

**Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee  
to be held on Thursday 23 November 2023  
at 2:00pm via Teams**

**Confirmed minutes**

<p><b>Present:</b> Dr Adam Bunni Philippa Burrell Professor Jamie Davies Lisa Dawson Dr Murray Earle Professor Patrick Hadoke (Convenor)</p> <p>Clair Halliday Carl Harper Karen Howie</p> <p>Alexandra Laidlaw Professor Antony Maciocia Callum Paterson Rachael Quirk Dr Deborah Shaw Professor Tim Stratford Dr Emily Taylor Professor Stephen Warrington (Vice-Convenor) Kirsty Woomble</p> <p><b>Substitute members:</b> Dr Valentina Ferlito (on behalf of Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif) Dr Neil Lent (on behalf of Dr Donna Murray)</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b> Isabel Lavers Cristina Matthews</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Dr Aidan Brown Professor Jeremy Crang Lucy Evans Dr Donna Murray Dr Uzma Tufail-Hanif</p>	<p>Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services Head of Academic Administration (CMVM) Dean of Taught Education (CMVM) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Elected member of Senate Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM) The Advice Place, Deputy Manager Vice President Education, Students' Association Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media, Information Services Head of Academic Affairs (CSE) Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association Head of Taught Student Administration &amp; Support (CAHSS) Dean of Students (CMVM) Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS) Dean of Student Experience (CSE)</p> <p>Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)</p> <p>Elected member of Senate</p> <p>Lecturer in Learning and Teaching (IAD)</p> <p>Academic Administration Manager (CMVM) Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services</p> <p>Elected member of Senate Dean of Students (CAHSS) Deputy Secretary, Students (Co-opted member) Head of Taught Student Development (IAD) Elected member of Senate</p>
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<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>The Convenor welcomed everyone and members of the Committee introduced themselves to the substitute members.</p>
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	<p>Reminder to the Committee that members can propose a substitute member, to be approved by the Convener, if they are unable to make the meeting. Once approved, the APRC administrator will then share the papers and meeting invitation with any substitute members.</p> <p>The Convener noted that this will be Philippa Burrell's last meeting, and that Isabel Lavers (in attendance) will be taking up one of the Committee positions for CMVM. The Convener thanked Philippa for all her contributions to the Committee and welcomed Isabel as a new member.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> APRC administrator to update membership lists.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting – APRC 23/24 3A</b> For approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 September 2023 (enclosed)</li> </ul> <p>The Convener noted that a member not present at the meeting had communicated via email that they did not think the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting; that some of the questions raised were not included, and that some of the answers were not comprehensive.</p> <p>The Convener reminded the Committee that the minutes are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting, and stated that the questions raised, and answers provided, were summarised and covered in the minutes.</p> <p>A member suggested that the issue of whether the responses to the questions raised were adequate or not is a separate issue to whether the minutes accurately reflect the discussion that took place. If members feel that the questions were not sufficiently answered in the meeting, this can be raised as a query separately.</p> <p>Members present at the meeting agreed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting. The Committee approved the minutes.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>3.1 Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>Convener's communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update on the termination of PhD</b></li> </ul> <p>The Convener updated the Committee on the case discussed at APRC at the meeting on 25 May 2023 (Closed Paper APRC 22/23 9G) where termination of supervision may have been necessary. A solution to this situation now looks possible at College level without the need for termination of supervision.</p> <p>The Convener noted that since the last meeting, Academic Services have identified a process for the termination of a PhD, which was approved by CSPC in 2017, and which involves a subgroup rather than a full Committee review. It was agreed to note and circulate the CSPC-approved process for future reference.</p> <p>In the event that such a case should come to the Committee in future, it will be dealt with following this process.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> CSPC-approved process for termination of PhD supervision to be noted and circulated to the Committee.</p>

- **Update on the operation of online exams in the December diet.**

The proposals approved by APRC in May 2023 included a provision that students who have additional time in exams as a reasonable adjustment would have a 20-minute submission period. However, the exam timetable has applied a uniform 15-minute submission period for all students, including those with additional time as a learning adjustment. Given that students had been informed of the 15-minute submission period, and that there was no issue with students' expectations not being met, the decision was taken not to make changes at this stage in order to avoid confusion. Guidance has been drafted for Schools and Deaneries, instructing them to contact the College in case a student with an adjustment for additional time submits an exam after the final deadline. The Disability and Learning Support Service and the Students' Association have both been informed about this and reported no major concerns. No students should have been disadvantaged by this issue.

The miscommunication on this item is partly due to how the Committee has handled minutes that relate to closed papers. Academic Services are reviewing their approach to handling minutes for closed items, and will be making changes to prevent a repeat of issues such as this one. The use of an action log was also emphasised in order to facilitate tracking of actions.

- **Update on APRC priorities**

Senate did not approve the APRC priorities paper presented at the September APRC meeting. Senate approved an amendment to the paper which related to reviewing the impact upon academic standards of variations to regulations applied during the period of industrial action. However, Senate did not approve the overall paper. The Convener clarified that the amendment would not have been in the remit of this Committee, it would be within the remit of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and that the substance of the amendment was already covered by the quality assurance processes of SQAC. In relation to this, there is an action from the APRC September meeting requesting an update from SQAC on the output of annual quality assurance monitoring processes and the impact of the temporary variations to the regulations (see actions log). The APRC priorities outlined in the paper were mostly responses to work initiated elsewhere, and the Committee will need to continue to work on these as part of its remit.

- **Actions log**

The actions log was circulated alongside the papers for the meeting, and the Convener provided a verbal update on this.

- **Academic Year Dates 2026/27**

The Committee would normally receive papers on Academic Year dates at the November meeting; however, given how the dates fall for AY26/27, we will be in a similar position to this academic year, i.e. the period available for the December resit period and exam diet will be shorter than usual. At the September APRC meeting, the Committee agreed to incorporate a second exam session into one or two days for the December diet. Given that the diet has not yet taken place, the proposal is to agree the Academic Year dates 2026/27 at the January 2024 meeting of this Committee, so that we can incorporate any lessons learned from this academic year.

### 3.2 Report of Convener's Action

- **Summary of approved concessions since the last APRC meeting 2023/24**

Since the last ordinary APRC meeting (21 September 2023), 18 individual student concessions have been approved.

	<p>In this period there have been no cohort concessions made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Addition of a second day with two exam sessions for the December exam diet</b></li> </ul> <p>Timetabling indicated that they would need two days on which to have two sessions in the December exam diet in order to meet demand. This is in line with what the Committee agreed at the September meeting, i.e. that including two days with two sessions could be approved by Convener's Action without returning to the full Committee for additional approval. Following the request by APRC that days with two sessions should be towards the end of the diet, these have been scheduled on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Programmes with non-standard semester dates (CMVM) – APRC 23/24 3B</b> For approval</p> <p>This item was chaired by the Deputy Convener, as the paper is for CMVM.</p> <p>The paper was introduced by Philippa Burrell, Head of Academic Administration, CMVM. This paper is seeking approval for non-standard semester dates for five online PGT programmes in CMVM in order to align with the dates for other CMVM online programmes already approved.</p> <p>Further context was provided: online programmes used to have different non-standard semester dates across CMVM but these dates have been streamlined in recent years in order to achieve consistency across the College. The five online programmes being presented in the paper are already running and should have been approved by APRC last year. The request for approval is therefore retrospective.</p> <p>A member reported questions on behalf of Senate members. These were clarified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of 'term' and 'semester': PGT online programmes in CMVM run from September to August. Given that there are three terms, 'term' is more appropriate than 'semester'. The paper uses both terminologies, given that 'term' is used in for this context in CMVM, but 'semester' is used elsewhere in the University.</li> <li>○ It was queried why ChM programmes were not included in the list of programmes for which an exemption was being sought; it was clarified that there is an existing exemption in relation to these, and other, programmes with non-standard dates, and that these were therefore already included in the appendix to the paper.</li> <li>○ It was queried why all programmes with non-standard dates are not included in the list; it was clarified that programmes on the list have all requested approval from APRC to run on non-standard semester dates, and that APRC have no record of other programmes with non-standard dates. If there are programmes with non-standard dates that do not appear on this list, Schools should seek approval for this from their respective College and then from APRC.</li> </ul> <p>There was clarification that there is no issue for programmes that run with standard University semester dates, and that only programmes with non-standard dates need to request approval for their academic year dates.</p>

	<p>There was also clarification that, although these term dates are not aligned with the University's standard semester dates, there is consistency in these term dates across CMVM.</p> <p>The Committee approved the proposal, but noted that in future these approvals should not be sought retrospectively. CMVM confirmed that the intention is to seek approvals in the correct sequence, and that mitigations are now in place to cover issues such as staff absence.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Philippa Burrell to communicate outcome of paper 3B to relevant Schools/Deaneries.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> APRC administrator to request update to list of programmes with non-standard dates on the website.</p>
4.3	<p><b>APRC annual concessions report 2022/23 – APRC 23/24 3C</b> To note and comment <b>This paper is closed.</b> Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act.</p> <p>This paper was presented by Cristina Matthews, Academic Services. The paper provides the Committee with an analysis of the concessions approved for the AY22/23, themes identified and proposed next steps in order to aid continuous improvement of the handling of APRC concessions.</p> <p>Members noted that the number of concession cases that come to APRC, although higher than in previous years, is only a very small proportion of concession cases reviewed at the College level, particularly for PGR students. There was an acknowledgement that PGR cases will usually be more complex and that it is important to ensure that our policies and practices are providing the best support for students. Members were supportive of the next steps proposed in the paper, which included establishing a subgroup to explore PGR concessions in more depth. This group can discuss amendments to policies, regulations or practices that could help to manage some of the more complex cases and provide a better student experience. Some members expressed an interest in also exploring issues related to extensions and interruptions of study for PGT students, particularly part-time online PGT students.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> APRC administrator to set up subgroup to discuss options for improving PGR concessions; follow up with colleagues regarding PGT concessions relating to extensions and interruptions of study.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding the high number of concession cases reviewed across the University at the College level, and also about the value of obtaining degree completion rates for cases of PGR concessions. Academic Services are looking into whether we can obtain this data in order to provide insight into potential improvements to be discussed with the subgroup.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Academic Services to confirm whether we can obtain data on degree completion rates for PGR students with concessions.</p> <p>The Committee discussed whether or not the full Committee should continue to review cohort concessions that are not affected by industrial action, given that this was agreed as a temporary arrangement for AY22/23. Members expressed a range of views on this, but the Committee reached the agreement that, for now, it will continue to review all cohort cases.</p>

**5. Any Other Business**

No other business. The Convener thanked members for their contributions to the Committee over this particularly busy year.