality and Standards.

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
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. Discuss the content of the paper and make constructive comments on where amendments may be needed as well as outline challenges Schools/Colleges may encounter in adopting the new Framework.

Background and context

3. The [Framework for Curricula](#) was originally developed to provide consistency in the delivery of the University's Curriculum Framework. The Framework for Curricula articulates a set of outline rules to support the University's Curriculum Framework. The current version was last reviewed in 2017 and is in need of updating in line with changes in the Taught Assessment Regulations and the introduction of the University's [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#).

Discussion

4. APRC are invited to discuss and suggest amendments to the draft Framework for Curricula document, noting the existence of the current framework and development of other policies, in particular the Assessment and Feedback policy, since its last review.

5. APRC should note this is a work in progress and the document presented has already incorporated feedback provided by College Education Committees across the University following discussions in April-June 2026.

Resource implications

6. Paper is for discussion and this will be completed when approval sought.

Risk management

7. Paper is for discussion and this will be completed when approval sought.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

8. Paper is for discussion and this will be completed as appropriate when approval sought.

Equality & diversity

9. Paper is for discussion and this will be completed when approval sought.

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

10. Once discussion has occurred and feedback received, all suggestions will be considered. Following amendments the paper will be sent to College Education committees with final approval being sought from APRC in November ideally.

Author

Professor Linda Kirstein; Professor Mary Brennan; Professor Gill Aiken; Professor Sam Fawcner.

Date 08-09-2026

Presenter

Linda Kirstein

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.

Framework for curricula (high level)

1. All degree programmes must be delivered in a mode (in-person, online, distance) compliant with UKVI requirements.
2. All taught degree programmes must be aligned to, and meet the rules of, the approved degree model types in the Models for Degree Types Policy.
3. A standard academic year of full -time study in any undergraduate degree must equate to exactly 120 credit points at the appropriate Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level(s), with an exception for professionally accredited clinical programmes. A normal year of full-time study on any PGT degree programme is spread across 2 semesters with an additional period (June -August) and must equate to exactly 180 credits. Part-time programmes must be a minimum of 60 credits per academic year. For postgraduate taught degrees with 240 credits, a normal year of study is 120 credits per academic year.
4. The expectation is that all degree programmes are built using 20 credit courses, or multiples thereof. Any course deviation must have a clear pedagogic rationale and be approved by School Board of Studies.
5. The use of zero credit courses is not permitted at any level.
6. Semester or year-long 'umbrella' (60, 80, 100, or 120 credit) courses are not permitted except where required for professionally accredited programmes, professional placements and/or study abroad.
7. Students are not permitted to take course combinations where they are unable to attend all scheduled teaching and assessment due to clashes in their official personal academic and centrally managed examination timetable.
8. All programme level skills and learning outcomes must be clearly specified, assessed, and satisfactorily acquired, through the core and/or compulsory courses of that programme.
9. Programme design must ensure that assessment is equitably distributed across the academic year.
10. All programme competence standards must be approved by Boards of Studies and College Curriculum Committees.
11. All programmes must be reviewed and reapproved as part of the institutional quality review of teaching provision (e.g. IPR).
12. For undergraduate programmes, course-level elevated progression hurdles (e.g. requirement to obtain a 50% and/or passes at first attempt on specific courses) are not permitted, except where required for professional accreditation purposes.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**24 September 2026****Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2026/27****Description of paper**

1. This paper articulates the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical Officer team for 2026/27.

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.	N
Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.	N
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.	N
Act with delegated authority from the Senate on matters of student conduct and discipline.	N
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.	N
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	N

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note and comment

Background and context

3. Each year a paper is presented to Senate and its standing committees, summarising the Sabbatical Officers' priorities for the coming year, enabling Senate and its member to identify areas of common interest and collaboration. These priorities are based on the manifestos the Officers were elected on – this year's Officers received a combined 9,216 votes – and were further refined during the Officers' inducted, based on data from the various national student experience surveys and feedback from outgoing student representatives.

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

6. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have risk implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Equality & diversity

8. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have equality and diversity implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

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

9. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have communication, implementation and evaluation implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Author

Heather Innes

Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator

Edinburgh University Students' Association

10/09/2026

Presenter

Joana Mends

Vice President Education

Edinburgh University Students' Association

Freedom of Information: Open

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Students' Association Vice President Education priorities for 2026/27:

- Hold the University accountable for delivering the quality of education it promises, including challenging cuts to teaching, course and learning opportunities.
- Champion an inclusive, decolonised and globally relevant curriculum, with better support for inclusive teaching.
- Develop a fair, student-centred approach to AI in teaching and assessment that prioritises critical thinking, creativity and independent learning.
- Protect students' learning and wellbeing during disruption, while improving academic adjustments, support and access to essential wellbeing provision.
- Strengthen the student voice by ensuring students are meaningfully involved in decisions about their education.

Sabbatical Officer team priorities for 2026/27:

- Strengthen student voice and accountability, ensuring students are meaningfully involved in University decision-making and receive clear, transparent updates on issues affecting them.
- Tackle the cost-of-living crisis, including affordable housing and food, free or cheaper travel, financial support and access to essential services.
- Build a more inclusive and accessible student community, with better support for marginalised students, commuters, international students, postgraduates and students across different campuses.
- Improve student wellbeing, safety and support, including mental health provision, consent and sexual violence prevention, academic and welfare support and safer, more accessible spaces.
- Protect and enhance student life, through stronger societies, peer support, volunteering, employability opportunities and a more diverse range of social and cultural activities.
- Challenge University cuts and protect student services, scrutinising financial decisions and their impact on teaching, support and the wider student experience.
- Push for a more sustainable and responsible University, particularly around divestment, sustainable food and products, ethical investment and environmental responsibility.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**24 September 2026****Policies due for review in 2026/27****Description of paper**

1. This paper provides information on the list of policies under APRC's responsibility which are due for review in the 2026/27 academic year.

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. The Committee is invited to **note** the list of policies due for review in 2026/27.

Background and context

3. APRC is responsible for a number of academic policies under delegated authority from Senate. These policies are reviewed on a periodic basis (usually every four years) in order to ensure that they continue effectively to support the University's educational activities.
4. It is common for changes to be made to the schedule of policy reviews where this is necessary, for example in order to align with institutional priorities or external requirements.

Discussion

5. The policies within APRC's remit which are due for review in 2026/27 are listed in the table below.

Name of policy	Reason for review	Comments
Policy on University use of Email as method of contacting students	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	
Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	These policies will be reviewed via the Doctoral College in the

PhD by Research oral examinations by video link (Videolinked PhD oral)	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	first instance, before coming to APRC for approval.
Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	
Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations	Annual review of degree regulations	As is standard practice, Academic Quality and Standards will invite Colleges and Schools to request essential changes to these regulations during the early part of 2027. Proposals for changes will be considered by APRC in March (UG and PG Degree Regulations), and May (Assessment Regulations). The Degree Regulations are approved by Court via the Resolution process (through which Senate has the opportunity to comment directly), while the Assessment Regulations are approved by APRC.
Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations	Annual review of degree regulations	
Taught Assessment Regulations	Approval of essential updates to the Taught Assessment Regulations	
Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations	Approval of essential updates to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations	
Framework for Curricula	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	A draft of this document has been tabled for discussion at the September meeting of APRC.
Models for degree types	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	
Board of Studies Terms of Reference	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24	APRC will be invited to comment on this document before it is sent for approval by Court Resolution. Proposed changes reflect changes to the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy, which were approved by SQAC in April 2026.

Support for Study Policy	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	The current version of the policy was approved in 2024/25. As such, the review of this policy is expected to be light-touch and focus on any issues encountered in its use.
International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2022/23	The review of this policy will be led by Registry Services, with APRC being asked for approval at an appropriate point.
Expected Behaviour Policy in relation to Appeals, Complaints, Student Conduct and related procedures	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	The review of this policy will be led by the Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, with APRC being asked for approval at an appropriate point.
Shared Academic Timetabling Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24	The review of this policy will be led by Registry Services, with APRC being asked for approval at an appropriate point.
Code of Student Conduct	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	The review of this policy is being led by the Office for Student Conduct, Complaints, and Appeals. APRC will be invited to endorse any proposed changes at an appropriate point, before approval via Court Resolution is sought.
Student Support Framework	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2024/25	Substantive

Resource implications

- The review of policies has resource implications in terms of staff time within those departments responsible for carrying out reviews (primarily within Registry Services), but also for staff in Schools, Colleges, and other relevant departments who are consulted about their experience of existing policies, or proposed changes to them. The schedule of policy reviews may be subject to change where there is a need to take account of exceptional demand upon staff time in Schools, Colleges, or central services.
- There is the potential that any recommendations arising from the National Review of Awarding Arrangements may lead to a need to reprioritise the schedule of policy reviews.

Risk management

8. It is essential that policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, and in order to remain compliant with external requirements. Where the review of any policies is subject to delay, the risks associated with such a delay will be considered.

Equality and diversity

9. Equality and diversity implications associated with any proposed changes to policy will be highlighted for consideration by APRC and any other approving bodies when changes are proposed.

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

10. APRC is not being asked to approve any specific action at this time.

Author

Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and Regulations
Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

Dr Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information Open

H/02/27/02

APRC 26/27 1G

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

24 September 2026

Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees 2025/26

Description of paper

1. This paper provides the Committee with the results, analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the internal effectiveness review survey for Senate Standing Committees, conducted in July 2026.

Fit with remit

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note the analysis of feedback received and comment on the areas for development as set out in Appendix 1.

Background and context

3. The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2023 (64) states:

"The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward, if necessary in these circumstances."

4. At its 19 May meeting, Senate approved plans for an internal effectiveness review of Senate Standing Committees. This was to consist of a survey of Committee members focussed on the Committee's effectiveness. The survey also included targeted questions on actions taken in response to the external review recommendations on the following topics:
 - a. Recruitment and Induction
 - b. Senate Standing Committees and their relationship to Senate
5. In June 2026, a survey was issued to all members of Senate Standing Committees.

Discussion

6. A summary of the responses, analysis, and areas for improvement are provided in Appendix 1.

7. There is a substantially lower response rate when compared to the previous internal effectiveness survey of Senate Committees; the areas for improvement are proportionate to the scope of the review, volume of feedback received and areas for improvement as given in survey responses.
8. The outcome of the survey will be reported to Senate alongside the annual report from the Standing Committees in October 2026.

Resource implications

9. The resource implications of the areas for improvement have been considered within Academic Quality and Standards and will be prioritised and taken forward in line with available resources.

Risk management

10. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Internal effectiveness review activity is intended to aid continuous improvement of the University's approach to academic governance.

Equality & diversity

11. The review provides an opportunity for members to identify any issues relating to the internal effectiveness of Committees. Members were not asked specific questions on equality and diversity issues, however are at liberty to raise such issues via the completion of the survey if they believe this to be relevant.

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

12. As detailed in paragraph 9.

Author

Olivia Hayes
Head of Committees and Governance
Registry Services

Presenter

N/A

Freedom of Information

Open

APPENDIX 1: Report of Senate Standing Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2025/26

A single anonymous survey of all Senate Standing Committees was conducted in June and July 2026. Respondents were asked to identify which Committee they were a member of at the commencement of the survey. Those who are members of multiple committees were invited to complete the survey for each Committee they are a member of. The Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary did not participate.

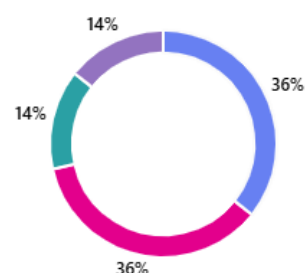
Fourteen responses were received, there are a total of 61 members across all Senate Committees, excluding the Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary. This equates to an overall response rate of 23%.

Three responses were received from members of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) from a total of 20 members giving a response rate of 15%. Three responses were received from members of the Senate Education Committee (SEC) from a total of 26 members giving a response rate of 12%. Eight responses were received from members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) from a total of 15 members, giving a response rate of 53%.

An internal effectiveness review survey of Senate Committees was not undertaken in the 2024/25 academic year, however compared with the 2023/24 academic year there has been a substantial reduction in response rate. For APRC, there was a 40% reduction in response rate from 13 to 3 responses. For SEC, there was a 32% reduction in response rate from 11 to 3 responses. For SQAC, there was a 1% increase in response rate to 8 from a possible 14, which is an increase from the 9 responses from a possible 16 received in 2023/24.

Of the responses, five responses were received from ex-officio members, including student members and five responses were received from nominated members, including College and Service area representatives. Two responses were received from elected Senate members and two responses were received from co-opted members.

● Ex officio member, including student members	5
● Nominated member - for example, College or Service area representative	5
● Elected Senate member	2
● Co-opted member - as chosen by the Convener	2
● External member (SQAC only)	0



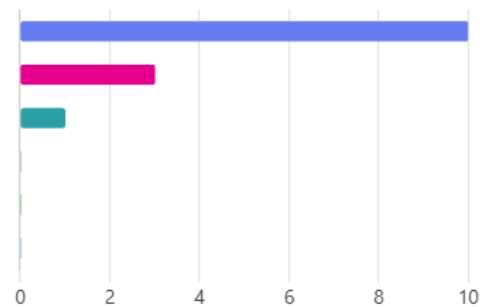
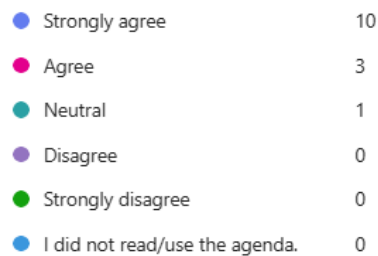
Due to the low response rate from APRC and SEC, and the potential to identify individual respondents, the analysis of survey results has been undertaken as a single exercise for all Committees. Where there is Committee-specific feedback provided in free text comments, this has been provided for completeness with any identifying information removed from comments.

A summary of survey responses Agendas and papers

Meeting agendas

The majority of respondents found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured, one respondent was neutral on this question and no respondents disagreed with this statement.

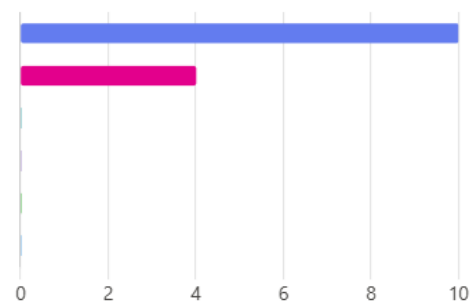
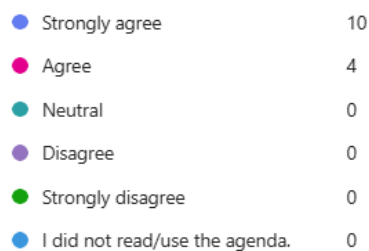
3. I found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured.



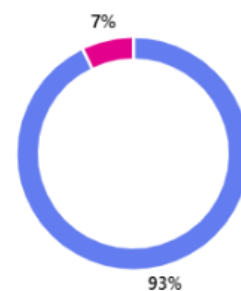
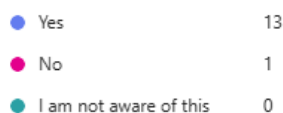
Fit to remit

All respondents agreed that agenda items fit within the Committee's remit. A majority of respondents (13) found the mapping of agenda items on the cover paper helped their understanding of how agenda items fit within the remit of the Committee, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

4. I found agenda items fit within the Committee's remit.



5. The mapping of agenda items to committee remit in the cover paper helped me understand how items fit within remit.



Coverage of agenda items

A majority of respondents (13) felt that agenda items were adequately covered during meetings, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

6. I felt that agenda items were covered adequately during meetings of the Committee.

● Yes	13
● No	1
● I did not attend meetings.	0



There were three free-text comments received in relation to Committee agendas. Free text comments in this category were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

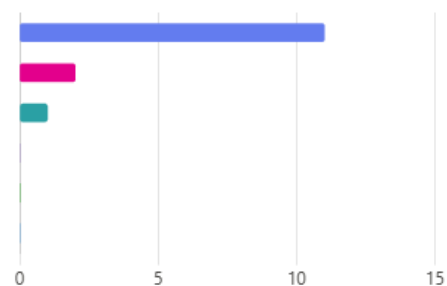
- The majority of Committee papers were to a high quality and aligned to Committee remit, however where papers were not high quality, or the action requested was unclear, this impacted on the Committee's discussions and decision-making and created confusion for members.
- There is a lack of clarity between the Committee's remit and University strategy, which impacts on the Committee's effectiveness and strategic and institutional impact on QA matters.
- Overall Committee discussions were productive and constructive, however did not address governance aspects required to support full Senate understanding and decision making on relevant matters.

Committee meetings

A majority of respondents (13) agreed that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion, one respondent was neutral on this statement.

8. I felt that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

● Strongly agree	11
● Agree	2
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0
● I did not attend meetings.	0



A majority of respondents (13) felt that the hybrid meeting format allowed members to contribute equally. One respondent disagreed with this statement.

9. The hybrid meeting format allowed in-person and online members to contribute equally?



Four free-text comments were received in relation to Committee meetings. Three free text comments were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and one free text comment was submitted by a member of another Senate committee. A summary of feedback is provided:

- One respondent expressed a personal preference for meetings to take place in-person or online only, noting that hybrid meetings can feel disjointed and technology is generally inadequate.
- Two respondents indicated that it was difficult to measure whether members had an equal opportunity to contribute, with one respondent stating that strong voices dominate Committee discussions.
- One respondent expressed appreciation for hybrid meetings which facilitated attendance for members in particular circumstances.

Relationship to Senate

A majority of respondents (11) strongly agreed with the understanding that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate. One respondent agreed, one respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

12. I understand that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate



A majority of respondents (9) strongly agreed that they understood the Committee's role in relation to Senate. Three respondents agreed, one respondent was neutral and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

13. I understand the Committee's role in relation to Senate



There were two free-text comments received on the Relationship to Senate. Both free text comments were submitted by 2 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

- There are ongoing discussions regarding Standing Committees at Senate meetings and it has been some time since the delegation of responsibilities and roles of Committees were discussed at Senate. A respondent referenced a decision to not honour a vote on committee chair's being elected.
- One respondent expressed a general understanding of the written remit of the Committees, however another expressed uncertainty regarding their understanding of the Committee's relationship to Senate.

Committee effectiveness

A majority of respondents (12) considered the Committee to be effective. One respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement, both respondents were members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

11. Overall, I consider the Committee to be effective.



Additional questions: measuring the effectiveness of the external review recommendations

There was one additional question intended to measure the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the External Review of Senate undertaken in 2022/23. Respondents were asked for their view on the effectiveness of Recruitment and Induction actions implemented in 2025/26 which were in response to the recommendations of the External Review.

Recruitment and Induction – Standing Committees

Standing Committee Induction pack

Of the fourteen responses, eight respondents indicated that they were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal. Of the remaining six respondents, two responses indicated this was very positive, one response indicated this was positive, two respondents were not aware of the action and one respondent did not give an answer.

Overall Standing Committee Induction Process

Five respondents indicated that the overall Standing Committee Induction process was positive, with one respondent indicating they were unaware of the action. Eight respondents were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the action taken, and one respondent did not give an answer.

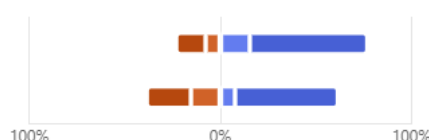
15. Please rate the effectiveness of the following actions on Recruitment and Induction:

[More details](#)

● Very positive ● Positive ● Negative ● Very negative ● I am not aware of this action ● I was not a new member in 2025/26

The provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal.

The overall Standing Committee Induction Process



There was one free text comment with the respondent indicating that support from other members was helpful for their induction.

The responses to this section will be logged for the next External Effectiveness Review of Senate.

Good practice

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

- **Fit to remit on Committee paper templates:** A majority of respondents agreed that the paper templates and mapping of agenda items to the Committee remit helped them to understand how items fit to the Committee remit. This was an action in response to the internal effectiveness review survey conducted in 2023/24.
- **Hybrid meetings:** A majority of respondents value that meetings are conducted in hybrid format. Meetings will continue to be held as hybrid, and AQS staff will

arrange meetings in rooms with good hybrid functionality, wherever possible and subject to availability.

Areas for development

Two key themes were identified within the feedback as areas where the Committee could seek to focus enhancement:

- **Survey response rate:** The reduction in response rate to the survey in 2025/26 (overall response rate of 24%) makes it difficult to ensure that the results are sufficiently representative of members' views and that actions reflect members' priorities for improving the internal effectiveness of the Committee. We will therefore aim to improve response rates for the next survey.
- **Relationship to Senate:** The responses to questions on the relationship to Senate indicate that respondents have an overall positive view, however these responses indicate a lower level of satisfaction when compared to other questions. The Statement of Senate's Primary Responsibilities (SOPR) has recently been approved by the University Court and will help to explain the relationship and develop understanding of the responsibilities delegated by Senate to its Standing Committees.