The University of Edinburgh

Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) held at 2.00pm on Thursday 24 January 2019 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

Present:

Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Claire Vallance	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Ellie Tudhope	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development
Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration
Diva Mukherji	Vice President Education Students' Association

In attendance:

Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Miss Theresa Sheppard	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Apologies for absence:

Professor Alan Murray	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Antony Maciocia	Representative of Researcher Experience Committee
Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Dr Juliette MacDonald	Edinburgh College of Art
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 22 November 2018 were **approved** as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

a. Electronic Business – Distance Learning at Scale Background Paper
The Committee noted that it had received as an item of electronic business an update on Distance Learning at Scale, which included some background information on the project in advance of an anticipated paper in 2019.

b. Senate Committee Planning
The Committee noted that Academic Services had fed comments received from members on issues to consider for the planning round into the planning process.

3. Academic Year Dates (CSPC 18/19 3 A)

The Committee noted the analysis provided by the Head of Timetabling and Examination Services and Academic Services. The paper acknowledged that, according to current

projections, the revision and examination diet in Semester 1 2020 would be truncated, and provided five options to mitigate the impact of this for the examination timetable for Semester 1 2020.

The data showed that there was an upward trend in the number of examinations conducted in Semester 1, which had contributed to an increase in the number of days required for the examination period. In view of this upward trend, it was likely that the solution which would ultimately be agreed by the Committee would apply to future years, and that the circumstances of 2020/21 (which mirrored those that had applied in 2015/16) would be repeated more regularly.

With this in mind, the Committee noted several factors which would need further examination in the longer term in order to address the issue: whether any courses could change their methods for assessment to place less reliance on examinations, and what the mechanism for exploring this would be; the possibility of reducing the number of administrative tasks which students needed to undertake in Welcome Week, with a view ultimately to reducing the length of the week; and the possibility of undertaking examinations in January.

With regard to the arrangements for 2020/21, the Committee discussed the five options, noting the following points:
- A reduction of the revision period would have an adverse impact on students' ability to prepare for examinations.
- Scheduling a greater number of examinations at weekends, including the use of Sundays, would place pressure on support teams and not provide the flexibility to address unforeseen issues.
- Extending the hours of examinations into the evening would not be possible, because it would not allow extra time for students who required it.
- Requesting that Schools redistribute examinations from Semester 1 to the May diet should be avoided, since this would directly contradict previous work by the Committee in this area.

The Committee noted that additional space for examinations (e.g. renting space from private providers) might reduce the time required for the examination period in the short term. It requested that the Head of Timetabling and Examination Services conduct further modelling to determine how much space the University would require, and at what cost, to enable this.

The Committee noted that a breakdown by School of existing data on the increase in examinations, and further data on the impact of the number of course combinations on timetabling, would inform the discussion on the possible reduction of examinations carried out in Semester 1.

The Committee approved the overall academic year dates for 2020/21 and provisional academic year dates for 2021/22 and 2022/23, since these dates were not specific as to the length of the revision/examination period. The Committee accepted that there was no realistic option of changing the start dates for Semester One or Two, or of reducing the number of teaching weeks.

Action: Head of Timetabling and Examination Services to undertake further examination timetable modelling for consideration by the Committee in March.

4. Proposed Amendments to the Code of Student Conduct (CSPC 18/19 3 B)

Dr Bunni introduced the paper which proposed amendments to the Code of Student Conduct. The amendments were principally designed to equip the University to deal more appropriately with allegations of serious misconduct.

The Committee discussed the amendments and made suggestions for minor alterations to the wording, including the following:
- The Committee requested clarification around the postponement of student discipline committee hearings, to include a statement that 'where possible' the student should request a postponement by a defined period ahead of the meeting.
- The Committee recommended that more detailed guidance be produced around resolving cases at the frontline without the need for investigation.

The Committee approved the proposed amendments to the Code, subject to the suggested adjustments.

5. Postgraduate Assessment and Progression (CSPC 18/19 3 C)

Dr Bunni introduced the paper, which provided an update on the matters of Postgraduate Assessment and Progression covered in the initial Task Group final report (CSPC 17/18 6 B) and the further benchmarking information, analysis of potential implications and proposals for further work which were presented to CSPC on 20 September 2018 (CSPC 18/19 1 E).

After discussion of the potential models and considerations, the Committee agreed that it wished to proceed in exploring Model C – retaining the current pass marks whilst removing the progression hurdle (average of 50 over 120 credits, passing a minimum of 80 credits). The Committee noted that this further work would require wider consultation and clarity around the implications of the removal of the progression hurdle for borderline students.

> **Action:** Academic Services to work with colleges and other stakeholders on the consultation on, and analysis of, Model C.

6. Extension to the PUC Chile Collaboration Agreement (CSPC 18/19 3 D CLOSED)

The Committee approved the creation of a new dual award, via the extension of the Memorandum of Agreement with PUC Chile, to cover PhD work in the area of Informatics (in addition to the current arrangement relating to Engineering).

7. Collaborative provision: assessment requirements for ANTHUSIA Joint PhD candidate (CSPC 18/19 3 E – CLOSED)

The Committee approved the non-standard assessment arrangements for ANTHUSIA joint Edinburgh/Aarhus/Oslo PhD candidates, noting that the second clause in the following wording contradicted the University of Edinburgh's regulations and should be removed from the agreement: "The examiners will submit a pre-viva report, including the recommendation to hold a viva."

8. **Collaborative provision: use of Edinburgh credits to award a Master's degree (University of Lucerne) (CSPC 18/19 3 F – CLOSED)**

The Committee approved the use of University of Edinburgh credits gained on the LLM degree towards the awarding of the Master of Law degree in Lucerne.

The Committee agreed that equivalent agreements would not need scrutiny by CSPC in future, with the exception of any proposal to double count the dissertation or research element.

9. **'New route to MBChB' – MBChB for Healthcare Practitioners, HCP – MBChB (CSPC 18/19 3 G – CLOSED)**

The Committee considered the proposal for the programme, which would offer graduates with other types of healthcare degree a streamlined route to a full degree in Medicine. The programme proposed to incorporate non-standard arrangements, which included non-standard academic years and 90 credit, whole-year courses in years 1, 2, and 3.

The Committee was broadly supportive of the proposed programme but agreed that a range of points including the following would require further scrutiny by a short-term dedicated task group in which all colleges would be represented:
- The equivalence between the clinical years in the proposed programme and the standard MBChB
- The entry requirements and the relationship with students' ability to access the intercalated year of the programme
- The impact of the credit volume on whether students would be part-time in the first three years of the programme
- The proposal to conduct whole-year courses in the first three years of the programme.

Action: Academic Services to arrange a one-off dedicated task group to address the outstanding issues.

10. **Degree Classification Outcomes (CSPC 18/19 G H)**

The Committee noted the publication of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment report, which looked at the reasons behind the increase in the number of graduates receiving first and upper-second class degrees. It noted that the University was invited to respond to a consultation, setting out a range of recommendations for sector-level actions to protect public confidence in the value of the honours degree classification system. Tom Ward provided an overview of the key points in the University's planned response to the consultation and the Committee indicated that it was supportive of the position. Further comments could be submitted after the meeting to Academic Services by email.

11. **Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update and Discussion of Contextualised Themes (CSPC 18/19 3 I)**

The Committee noted the preparations for the 2020 ELIR, and observed in discussion that each theme should identify a programme of work relating to postgraduate research.

12. **Programme and Course Information Management (PCIM) Project (CSPC 18/19 3 J)**

Sarah Harvey, Design Lead and Sarah McAllister, Project Sponsor for PCIM, attended the meeting and presented the paper.

The Committee noted that it would be important for the project to future-proof the University's business processes and systems by ensuring they are agile enough to accommodate key emerging types of provision, such as interdisciplinary programmes and credit-bearing CPD.

The Committee supported the direction of the PCIM project and commented on the impact which it would have on University policy. It noted that the Project Sponsor would bring more detailed proposals for the design of the project to CSPC at its meeting in March.

13. Support for Study (CSPC 18/19 3 K)

Gavin Douglas introduced the paper, which proposed revisions to the Support for Study Policy, following its introduction in 2015. The paper identified several issues with the Support for Study Policy and invited CSPC to support proposed changes to address these, and identify further issues for consideration.

In discussion, the Committee noted that the Students' Association did not support the introduction of Stage 3 to the process; it requested anonymised case studies to put this proposal into context, and the Students' Association agreed to circulate a paper which would provide further background on its concerns about this proposal.

The Committee noted that it would review the final version of the Policy at its meeting on 21 March, with a view to considering giving formal approval for its commencement in the academic year 2019/20. The Committee suggested that it have oversight of the data around the operation of the process in order that it would be able to monitor the impact of the changes on an ongoing basis, in the event that it approves the introduction of the changes.

> **Action:** Gavin Douglas to provide anonymised case studies to support the final proposals for the Policy.
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> **Action**: The Students' Association to circulate background paper.

14. Service Excellence, Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Update (CSPC 18/19 3 L)

The Committee noted the decision by the SA&S Board to push back the go-live date for Special Circumstances and Extensions of Coursework to July 2020.

15. Assessment and Progression Tools Update (CSPC 18/19 3 M)

Lisa Dawson introduced the paper, which informed the Committee that fewer resources had been available to the Student Systems Partnership to assign to the Assessment and Progression Tools project since September 2018, which had resulted in delays in delivering critical issues.

The Committee formally noted its concern that the lack of resourcing would have a significant impact, beyond the APT project, on the University's ability to act strategically

and make necessary changes to student systems to support the implementation of policy and regulation.

Action: Academic Services to convey the Committee's response to the Service Excellence Project Sponsor, Gavin Douglas.