**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
to be held online on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 2.00pm**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held online on 3 June 2021**   Enclosed

2. **Minutes of the previous special meeting held online on 5 August 2021**   Enclosed

3. **Matters Arising**

   a) **Convener's Action July 2021 (concession relating to regulations for optional study abroad)**

   b) **Convener's Action July 2021 (joint PhD UoE/University of Groningen – non-standard assessment arrangements)**

For discussion

4. **CMVM: Proposal for an alternative third year in the MSc in Surgical Sciences Programme.**   APRC 21/22 1A

5. **Study Abroad for one Semester: credit on aggregate**   APRC 21/22 1B

For information and formal business

6. **Vice President Education Priorities 2021/22**   APRC 21/22 1C

7. **APRC Membership and Terms of Reference 2021/22**   APRC 21/22 1D

8. **Review of Senate Committee Effectiveness**   APRC 21/22 1E

9. **Any Other Business**

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting held online on Thursday 3 June 2021 at 2.00pm

Present:

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration

In attendance:

Professor Siân Bayne	Director of Education at the Edinburgh Futures Institute and Assistant Principal for Digital Education
Tara Gold	Incoming Vice President Education, Students' Association
Charlotte Macdonald	Advice Place Deputy Manager
Rachael Quirk	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)
Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Tom Ward	Edinburgh Futures Institute Head of Education Administration and Change Management

Apologies for absence:

Dr Lisa Kendall	Director of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)
Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, Students' Association

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

   The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Electronic business and Convener's Action had been conducted since the last meeting on 25 March 2021 as follows:

a) Electronic Business – Draft annual report of the Senate standing committees 2020/21, Annual review of the effectiveness of the Senate standing committees 2020/21, Senate presentation and discussion themes for 2021/22 meetings (7 May 2021-14 May 2021)

b) Convener's Action –Environmental Geosciences cohort graduating in 2020/21 (1 April 2021), SRUC measures to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for BSc in Environmental Management (13 April 2021), Appointment of additional deputy Board of Studies Conveners (1 May 2021).

3. Edinburgh Futures Institute Postgraduate Taught Programmes: proposals for regulatory arrangements(Paper A)

Tom Ward and Professor Siân Bayne presented this item. The planned suite of EFI educational programmes due to launch in 2022/23 included some approaches not anticipated by the University's current regulations, for the substantive project/dissertation element, and in relation to flexibility around duration of study and lifelong learning. At the last APRC meeting in March 2021, Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) had sought the Committee's views on potential approaches to addressing some of the regulatory issues. EFI was now submitting formal proposals for the Committee's consideration. Comments were made as follows:

The regulatory arrangements associated with the substantive project / dissertation, which include a request for one formal opt-out and pose some other questions for regulations around assessment and progression (paras 15 to 20 of the paper).

- The Committee noted the proposals identified in relation to the planned assessment of the 20 credit 'integration' course on a pass/fail basis. It was recognised by the Committee that the pass/fail approach to the project component would have some knock-on regulatory consequences for retrieval of failure and calculations of awards.
- The Committee was supportive of the proposal to hold an oral examination, if the student demonstrated active engagement and meaningful, consistent reflection in the blog, but failed the project plan. The Committee were also supportive of the proposal to offer the student an opportunity to produce a 1,000 word essay if they failed to demonstrate active engagement and meaningful consistent reflection in the blog.
- The Committee further queried what would happen if a student then failed the re-submission element, and how the assessment process would work in practice, in the absence of a formal progression point between the taught element and the project component.
- The Committee were supportive of the proposals identified in the paper with regard to the calculation of merit and distinction based on a single average

mark calculated from both the taught and project/dissertation elements (minus the 20 credit 'integration' pass/fail component). The Committee recognised that these proposals signified an opt-out from Taught Assessment Regulations 59 and 60, as merit and distinction would be calculated in a different way to that outlined in those regulations. The award of merit or distinction would, however, still be based on an average mark of 60% or 70% respectively.

<u>The proposal to base the substantive 40 credit project for the MSc Creative Industries predominantly on group assessment (paras 21 to 25)</u>

- The Committee noted the proposal to base the substantive 40 credits project for the MSc Creative Industries predominantly on group assessment. Members had raised some concerns about the risks associated with free-riding and team conflicts with regard to group assessment at the March 2021 APRC meeting, and it was recognised that EFI had taken steps to mitigate against this in their revised proposals.
- It was noted by the Committee that there was a distinction to be made between group work and group assessment.
- Members of the Committee noted that the balance between individual and group assessment outlined in the proposals signified a high proportion of group assessment, both for the MSc Creative Industries, and also for the 'shared core' courses that all students on the EFI PGT programmes would take.
- The Committee agreed that it would have concerns about any programmes where it was proposed that less than 50% of the assessment (by credit) was based on individual assessment. The Committee further agreed that they were likely to want to hear about any proposals of this type.
- It was clarified by the EFI representatives that the proposals for the 'shared core' courses that all students would take at EFI involved 55% individual assessment and 45% group assessment, not including the 'integration' pass/fail component.
- There were comments from within the Committee about the possibility of appeals and complaints from students who excelled in individual work but were "pulled down" by group work.
- It was noted by the Committee that in CAHSS there were several other Schools interested in "group based" dissertations, but they had been looking at group based projects with a higher proportion of individual work.
- A Committee member commented that the group work element made this programme less likely to be used as a "stepping stone" to a PhD, but recognised that the programme was more likely intended to target a particular market, which made this less of an issue.
- The Committee queried whether, if a student had failed courses, they could potentially use the 40 credits from the project element towards a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma.
- It was recognised that the Models for Degree types did imply that the project/dissertation element focused on individual rather than group proficiency in research skills. The Committee gave their approval for a programme specific opt-out for the MSc Creative Industries, so that there could be an increased emphasis on group assessment, as proposed.

Opt-outs from Postgraduate Degree Regulation 16 and from the Models of Degree Types to facilitate transfer from lifelong learning to named and generic awards (para 29).

- The Committee discussed the EFI proposals in order to facilitate lifelong learning. In order for EFI to offer the opportunity for students to transfer on to a programme leading to a named award, and for EFI to offer a suite of generic awards, two formal opt-outs from the regulations were required. This involved an opt-out from Postgraduate Degree Regulation 16 (Recognition of Prior Learning) and an opt-out from provision outlined in the Models for Degree Types. The opt-out from the RPL regulation would allow students to transfer from studying with EFI on a lifelong learning basis to study towards a named award with up to 120 credits of prior study accumulated during lifelong learning studies with EFI (i.e. two-thirds of the total credits for the award). The opt-out from PGT provision in the Models for Degree Types would allow EFI to offer programmes without a 60 credits project/dissertation element. The Committee approved these opt-outs.

EFI's proposed arrangements for flexibility in duration of study (subject to subsequent confirmation that the University could manage the implications for business process and statutory returns) (paras 30 to 39).

- Committee members agreed that, as noted in the EFI paper, the proposal to allow lifelong learning individuals to remain registered for a long period of time (ideally around 10 years) raised substantive business process and statutory returns issues, along with regulatory issues. There were questions, for example, regarding: whether the University should treat these individuals who remained matriculated as if they are students; whether the students should be subject to the Code of Student Conduct; how far student support should extend, what access there would be to the full range of University and Students' Association services; and questions about raising expectations/the creation of legal obligations under consumer law, which would mean that marketing materials would need to be very clear.
- Members raised concerns about the proposed arrangements for flexibility in duration of study, given the current lack of understanding of downstream implications for business processes and statutory returns. It was noted in particular that it would be good to understand what the scope of work was for Student Systems e.g. whether there was any more substantial development work required, or whether it was more about "re-labelling". This would all need to be considered further by the Student Systems Partnership Board.
- A member suggested that the terminology for the status involved could be something like LLL for Lifelong Learner, and also noted that 10 years could be too short for a "lifelong learner" and that the boundaries could be pushed further to 15 years, but with the necessary caveats about re-registering etc.
- The Committee noted that it would be possible to facilitate the kind of sporadic engagement expected from Lifelong Learning students using existing Non-Graduating Student codes, without encountering the issues presented around student status in intervening years. However, this would not support the kind of longstanding connection with this cohort which EFI was seeking to put in place, so would require EFI to hold its own records regarding students in this cohort.
- It was proposed that EFI should approach Senate Education Committee (SEC) and also possibly SRFSG and any other relevant bodies to discuss the proposed arrangements for flexibility in duration of study further. There were a

range of philosophical and other questions raised here that required more of a discussion of the institutional position, before APRC could further engage.

- Once SEC and any other bodies had advised further, EFI could be invited to produce a Degree Programme Table for the lifelong learning programme. The Committee would be happy to have further discussion with EFI representatives as needed.

4. Online examination arrangements for 2021/22 (Paper B)

Dr Bunni presented this item. The paper discussed options relating to some aspects of the delivery of online examinations during centrally-scheduled exam diets in the 2021/22 session. Section A of the paper covered the length of time allowed for examinations, and Section B covered the handling of late submissions. The Committee discussed this paper in detail.

The Committee discussed the options in the paper and approved **option b. students should be offered an additional 1 hour for submission, with no further "silent window".**

Students' Association representatives noted that they understood that the consensus from the group was to approve option b) but that they would like it to be noted that their preference would have been for option c). Option c) would have involved a further 10 minutes being offered either as a "silent window" or a clearly-defined period for late submission.

In relation to the handling of late submissions, the following options were presented:

a. Schools must mark answers submitted late by students, where special circumstances have been accepted.
b. Schools must not mark exam answers submitted late by students, where special circumstances have been accepted, but should award a null sit and provide a further opportunity for assessment.
c. Schools can decide whether or not to mark exam answers submitted late on a case-by-case basis, where special circumstances have been accepted; late submissions should only be marked where Board of Examiners is satisfied that the student could not have gained an unfair advantage by submitting late.

The Committee were divided in opinion as to which of the above options to approve in relation to late submissions, and took a vote. There were 7 votes for option b. and 9 votes for option c.

The Committee approved **option c. Schools can decide whether or not to mark exam answers submitted late on a case-by-case basis, where special circumstances have been accepted; late submissions should only be marked where Board of Examiners is satisfied that the student could not have gained an unfair advantage by submitting late.**

5. Course Organiser: Outline of Role Update (Paper C)

Dr Bunni presented this item.

CAHSS had already been in touch with the author directly about some revised wording in section 2.4.

A Committee member asked whether 1.15 could be updated with reference to library resource lists, perhaps with links, for courses that use them. Dr Bunni agreed to pass this comment on to the author of the paper (Nichola Kett, Academic Services), to see if it was feasible for this to be included.

Subject to the above amendments, this paper was approved.

> **ACTION: Dr Adam Bunni to contact author the paper Nichola Kett, Academic Services) to pass on the Committee's comments about this paper.**

6. Programme and Course Handbooks Policy Update (Paper D)

Dr Bunni presented this item. A Committee member asked whether handbooks could include the name of the School Representative, since they were elected in March. Dr Bunni agreed to pass this on to the author of the paper (Nichola Kett, Academic Services), to see if it was feasible for this to be included.

Subject to the above amendments, this paper was approved.

> **ACTION: Dr Adam Bunni to contact author the paper Nichola Kett, Academic Services) to pass on the Committee's comments about this paper.**

7. College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference (Paper E)

Dr Bunni presented this item. The following comments/proposals were made:

- Terminology -"CSPC" and the "International Office" was mentioned on the front page instead of APRC and Edinburgh Global;

- Page 6 (appendix 1) near bottom of page – it referred to students studying abroad in year 3 twice, when one reference should be to studying abroad in year 3 and the second reference should be to students studying abroad in year 4 – e.g. it should refer to Year 4 when it referred to students studying abroad 33.3, 0, 66.6… ;

- There was a typo near the bottom of page 6 where "ration" was noted instead of "ratio".

Subject to the above amendments, this paper was approved.

> **ACTION: Academic Services (Stuart Fitzpatrick) to amend the Terms of Reference in the light of the Committee's comments and arrange for them to be published online.**

8. Taught Assessment Regulations (Paper F)

These proposed regulations for 2021/22 were approved as presented, subject to amendment of any typos and any other minor corrections. Academic Services would communicate the approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies, and cover any changes in relevant briefings.

[Following the meeting a further change to Taught Assessment Regulation 43 Special circumstances was made, with approval by Convener's Action. This was to include reference to the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service].

> **ACTION: Academic Services to publish Taught Assessment Regulations 2021/22**

9. Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2021/22 (Paper G)

These proposed regulations for 2021/22 were approved as presented, subject to amendment of any typos and any other minor corrections. Academic Services would communicate the approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies, and cover any changes in relevant briefings.

> **ACTION: Academic Services to publish Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2021/22**

10. Student Appeal Committee Membership 2021/22 (Paper H)

CAHSS colleagues noted that one of the members named had now left the University, so a replacement would need to be found. With the exception of this change, the paper was approved as presented.

11. Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy (Verbal Update)

Dr Antony Maciocia gave a verbal update on this item. This policy was due for revision, but there had been some recent discussions around PhD students and pay that may need to be reflected in this revision. The revised Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy would return to APRC for approval at a future date.

12. CSE: PUC Chile (CLOSED Paper I)

Alex Laidlaw presented this paper, and it was approved by the Committee.

13. Any Other Business

The Committee extended their sincere thanks to Professor Murray for his Convenership of APRC since January 2016. This would be Professor Murray's last meeting as Convener (and his last meeting of APRC). Dr Paul Norris was to take the Convener of APRC role from 1 August 2021.

The Committee also extended their sincere thanks to Dr Jeremy Crang for his role as Vice-Convener. Professor Judy Hardy was to take the Vice-Convener of APRC role from 1 August 2021.

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) special meeting
held online on Thursday 5 August 2021 at 10am**

Present:

Dr Paul Norris (Convener)	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Professor Jamie Davis	Dean of Education (CMVM)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration
Tara Gold	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Stuart Lamont	Academic Policy Co-ordinator, Students' Association
Charlotte Macdonald	Advice Place Manager
Rachael Quirk	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)

In Attendance:

Rosie Edwards	Student Systems and Administration
Roshni Hume (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Apologies for absence:

Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner (CMVM)	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)

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1. **International Student Attendance**

   Rosie Edwards presented this item. The committee was asked to consider and approve proposed changes to the Tier 4 Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy which was last updated in 2017. The proposed changes have been

made in order to account for a change in UKVI terminology, which has resulted in 'Tier 4' visas being replaced with 'Sponsored Student' visas. The Committee was also asked to approve proposed changes relating to the University of Edinburgh which reflect the expansion of the Student Immigration Service and the wider role that this now plays in supporting students with visas.

The Committee considered and approved the proposed changes. It was suggested that it would be helpful if a definition of the term 'sponsored student' could be added to the policy document to explain what the term means within the context of the University.

ACTION: Dr Adam Bunni and Rosie Edwards will incorporate a definition of 'sponsored student' into the policy document ahead of publishing the revised version.

2. **Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances**

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item. The Committee was asked to consider and approve proposed changes relating to coursework extensions and Special Circumstances. The proposed changes sought to make permanent some of the concessions which were put in place during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic sessions.

Coursework Extensions:

The Committee was asked to approve the curtailment of the concession allowing students to claim an automatic extension of up to 7 days as this had resulted in a significant increase in the volume of applications during the period covered by the concession in relation to the previous semester. It was also noted that the concession had a detrimental impact on the arrangements for the marking of and the return of assessments. It was highlighted that the existing provision in the regulation for students to request an extension based on a range of approved circumstances, and provide self-certification to support this was appropriate and therefore, no changes were proposed to this.

The Committee considered the points above and agreed to approve the proposed action, however, it was agreed that further discussion would be required at a future meeting in relation to the following issues which were raised during discussion:

- The volume of requests;
- How extension requests are being used;
- Feedback turnaround;
- Consistency of School action in response to requests

ACTION: Dr Adam Bunni and Sarah McAllister will discuss how best to communicate the changes to students and they will also seek to gather data in relation to the use of extensions and bring this to a future meeting of APRC for further discussion.

Extension requests for longer than 7 days

It was noted that some Schools had expressed a desire to offer extensions of longer than 7 days for dissertations and large projects, and to provide students with early assurances that these extensions have been approved. It was noted that this course of action was accounted for within Section 7.6 of the Special Circumstances Policy under Expedited Decisions, however, the Committee was asked to approve some wording which has been added to Section 10.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy to emphasise this.

The Committee noted that it may not currently be widely known that students can apply for extensions for longer than 7 days and it was agreed that students and staff should be made aware of this and that further information should be provided in relation to how students should apply for this. It was agreed that this information would be contained in a single e-mail communication outlining changes to the regulations. The Committee considered and approved the additional wording to section 10.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy. It was also agreed that the wording should be reflected with the Taught Assessment Regulations and should link back to the Special Circumstances Policy.

ACTION: Dr Adam Bunni will seek to add wording to the Taught Assessment Regulations in relation to extension requests for periods of longer than 7 days and will seek approval via Convener's action.

Special Circumstances – Evidence Requirements

The Committee was asked to consider making permanent, the following concessions in relation to providing evidence to support Special Circumstances applications which were put in place temporarily as a result of the pandemic:

- Students do not need to provide medical evidence in support of applications relating to health concerns.
- Students also do not need to provide formal documentary evidence (e.g. from government, or external agencies) to support other types of application

It was agreed that it would be difficult for students to obtain medical evidence going forward as a result of the pandemic and therefore, students should no longer be required to provide medical evidence in support of their applications. It was also agreed that statements from support staff should be given further weight when making a decision regarding a student's circumstances and that this should be reflected within the Special Circumstances Policy.

The Committee approved the proposed amendments.

Special Circumstances – Additional Grounds

The Committee was asked to consider making permanent, the following additional grounds which were added to the Special Circumstances during the pandemic

- Been required to carry out more paid work than usual, as a 'key worker' (e.g. in healthcare, retail, delivery);Experienced significant and prolonged problems with access to teaching and learning materials, e.g. due to connectivity, power, or equipment issues;
- Experienced catastrophic technical failure preventing submission of an online assessment by the relevant deadline;
- Experienced prolonged exposure to a difficult/challenging home environment;
- Experienced severe financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic;

- Experienced lack of access to library resources where there are no viable alternatives.

The Committee considered and approved the proposed amendments.

Late Special Circumstances Applications

The Committee was asked to consider amending the final deadline for late Special Circumstances applications from the final mark publication date to the earlier date of when marks have been input into the system but have not been published. This would allow Schools to handle Special Circumstances cases ahead of the final publication date.

The Committee had a discussion about the possibility of requiring students to submit Special Circumstances applications ahead of mark release. It was agreed that this would require further discussion at a later date.

The Committee approved the proposed amendment subject to a broader discussion around the issue at a later date.

3. **Special Circumstances – MSc Dissertations**

Dr Adam Bunni presented this item. The Committee were asked to consider whether College approval should continue to be required in order for students to re-submit a dissertation at MSc level. It was highlighted that this was currently the practice within Colleges.

The Committee agreed that this would require further discussion at a later date, however, highlighted that Colleges are able to devolve such decisions to Schools and should do this in the meantime. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at a future meeting of APRC ahead of the 2022/23 academic year.

Roshni Hume
11 August 2021

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 September 2021

CMVM: Proposal for an alternative third year in the MSc in Surgical Sciences Programme.

1. Description of paper
This paper is a proposal for an alternative 60 credit SCQF Level 11 Evidence Based Surgery course which has been designed to sit alongside the current final year, 60 credit MSc Surgical Sciences Dissertation course SURG11011.

The proposal will contribute to the key Strategy-2030 outcomes. It ensures that our online teaching is increasingly relevant to societies worldwide and underpins the University's desire to be diverse, inclusive and accessible to all. The proposal supports flexible whole-life learning, particularly for students on already established surgical career pathways who wish to pursue masters level education to support their professional and academic development; to better prepare for professional examinations and to gain a sound basis in evidence based surgical practice.
By offering a more structured and supported option in the third and final year of the programme, we will proactively support students to tailor their masters degree to their own developmental, educational, and career needs, consistent with the statement from the Strategy "*We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability...*"

By making the programme more attractive and accessible to prospective students globally, the new course should increase student applications and enrolment, particularly from low and middle income countries and may reduce student withdrawal on completion of the diploma year thereby increasing programme and University income. This proposal demonstrates that the programme team are prepared to adapt and work in new ways that are likely to increase interest from existing and new partners to develop further our increasingly strong scholarship programme that has added considerably to programme income over the last five years.

2. Action requested / recommendation
The author requests that the Committee discuss and give support for the 60 credit SCQF Level 11l Evidence Based Surgery course as an alternative to the currently offered Dissertation (Surgical Sciences) course.

3. Background and context
The MSc in Surgical Sciences was established by the University of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 2007 as a response to the changes in surgical training at that time. It was designed to support trainees in the early years of

surgical training by means of a three year, part-time, taught, online Masters programme (180 academic credits). It was structured to support the acquisition and application of the knowledge required to underpin basic surgical practice and to complement in the work-place experience relevant to the surgeon's professional development and professional examination during training (Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons, MRCS). The programme has been adopted globally by training surgeons, and for many has provided a solid career base for evidence based surgical practice in over 60 countries.

The programme, which attracts a high number of international students, is delivered to masters level (180 academic credits) although students may choose to graduate at postgraduate certificate (60 credits) or postgraduate diploma level (120 credits). Year 1 and 2 of the programme comprise a series of core 10 and 20 taught credit level courses that cover a similar curriculum to that required for the early years of professional surgical training and examination. More detailed information about the programme can be found at here and here.

There are around 80 students in Year 3 at any one time. Year 3 currently comprises a 60 credit Dissertation (Surgical Sciences) course. A number of students are challenged by the current year 3 format in that their working environment may not have a well-regulated or efficient system of securing ethical committee study approval. Their local situation may also not allow them readily to access or gather quality patient data, and they may not have the support of an experienced local project supervisor to provide appropriate guidance.

In response to this challenge, the programme team wish to make an amendment to the current third year, by introducing an additional 60 credit course (Evidence Based Surgery with two assessed components with specified percentages.This will allow students to gain experience of academic surgery writing and research methodology in a structured supported environment.

4. Discussion
See Appendix 1 for course proposal form.

The reasons for offering an alternative course are to:

1. Meet the recognised needs of students normally recruited to the programme, better prepare students for professional work and widen access by offering a more clinically orientated 'dissertation'
2. Enhance the programme and offer equity of access by increasing choice of final year courses, increasing student choice based on sound pedagogical design and reasoning.
3. Offer flexibility of learning in line with the University Strategy 2030.

The [MSc in Surgical Sciences](#) is a professional orientated part-time masters programme attracting a large number of international training surgeons who continue to work during postgraduate study.

The majority of Surgical Sciences students pursue masters level education to enhance their in-the-work-place training as well as to prepare for professional examinations, training milestones and to gain a sound basis in evidence based surgical practice that supports them throughout their career, rather than pursuing full time research or dedicated academic careers.

Currently students entering the third year of the MSc in Surgical Sciences have no choice of courses, undertaking a 60 credit Dissertation (Surgical Sciences) course ([SURG11011](#)).

This alternative Evidence Based Surgery course will enable students to still acquire an in-depth working knowledge of relevant research, to critically appraise or commission research and to develop the Quality Assurance Agency's [masters graduate attributes](#) of independence and self-regulation but in a manner that best suits their learning needs, the needs of their career and their future aspirations, irrespective of their global setting.

This alternative option would address feedback from a proportion of past students and supervisors who have highlighted the challenges of securing quality data, particularly in low and middle income health care settings

2. Enhance the Programme and offer Equity of Access to Alternative Master Level Courses
Offering an alternative to the current Dissertation (Surgical Sciences) course will help to mitigate the challenges that the dissertation course present to Surgical Sciences students, in particular students from resource restrained areas. These challenges include:

- Students local/home environments do not always have a well-regulated or efficient system of securing ethical committee study approval.
- Students local/home environments do not always allow access to gather quality patient data.
- Students do not always have the support of an experienced local project supervisor to provide appropriate guidance.

The alternative year 3 course will enhance the programme and increase access to the programme for students. Furthermore, the proposed course will offer a more structured level of support while still allowing students to develop and acquire the Quality Assurance Agency's [masters graduate attributes](#) of independence and self-regulation

The Evidence Based Surgery course will give students the opportunity to benefit from the flexibility already afforded to several long-standing PGT programmes.

3. Offer Flexibility of Learning in Line with the University Strategy 2030

The Evidence Based Surgery course supports the aims of the University Strategy 2030.

By offering a more structured and supported option, we will proactively support students to tailor their masters degree to their own developmental, educational, and career needs, consistent with the statement from the Strategy "*We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability..."*

It is anticipated that the Evidence Based Surgery course will reduce student withdrawal on completion of the diploma year, result in an increase external scholarship funding from existing and other potential partners, student applications and enrolment worldwide, particularly from low and middle income countries, thereby increasing University income.

University Regulations
The single 60 credit Evidence Based Surgery course is broken down into a 2 phase model.
- Phase 1: Foundations of Evidence Based Surgery
- Phase 2: Research Methodology and Evidence Based Surgery Project

This structure is aligned with the relevant regulation described in the Models for Degree Types document that states that PGT masters degrees must consist of "60 points at level 11 for the research/dissertation element, that demonstrate that the student can show proficiency in research and/or analytical skills relevant to advanced work in the discipline." and The *Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study document (Section 8) that states that "at least 180 credits of which a minimum of 150 are at SCQF Level 11".*

This structure is also consistent with the statement from the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee's proposals for PGT Master's without a dissertation or research project (SEC 20/21 3 C)
1. Programmes could seek to meet the requirement to produce a substantial, self-directed piece of work demonstrating proficiency in research or analytical skills through a different form of project:
- *This could consist of a clinical audit, a desk-based review of practice, or other form of enquiry.*
- *This could also include projects which are assessed in a modular fashion; It is expected that the depth of enquiry involved may not be achieved within a 20-credit course in isolation.*

The new course does not affect University taught assessment regulations regarding exit awards, and proposed criteria for the award of the Master's degree, Merit and Distinction, and aligns with arrangements already in place for the current year 3 Dissertation (Surgical Sciences) course.

Academic integrity is the same as all for normal University regulations.

Exception amendments will be reviewed at regular intervals.

5. Resource implications
All costs will be met from within existing budgets.

6. Risk management
This paper considers the option for flexibility in a masters level course for the MSc in Surgical Sciences programme, alongside the more current offering. Doing so could enhance the current offering to students; align more closely to students' educational, career and personal goals, and ensure resources, both staff and educational, are used to best advantage. Having an alternative final year course may also serve as a USP to attract new demographics of students to the University.

Failure to consider an alternative final year course option may result in students not gaining the most from their educational experience and importantly continues the current inequity as some students already have the option to undertake fully taught masters degrees.

7. Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals
The new course directly impacts SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG4 (Quality Education) by providing surgeons with world-class training in surgical specialties. By better preparing MSc Surgical Science students for professional work, widening access and offering flexibility we will directly combat the brain drain of skilled surgeons from resource restrained regions, increasing the number of surgeons on the ground while also increasing their ability to treat effectively conditions needing surgical intervention.

Additionally, the proposed course will also directly impact on SDG1(reduce poverty), and SDG8 (economic growth), as increasing investment in surgical care globally and in low resource settings has a direct impact on economic growth, welfare and capacity.

8. Equality & diversity
The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of all postgraduate teaching regardless of mode of delivery. The considerations outlined in this paper will enhance the equality and diversity experience for students on the MSc in Surgical Sciences programme.

9. Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
If the Paper is supported, the author will move to present the Paper at ARPC.
The MSc Surgical Sciences programme team will be responsible for overseeing the implementation from the academic year 2022/23. The implementation will be led by

Dr Susan Morrow, Deputy Programme Director, in collaboration with Professor James Garden (Edinburgh Surgery Online Director). The impact of any action taken will be evaluated and reported through regular programme reviews, student feedback and QA reviews.

Author

Name Dr Susan Morrow
Date: 25/08/2021

Presenter

Name Dr Susan Morrow

Freedom of Information *(Is the paper 'open' or 'closed')*
The paper is open

Appendix 1

MSc Surgical Sciences: Course Proposal Form

Course Name:	Evidence Based Surgery
Course Proposer:	Dr Susan Morrow
Have you confirmed that the appropriate resources are in place (finance, teaching staff, IT):	Yes
Have you confirmed that the appropriate support services are in place (library, computing services):	Yes
Normal Year Taken:	Postgraduate Year 3 (note this an online part-time MSc programme)
Course Level:	PG
Available to Visiting Students?*	No
Display in Visiting Student Prospectus:	Yes / No
SCQF Credits:	60
Credit Level[1]:	11
Home School:	Deanery of Clinical Sciences
Other School:	
Course Organiser:	Dr Susan Morrow
Course Secretary:	Ed Gamble
% not taught by this institution:	0
Collaboration Information:	Partnership with Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.
Total Contact Teaching Hours:	This course will be taught entirely by online learning.
Any costs to be met by students:	Students will be responsible for their computer equipment and internet access.
Pre-requisites (course name & code):	This is a supported alternative to the existing year 3 course SURG11011 Pre-requisites are: Year 1 (PgCert) courses: SURG11001, SURG11002, SURG11003, SURG11009, SURG11010 Year 2 (PgDip) courses: SURG11004, SURG11005, SURG11006, SURG11007, SURG11008
Co-requisites (course name & code):	None
Prohibited Combinations (course name & code):	None
Visiting Students Pre-requisites:	None

Summary Course Description:	The course will enable the student to deliver an evidence-based surgery project from conception to completion. The single 60 credit course is divided into 2 phases. • Phase 1: Foundations of Evidence Based Surgery • Phase 2: Research Methodology and Evidence Based Surgery Project Phase 1 equips students with a critical and reflective understanding of the research design process to enable them to develop a feasible research project and embark on it with confidence. Phase 2 (the research project) would involve the reliable planning, execution and development of a significant body of clinical or laboratory research to answer an evidenced-based question. The 60 credit course would develop further the ability to analyse published evidence and apply the principles of evidence-based medicine to the professional practice of surgery in a reliable/robust manner.
Keywords[2]:	Evidence based surgery, academic writing, research methodology, critical appraisal, data analysis, study design
Fee Code if invoiced at Course level:	
Default Course Mode of Study:	Online
Default Delivery Period:	Full Year
Marking Scheme:	Post-Graduate Common marking scheme
Taught in Gaelic:	NO
Course Type:	SLICC
Learning Outcomes:	On completion of this course students will be able to: 1. (Characteristic 1: Knowledge and understanding) Demonstrate a critical understanding of the concepts underpinning research methodology, critical appraisal, data analysis and academic writing 2. (Characteristic 2: Applied knowledge and understanding) Apply research methodology, data analysis and academic writing skills to develop a research question and plan a research project 3. (Characteristic 3: Cognitive skills) Critically appraise research literature and published evidence, and its uncertainty and complexity 4. (Characteristic 4: Communication, Information Communication Technology (ICT), numeracy)) Interpret, evaluate and present datasets to answer a research question, and effectively communicate findings 5. (Characteristic 5: Autonomy) Execute a research project with substantial autonomy
Special Arrangements:	Delivered via online distance learning
Components of Assessment (inc. % weightings):	Written Exam 0 %, Practical Exam 0 %, Coursework 100 % A blend of formative assessment (with early feedback) and summative assessment will be employed to help students better orient their efforts and come to understand what is expected of them as they progress through the course.

	Phase 1 (Assessment Weighting 30%) • Discussion Boards: Students will interact through group discussion boards in Learn throughout Phase 1. Engagement in discussion boards will be monitored. • Critical Review: Students will prepare a brief (around 500 words) critical review of a paper. • Promotional Article: Students will prepare a blog (around 500 words) to promote the critically reviewed paper. • Literature Review: Students will plan and execute a literature review to answer a research question that they will develop during Phase 1. This will be submitted in the required format for a journal of choice. **Phase 2 (Assessment Weighting 70%)** **Phase 2a Research Methodology (Assessment Weighting 20%)** • Visual abstract (infographic). Students will prepare a visual abstract (infographic) of their chosen research question and data collection plan. The visual abstracts will be submitted for presentation at an Edinburgh Surgery Online virtual conference. Students will be required to view visual abstract submitted by other students and give feedback. **Phase 2b Evidence Based Project (Assessment Weighting 50%)** • Evidenced Based Surgery Project report (maximum 5000 words) in a standard publication format. • Reflection: Students will write a reflection (750-1000 words) on the process of carrying out and writing up a research project.
Exam Information:	Not Applicable
Syllabus/Lecture List:	TBC
Course Description (academic description):	This is a online course worth 60 credits. The course will consolidate the knowledge and understanding gained from the first two years of study in the MSc in Surgical Sciences programme, in particular the Year 2 Academic Surgery course (SURG11008). In providing an opportunity to develop a critical understanding of academic writing and manuscript interpretation, the course will allow students to create an original research question, synthesise an evidenced-based answer (using an openly available dataset) and present this in the style of a manuscript that would be delivered in a format considered suitable for publication in a peer review journal. The topic, type of study and dataset to be used will be agreed with the student to support the planning, execution and development of the evidence-based surgery project. The subject matter must be relevant to an area of clinical surgery, and it is envisaged that students would consider a topic relevant to their chosen specialty area. This single 60 credit course will be delivered in 2 phases. • Phase 1: Foundations of Evidence Based Surgery • Phase 2: Research Methodology and Evidence Based Surgery Project **Phase 1 Foundations of Evidence Based Surgery** (10 weeks)

	Phase 1 will run over five 2-week blocks, with each block focusing on a particular topic.
	• Academic Writing • Constructing Research Questions and Critical Review • Literature Review (1) • Literature Review (2) & Promotion of Research Findings • Preparation of Abstracts & Manuscript for Publication and Summative Assessment Within each block a variety of learning activities will be employed to suit different learning styles and to create an engaged, interactive and collaborative community of learners. **Phase 2 Research Methodology and Evidence Based Surgery Project (**20 weeks) **Phase 2a Research Methodology** • Advanced Study Design • Data Collection and Data Analysis • Accessing and use of openly available datasets to formulate research questions • Data Presentation **Phase 2b Evidence Based Project** • Preparation and submission of a research evidence-based project.
Graduate Attributes, Personal and Professional Skills	During this course students will have to demonstrate the ability to work independently and integrate information gained in each of the year 1 and 2 MSc in Surgical Sciences courses. Their knowledge and understanding of surgical sciences will continue to develop. They will acquire an excellent working knowledge of relevant research, a critical understanding and application of the concepts underpinning research methodology, critical appraisal, data analysis and academic writing to enable them to execute a research project with substantial autonomy Effective participation and engagement with course materials and assessments will develop students' capacity to reflect effectively and critically, to communicate actively with tutors and other students, and to direct their learning so that their own self-identified learning needs are addressed.
Study Abroad:	N/A
Reading Lists / Learning Resources:	TBC
Convener of Board of Examiners:	TBC
Display in Visiting Student Prospectus:	
Course URL:	

URL for Additional Supporting Documents:	
Comments (Internal Use Only):	
High Demand:	

Learning and Teaching activities

To be completed by Course Organiser.

Lecture Hours	
Seminar/Tutorial Hours	
Dissertation Project Supervision Hours	
Supervised Practical/Workshop/Studio Hours	
Fieldwork Hours	
External Visit Hours	
Online Activities	
Feedback/Feedforward Hours	
Formative Assessment Hours	
Summative Assessment Hours	
Revision Session Hours	
Other Study Hours	
Programme Level Sch L&T Hours	12
Directed Learning and Independent Learning Hours	588
TOTAL HOURS	600 hours for 10 credits

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 September 2021

Study Abroad for one Semester: credit on aggregate

Description of paper
1. The paper considers an issue relating to the application of credit on aggregate in cases where undergraduate students study abroad for one semester only.

Action requested / recommendation
2. APRC is asked to consider the proposal summarised in section 14.

Background and context
3. A large number of undergraduate students spend a period of time studying at another institution abroad, either as a compulsory or optional part of their programme. Study abroad is usually for a whole year, in Year 3 of the programme, but can be for one semester only, with the other semester spent in Edinburgh. Students in Year 3 of most Honours programmes can be eligible for the award of up to 40 credits for failed courses by aggregation (i.e. where they have passed 80 credits, and have an average across all courses of 40%). Where students spend a single semester abroad, eligibility for credit on aggregate is calculated separately for each semester, in line with Taught Assessment Regulation 52.5:

   "52.5 Where a student studies abroad for a single semester in the junior Honours year, decisions regarding eligibility for credit on aggregate are made separately for the semester spent studying abroad and the semester spent in Edinburgh. Students are eligible for up to 20 credits to be awarded on aggregate in each semester, in line with the criteria above."

4. The ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic means that a larger-than-usual proportion of students are likely to spend one semester abroad in 2021/22, as opposed to the full year. This increases the likelihood that there will be students who fail more than 20 credits during their semester in Edinburgh. For students studying in Edinburgh in Semester 1, and abroad in Semester 2, this may mean they leave Edinburgh already unable to progress to Year 4 of their programme, based on the existing regulation.

5. Students studying abroad often return with transcripts in which they have either taken a lower credit volume of courses than they would in an equivalent year in Edinburgh, or in which they have failed some courses. These students may be awarded full credit for their period of study abroad by College Progression Boards through a process similar to credit on aggregate.

Discussion

6. It would be prohibitively complicated to design a process for determining eligibility for credit on aggregate which combines credit obtained abroad with credit obtained in Edinburgh in a seamless way. Conversion of grades between regimes is not straightforward, and decisions relating to credit deficits for periods of study abroad are allowed a reasonable amount of additional discretion, relative to decisions about UoE credit. However, the increasing likelihood of students failing more than 20 credits of UoE courses, or the equivalent volume of courses taken abroad, draws into focus a potential unfairness in their treatment, relative to the treatment of those who stay in Edinburgh for the full year, or study abroad for a full year.

7. The College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference (https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studyabroadcollegeboards-termsofreference.pdf) group students returning from periods of study abroad into the following categories:

    "Category 1: This comprises students who have undertaken a normal load of study (equivalent to 120 SCQF credits, as agreed in the Exchange Learning Agreement); who appear to have taken all courses at an appropriate level, and who have successfully passed all courses.

    Category 2: This comprises students who appear to have taken fewer courses than expected; or who have taken courses at a lower level; or who have failed elements of their programme abroad but still met the requirements of the University's Taught Assessment Regulations for the award of credit on aggregate or for the provision of a further assessment opportunity.

    Category 3: This comprises students who appear to have failed badly or for whom there are other problems with the transcript. For all such cases, the relevant Personal Tutor/Exchange Co-ordinator is asked to comment on the student's performance and is offered the opportunity of recommending how to proceed."

8. We would propose to relax by concession the rules around credit on aggregate for cases involving study abroad for a single semester, with a view to amending the regulation for 2022/23. While separate calculations for eligibility for credit on aggregate should still be carried out for each semester, we would propose that students who have failed 30 or 40 credits of UoE courses may be able to compensate for this based on the attainment of credit for study abroad. Likewise, students who have passed a full complement of UoE courses but fall into Category 3 for their study abroad may be eligible to receive more than the equivalent of 20 credits (10 ECTS) on aggregate for their study abroad.

Categories

9. There are options regarding which students may be considered eligible for compensation, and how this may be calculated. It seems reasonable that, at a minimum, students who fall into Category 1 above, may be able to qualify for the

award of credit on aggregate for up to 40 credits for their UoE courses. This would place them in a similar position to their peers who stay in Edinburgh for the full year, since they have achieved passes in the full complement of their courses taken abroad.

10. With regard to Category 2 students, if they have failed 30 or more of their UoE credits, they are unlikely to be in a position to compensate this via their study abroad, unless they have failed (or have a credit deficit of) as few as 5 ECTS.

11. On this basis, we would propose that only Category 1 students are considered eligible to compensate for failure in 30 or 40 credits of UoE courses.

12. With regard to students' ability to compensate for failure in courses taken abroad through performance in UoE courses, as stated above, the approach taken to credit on aggregate is more flexible for non-UoE credit than it is for UoE courses. However, we would propose that College Progression Boards should take into account performance in UoE courses during students' semester in Edinburgh when determining eligibility for the award of credit for Category 3 students. For example, where a student falls into Category 3 on the basis that they have failed half of their courses completed abroad (e.g. equivalent to 30 UoE credits, or 15 ECTS), but passed all 60 credits of their study in Edinburgh, they may be awarded full credit for their study abroad.

Calculation

13. Eligibility for the award of credit on aggregate is based on achieving an average of 40% across all courses, including any failed courses. Where students have failed 40 of 60 credits' worth of courses in a semester, there is the potential that their average may dip below 40%. As explained above, it is unlikely to be possible to calculate an average for courses that combines UoE and non-UoE courses. It may be reasonable to assign a passing mark to the courses awarded credit for study abroad. However, assigning a mark of 40% for the credits attained abroad is unlikely to significantly improve the average for courses overall. Assigning any higher mark would either need to be based on a stable conversion of marks, or would be arbitrary.

14. On this basis, we would propose that the options are either:

   i. continue to require an average of 40% across the UoE courses, including any failed courses; or
   ii. require a lower average across the UoE courses (provided the student has passed 20 credits of UoE courses and is Category 1 for their study abroad), for example of 30%.

Summary

15. The proposal is to continue to calculate eligibility for credit on aggregate separately for a semester spent abroad and a semester spent at UoE, in line with TAR 52.5. **However**:
    a. where a student fails 30 or 40 credits of UoE courses, they will be allowed to progress provided they fall into Category 1 for their study abroad, **and** have achieved an average of 40% or 30% (depending on the Committee's view regarding section 14) across the courses taken in their semester at UoE.
    b. Where a student has passed all 60 credits during their semester in UoE, but is placed in Category 3 for their study abroad, they may be awarded full credit for their study abroad, provided their credit deficit is roughly equivalent to no more than 40 UoE credits (20 ECTS).

APRC is asked to consider this proposal.

Resource implications
16. The additional consideration which would need to be given to students affected by the proposal would require time from professional services staff in Schools, and Boards of Examiners responsible for programmes. However, this is likely to affect only a very small volume of cases, so the overall impact should be minimal.

Risk management
17. The proposal does not present any significant risks, since it suggests academic requirements for affected students which are broadly equivalent to those applying to other students in the same year of study.

Equality & diversity
18. The proposal does not carry likely impacts for students in any particular protected characteristic groups.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
19. If the proposal is approved, Academic Services will prepare a communication for sharing with Schools via Colleges.

Author
Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Academic Services

Presenter
Dr Adam Bunni
Head of Academic Policy and Regulation
Academic Services

Freedom of Information

Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 September 2021

Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2021/22

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an overview of the Students' Association Vice President Education's priorities for the academic year 2021/22.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information.

Background and context

3. In March 2021, Tara Gold was elected as the Students' Association's Vice President Education for the academic year 2021/22. This paper outlines her priorities for the year ahead, including key areas of work.

Discussion

4. Over the coming year, Tara will be focusing on the following priority areas:

Strengthening the University's response to the pandemic

Covid has had an incalculable impact on student's lives; their academics, mental health, and finances, all of which needs to be kept in mind as we return to campus. Marginalised students have been particularly adversely affected throughout the pandemic, necessitating increased consideration of their perspectives and needs. The shift to online learning has also presented an opportunity to improve the accessibility.

Tara will work to strengthen the University's Covid response by prioritising the centring of student voices in decision making and planning, advocating for measures to support students who have missed essential components of their degrees, and working to ensure progress on accessibility is not lost in the return to on-campus activity.

Modernising Edinburgh's curriculum

Events in recent years have increasingly highlighted the decreasing suitability of Edinburgh's curriculum for students. Furthermore, while the topic of decolonisation has been highlighted as an area of activity, the University is yet to enact decolonisation efforts across its educational offering, which is central to the creation of an educational experience that reflects the University's values. *The Curriculum*

Transformation Project represents an opportunity to reimagine the curriculum, to help it reflect the world we live in now and the unique challenges we face in it.

Through *The Curriculum Transformation Project,* Tara will prioritise supporting student engagement and involvement in the programme's work and outputs. Centrally, ensuring the perspectives of students from marginalised backgrounds are heard and supported is a priority in creating an inclusive and accessible curriculum. Tara will push for strong engagement of the project in decolonisation work, and the integration of modes of accountability on decolonial activity into its operation, to ensure alignment between values and educational delivery. Tara will also work to establish processes for future processes of curriculum transformation, creating more opportunities for student-staff collaboration so that learners have an active role in shaping the education they want and need. Another key focus will be integrating recognition of broader aspects of the university experience into the curriculum, such as internships, studying abroad, student activism and research.

Increasing transparency, responsibility, and accountability

Tara will prioritise fostering more transparency, responsibility and accountability from the University and its structures to improve the student experience. Complex and opaque University processes create additional burdens on students, particularly when dealing with difficult circumstances, often exacerbating pre-existing inequities. Tara will work on improving the navigability of University structures for students, particularly student support services, advocating for better co-ordination between services and clearer student communications of available support and how to access it.

Tara will also work with stakeholders to make the University's structures more accountable on issues important which are important to students, such as sustainability and ethical partnerships, and will advocate for the strengthening of reporting procedures, support structures, and policy protections for marginalised students in academic spaces.

Risk management

5. To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

Equality & diversity

6. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of the Students' Association's work, and this paper reflects that. Equality and diversity implications will be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

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

7. To be agreed if specific actions arise from the paper.

Author

Stuart Lamont
Academic Policy Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association
03/09/21

Presenter

Tara Gold
Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association

Freedom of Information

This paper is open.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 September 2021

APRC Membership and Terms of Reference 2021/22

Description of paper
1. APRC membership and Terms of Reference for 2021/22.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For information.

Background and context
3. Annual paper that is presented at the first meeting of the year for Senate committees.

Discussion
4. No further changes proposed for the Terms of Reference (they had some very minor edits at Senate in June 2021).

Resource implications
5. There are resource implications with regard to attendance at meetings and any required follow-up.

Risk management
6. No key risks.

Equality & diversity
7. No major equality impacts.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. Membership and Terms of Reference are available online at:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/academic-policy-regulations/members
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/academic-policy-regulations/terms-reference

Author
Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services
15 September 2021

Freedom of Information
Open

Committee membership of APRC 2021/22

Name	Position/School	Composition	Term of Office
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, CAHSS	Convener	Ex Officio
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)	College representative	
Rachael Quirk	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)	College representative	
Kirsty Woomble	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)	College representative (PGR)	
Professor Judy Hardy	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)	Vice-Convener and College representative	
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)	College representative	
Alex Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)	College representative	
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE)	College representative (PGR)	
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)	College representative	
Professor Jamie Davies	Dean of Taught Education (CMVM)	College representative	
Dr Deborah Shaw	Dean of Students (CMVM)	College representative	
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)	College representative (PGR)	
Tara Gold	Vice President Education, Students' Association	Students' Association sabbatical officer	Ex Officio
Charlotte Macdonald	Advice Place Deputy Manager, Students' Association	Students' Association	
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)	IAD	
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team	Academic Services	
Sarah McAllister	Student Systems and Administration	Student Systems and Administration	Ex Officio

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

23 September 2021

Review of Senate Committees Effectiveness 2020/21

Description of paper

1. This paper provides the results of and proposed actions in response to the review of the effectiveness of the Senate Standing Committees conducted in summer 2021.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to consider the results of the review and, while recognising the low response rate, to APPROVE the proposed actions in section 4 of the Appendix. These will aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance in 2021/22.

3. The results of the effectiveness review and agreed actions will be reported to the 20 October 2021 meeting of Senate.

Background and context

4. In summer 2021, Academic Services carried out a primarily self-reflective review of the effectiveness of the Senate Standing Committees. Members' input was requested across the themes of:

   a. Remit
   b. Composition
   c. Support
   d. Engagement
   e. Impact of the Committees' work

5. Information on the Senate Standing Committees' remits and memberships can be found at https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

6. The response rate was low across all three Committees (14 replies in total), but there are potentially some common themes in relation to remits, communication and equality, diversity and inclusion.

7. Committee Conveners discussed the results of the review at a meeting on 24 August 2021 and, with Committee Secretaries, have proposed relevant actions for the year ahead.

Discussion

8. The results of the review and proposed actions in response can be found in the Appendix.

Resource implications

9. The recommended actions will require coordination by Committee Secretaries in Academic Services as part of their established roles in supporting Conveners and the cycle of committee business.

Risk management

10. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Equality & diversity

11. Conveners have noted the particular comments made by respondents in this area. It is recognised that the level of diversity in the composition of the Senate Committees is largely driven by the diversity of the College, School and Professional Services posts from which Committee members are drawn. Conveners will continue to monitor the composition of their respective Committees and work with colleagues to continually improve diversity.

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

12. Any amendments arising from the Senate Committees' discussions of this paper will be incorporated into the final version presented to Senate on 20 October 2021.

Author

Director of Academic Services
6 September 2021

Freedom of Information - Open

Senate Committee Effectiveness Review 2020/1

Analysis of feedback by Committee

1. Senate Education Committee (SEC)

SEC currently has 23 members. 7 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit**

  Respondents broadly agreed that the remit of the Committee is clear and the scope appropriate. However, it was suggested that:
  - there would be benefit in separating out discussion relating to the student experience and wellbeing by establishing a separate committee for this.
  - SEC's responsibility for Curriculum Transformation (CT) should be clarified.
  - the extent to which SEC has ownership of learning and teaching strategy and governance in COVID and post-COVID planning should be clarified.

  Respondents broadly agreed that the Committee has responded effectively to the challenges of changes in priority. However it was noted that:
  - in relation to managing the move to hybrid learning during the pandemic, there would have been benefit in the Committee meeting more regularly to pick up work. The view was expressed that SEC or task / working groups of SEC could have taken on some of the work undertaken by Adaptation and Renewal (ART).

  One respondent disagreed that the Committee makes effective use of task groups.

- **Governance and Impact**

  All respondents understood how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and considered there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

  One respondent disagreed that there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and one respondent did not agree that the Committee makes the desired impact. In relation to impact it was noted that:
  - this is lacking because there are not clear lines of communication for key outcomes and decisions. The respondent noted that the Senate Committees' Newsletter should not be relied upon to convey all important information.
  - this would be increased if the Committee were to meet more frequently (although the respondent noted the potential workload challenges associated with this). For example, it was noted that the shift to hybrid learning had broadly been managed by groups outside of the Senate Committees' structure (ART). This left colleagues feeling that Senate and its Committees did not have sufficient oversight or opportunities to influence decision-making around hybrid learning.

- **Composition**

  Respondents were satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee broadly enables it to operate effectively. However, it was suggested that:

- o there may be benefit in reviewing the Committee's use of co-opted members. Co-option of members of Senate itself was suggested, particularly for task group or shorter-term work.
- o the Committee is probably too large to be as agile as it would like, although it was recognised that it is important to have representation from across the institution, and that the University is large.

- **EDI**

  The majority of respondents did not agree that the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population. It was suggested that:
  - o there would be benefit in having more student voices on the Committee.
  - o the lack of diversity is a difficult issue to tackle given that the majority of members are on the Committee because of their roles within Colleges / Schools / Support Services. The University needs to consider how lack of diversity can be addressed across the institution. Asking representatives of minority groups to sit on every University committee is not the answer to addressing EDI concerns.

  One respondent disagreed that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business:
  - o EDI issues are too often addressed as 'tick box exercises' and not given proper consideration.

- **Role**

  Respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

  Two respondents did not feel that they had received an effective induction when they joined the Committee.

- **Communications**

While the majority of respondents felt that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders and that they had a clear understanding of their role as a representative of their College or Group, around half of respondents did not have a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. It was noted that:
- o the Committee does not tend to discuss how and when information should be disseminated by members.
- o while every effort is taken to communicate with stakeholders, not all parts of the University feel that they are adequately informed and as involved as they would wish to be. It is, however, difficult to know how to tackle this problem, and may be an inevitability in an institution of this size.

- **Support**

All respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail. It was however noted that:
- o even though papers are detailed, members do not always have a full understanding of the way in which decisions will be implemented. It is not possible to anticipate all potential aspects / problems.

2. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

SQAC currently has 13 members. 2 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit**

Respondents agreed that the remit of the Committee is clear, that it has adapted well to changes to priorities and uses its task groups effectively. However, it was suggested that:
  - *The extent to which the Committee can escalate concerns discovered through the quality processes or act if responses received are inadequate, is unclear (eg. concerns about responses to thematic reviews). Furthermore, some key policy decisions relating to quality seem to lie outside the Committee's remit (eg. amendments to assessment regulations).*

- **Governance and Impact**

All respondents understood how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and considered there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

One respondent disagreed that there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and one respondent did not agree that the Committee makes the desired impact. In relation to impact it was noted that:
  - *Information flows smoothly between different governance levels vertically. But it is not clear that information flows horizontally to adjacent committees (eg Senate Education Committee) or that SQAC insights are taken into account when determining strategic priorities.*

- **Composition**

Respondents were satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee enables it to operate effectively.

- **EDI**

The respondents were split on whether the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population. The dissenting response suggested that:
  - *We do not seem to be representative of the University population in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, or disability. We do consider E&D regularly, but this may be driven by the interests of current committee members. It's not clear that this would be sustained or that it is integral to the business of the committee.*

- **Role**

Respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

- **Communications**

The respondents felt that they had a clear understanding of their role as a representative of their College or Group and had a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. However, one respondent disagreed that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders, noting that:
  - *Email communications to key stakeholders are always clear and well directed, but more widely SQAC still seems to be mysterious outside of a small group who*

are involved in quality work. Communications through Teaching Matters and newsletters have improved the Committee's reach, but I doubt that many read the PDFs of committee minutes. There is much to be done to make it easier for stakeholders to learn about the Committee's work. Hopefully the digital maturity project will assist with this issue.

- **Support**

All respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail.

One response noted that:
- *Academic Services support for this committee has been outstanding, consistently.*

3. Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

APRC currently has 16 members. 5 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit, Governance and Impact**

All respondents strongly agree that the remit of the Committee is clear and appropriate.

All respondents strongly agree that the Committee has adapted effectively to challenges of changes in priority.

Two respondents disagree that the Committee uses task groups effectively. However it was noted:

- Whilst APRC has not had many task groups recently, this has been appropriate to needs.

All respondents understand how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and consider there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

All respondents agree there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and that the Committee makes the desired impact based on its remit and priorities.

- **Composition**

All respondents are satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit and to operate effectively. It was noted:

- APRC covers some highly complex regulatory areas of practice. There are some highly experienced and knowledgeable colleagues on the committee as well as less experienced colleagues. Many of the issues dealt with on APRC require good knowledge of regulations and we rely on the diversity of the membership to cover the expertise necessary.

- **EDI**

All respondents agree that the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population, and that they are satisfied that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business. However it was noted:

  o Representation for EDI can always be improved and should be reviewed regularly. The current committee is pretty good but there is always room for improvement.

  o As with many University committees, APRC could welcome more colleagues from BME backgrounds, and with other protected characteristics.

- **Role**

All respondents feel they have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

One respondent does not feel that they received an effective induction when they joined the Committee. It was noted:

  o Some issues brought to APRC are highly specialist and it might be helpful for there to be some checks that all terminology or current practice is understood by committee members before debate. However, often colleagues are invited to present their papers and this can add clarity, or the chair (or another committee member) explains terms.

- **Communications**

All respondents are satisfied that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders, and they have a clear understanding of their role on the Committee as a representative of their area.

All respondents feel they have a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. It was noted:

  o It was unclear how widely colleagues at the University understand the remit of APRC and other senate committees. The newsletters summarising business covered by the committees is a very helpful contribution to sharing more about the work of the committees and thereby making it easier for colleagues to understand what we do.

- **Support**

All respondents feel that the Committee is effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail. It was however noted that:

  o Sometimes implementation plans are a little thin.

  o The volume of papers is usually quite big for this committee, but it is understood why.

4. Suggested Actions in light of responses (combined)

A combined analysis of the answers to the review questions suggests the following recommended actions:

Area Under Review	Recommended Action	Responsible	Date
Remit	1. Student Experience to be included as a standing item on SEC agendas in 2021/22.	Secretary to SEC	New academic year
	2. Curriculum Transformation to be included as a standing item on SEC agendas in 2021/22.	Secretary to SEC	New academic year
	3. SQAC and SEC to consider triggers for escalation and relationship with University Executive	Conveners' Forum	Next meeting
Composition	4. Senate to receive discussion paper on this topic at a later date.	Academic Services to take forward with the Senate Convener.	TBC
Governance & Impact	5. Each Committee to discuss more explicitly at the time how decisions taken will be implemented / communicated / impact evaluated.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting
	6. Authors of papers to be encouraged to make better use of the 'Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed' section of the paper template.	Conveners / Secretaries / paper authors	Every meeting
	7. Each committee to consider more effective use of short-life working / tasks groups	Conveners / Secretaries	Ongoing
EDI	8. Each committee to ensure proactive consideration of EDI for all papers, discussion and decision-making.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting
	9. Senate to receive a discussion paper on 'composition', including EDI, at a later date.	Academic Services to take forward with the Senate Convener.	TBC

Role	10. Each Committee to consider effective induction for members and implement revised approaches as required	Conveners / Secretaries	Start of new academic year and for any member appointed mid-year
Communications	11. Each committee to be more explicit at each meeting about the way in which decisions will be communicated.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting