**Meeting of the Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
to be held online on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 2.00pm**

A G E N D A

1.	**Minutes of the previous meeting held online on 21 January 2021**	Enclosed
2.	**Matters Arising**	

   a) **Electronic Business – PGT Concession (credit on aggregate vs progression) 21 January 2021-15 February 2021; Additional time allowance for 24-hour duration examinations 24 February 2021-28 February 2021.**

For Discussion

3.	**Edinburgh Futures Institute Postgraduate Taught Programmes: preliminary discussion about potential opt-outs for regulations**	APRC 20/21 3A
4.	**Una Europa PhD in Cultural Heritage**	CLOSED B (TO FOLLOW)
5.	**Covid-19: further mitigation measures; Board of Examiners guidance**	APRC 20/21 3C
6.	**PhD by Research Oral Examinations by Video Link**	APRC 20/21 3D
7.	**CSE: Extensions to Correction Periods in Doctoral Degrees**	APRC 20/21 3E
8.	**CAHSS: Non-standard academic year for Executive MBA Part-Time**	APRC 20/21 3I
9.	**CMVM: Online Postgraduate Taught Programmes (proposed amendment to start of academic year 2021/22)**	APRC 20/21 3F
10.	**Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22**	APRC 20/21 3G
11.	**Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22**	APRC 20/21 3H

For information and formal business

12.	**Convenership and Vice-Convenership of APRC from 1 August 2021**	Verbal Update
13.	**Any Other Business**	

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Minutes of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) meeting held online on Thursday 21 January 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)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Director of Academic and Student Administration (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)
Dr Paddy Hadoke	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President Education, Students' Association
Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, 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:

Lisa Dawson	Director, Student Systems and Administration
Rosie Edwards	Student Systems and Administration
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Professor Edward Hollis	Deputy Dean of Research (CAHSS)
Ailsa Taylor (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

   The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

2. **Matters Arising**

Electronic business and Convener's Action had been conducted since the last meeting on 24 September 2020 as follows:

a) Electronic Business - Special Circumstances and Covid-19 (14-19 October 2020), CAHSS PUC Chile (18 November – 25 November 2020), Virtual Boards of Examiners - concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations (23-26 November 2020)

b) Convener's Action - CSE Mathematics PUC Chile (23 October 2020), approval of the Expected Behaviour Policy (8 October 2020)

Item 11 Any Other Business (24 September 2020):

Reference was made to the late paper that was circulated in advance of the last meeting by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in relation to advice for staff about authorised interruption of studies. It was agreed by the Committee that a more permissive approach to authorised interruption of studies than that approved at the last APRC meeting may be more acceptable in the current circumstances.

3. **Una Europa Joint PhD in Cultural Heritage (CLOSED A)**

Professor Edward Hollis and Kirsty Woomble presented this closed paper. The Committee provided feedback for the UoE Una Europa team on the proposals.

APRC were satisfied that the proposals were in line with existing University of Edinburgh approaches to collaborative PhD programmes, and satisfied that the proposals adequately safeguarded the academic standards and student experience expectations of the University of Edinburgh. If the final arrangements for the joint PhD programme were in line with the draft proposals presented, APRC agreed that these could be approved by APRC by Convener's action.

4. **Board of Examiners 2020 Resilience Survey Analysis (APRC 20/21 2B)**

This paper was presented by Lisa Dawson, Student Systems and Administration and provided the Board of Examiners 2020 Resilience project post-project survey analysis. The paper was approved by the Committee, with the caveat that there needed to be a cross-check with the proposals to mitigate the impact of covid-19 on student assessment (both Paper G and a late circulated paper on covid-19 and student assessment by Professor Harrison).

5. **Mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on student assessment (CLOSED G)**

The Committee agreed to re-order the agenda to take the closed paper (Paper G) on mitigating the impact of covid-19 on student assessment at this point. This paper considered some further measures which may be appropriate to mitigate the ongoing impact of the pandemic on students' performance in assessment in the current 2020/21 session.

Another paper had been circulated on behalf of Professor Tina Harrison to APRC members in advance of the meeting. This paper was to be read in conjunction with Paper G, and made a suggestion for a proposed approach, for consideration by APRC.

Members from Colleges provided comments on behalf of their constituent Schools and Deaneries. The Committee noted the short time that had been allowed for comments, but felt that there was urgency to make decisions, if possible, given that students were anxious to receive certainty regarding what measures would be in place. Key issues considered included:

- The measures introduced in 2019/20 had placed extreme workload pressures upon staff in Schools; measures introduced this year must avoid compounding this;
- In considering the measures to be introduced, members were asked to be especially mindful of the demands upon students who have caring or employment commitments;
- Regarding borderlines for classification, there were concerns in some areas that increasing these may lead to inflation in degree outcomes; however, it was also noted that, while expanding the borderline would increase the volume of students considered, using the same criteria as normal for upgrading students (e.g. the CAHSS algorithm), should mitigate against unreasonable inflation;
- Members were keen to avoid setting an expectation that there must be blanket extensions to assessment deadlines, as many Schools had already amended submission deadlines as much as would be compatible with returning marks by relevant deadlines; members were mindful that staff may struggle to provide feedback to students within the normal, expected timelines;
- CAHSS members proposed consideration of automatic approval of 7-day coursework extensions, where these would normally be offered;
- Members noted that Boards of Examiners can (under existing powers) consider performance of cohorts against those of previous years, and can make marking adjustments if they feel these are warranted; it is understood, however, that routine scaling of marks is not common.

The Committee approved the paper provided by Professor Harrison outlining the proposed range of mitigation measures, after making some minor changes to it.

The following mitigating measures were therefore approved for 2020/21, subject to any further minor clarifications:

Extensions

- Students can apply for a 7-day extension to coursework deadlines (via the ESC service, as normal), which will be approved automatically (i.e. they do not need to demonstrate a valid reason).
- Students can continue to apply though the Special Circumstances process for extensions of longer than seven days. Conveners of Special Circumstances Committees can make decisions about these by Convener's Action under the "expedited decisions" provisions (7.6) of the Special Circumstances Policy.

Academic Services will work with ESC colleagues to ensure the flow of information regarding these cases is improved, to enable Schools to make these decisions promptly.

- Schools are encouraged to consider greater use of blanket extensions/changes to deadlines for whole cohorts/courses, including dissertations:

  a. where this is helpful to students, does not conflict with the return of feedback, does not compromise the ability of academic and professional services staff to meet key deadlines for the effective running of Boards of Examiners, and is compatible with students being able to receive a further 7-day extension.

  b. This is within the control of Schools to manage.

  c. Many Schools have already made such adjustments and, therefore, may not be in a position to extend some deadlines further.

Special circumstances

- We are continuing to waive evidence requirements for Special Circumstances applications relating to medical circumstances (introduced last year).
- Additionally, we are waiving evidence requirements for other types of formal documentary evidence that may be more difficult to acquire due to the pandemic (e.g. documentation provided by government, or external agencies).
- We are continuing to invite Special Circumstances applications based on the following grounds (all added as new grounds this session, as a temporary measure), in addition to existing grounds covering the health of students and those close to them, bereavement, and exceptional caring responsibilities:
  a. Been required to carry out more paid work than usual, as a "key worker" (e.g. in healthcare, retail, delivery);

  b. Experienced significant and prolonged problems with access to teaching and learning materials, e.g. due to connectivity, power, or equipment issues;

  c. Experienced catastrophic technical failure preventing submission of an online assessment by the relevant deadline;

  d. Experienced prolonged exposure to a difficult/challenging home environment;

  e. Experienced severe financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic;

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

Pre-honours specific measures (progression)

- Students in pre-Honours years will be able to qualify for up to 40 credits on aggregate, based on the following principles:
  a. The expectation is that this would apply to "outside" courses, rather than to "core" courses, except where a Board of Examiners feels that awarding it for a "core" course would not be to a student's disadvantage in the longer term.

  b. Students will be required to achieve an average of 40% across 120 credits in order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate for any failed courses, unless any courses are discounted for progression purposes due to upheld Special Circumstances.

- Requirements for "elevated hurdles" for entry to Honours, should be waived, where these exist, except where they are required to meet the expectations of professional or accrediting bodies, or where students are required to demonstrate language competency in advance of study abroad.

Honours, PGT specific measures

- Honours and PGT students will be able to qualify for up to 60 credits on aggregate (as opposed to the usual 40 credits) in a given stage of study, subject to the requirements of professional or accrediting bodies:
  a. This applies to Honours Years 3 or 4, or the taught component of a Master's programme.
  b. Students will be required to achieve an average of 40% across 120 credits in order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate for any failed courses, unless any courses are discounted due to upheld Special Circumstances.
  c. Course results for courses awarded credit on aggregate will be included in classification calculations, unless they have been discounted due to upheld Special Circumstances.

Expanded borderline

- The borderline has been expanded from 2% to 3% for classification, or progression purposes:
  a. Boards of Examiners should apply their usual rules for the award of a higher classification for borderline cases, which should have been publicised to students.
  b. Boards of Examiners will still need to see a significant volume of performance in the higher classification for the award of the higher classification.

PGT Merit and Distinction

- We have relaxed the regulation for AY 2020/21 that both the taught and research components should demonstrate the same level of performance in order to qualify for Merit and Distinction:
  a. Students will be automatically upgraded to the higher class if they fall into the (expanded) borderline for either the dissertation or taught component, and the other component is in the higher class (e.g. 70 and 67 for a Distinction).

Reiterating existing Boards of Examiners powers

- Boards of Examiners have a responsibility to ensure students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate performance against the learning outcomes, and the moderation process empowers them to make marking adjustments where they do not think this has happened, for whatever reason. Under existing provisions, Boards of Examiners can:
  a. Compare performance on courses with previous years to discern whether performance appears to have been unreasonably depressed;
  b. Take account of exceptional circumstances affecting the delivery of courses;
  c. Adjust, scale or discount marks as appropriate, where this is in the interests of students.

Postgraduate Research

- PGR students may continue to apply for interruption of study or extension where appropriate to take account of the impact of Covid-19. We expect to be sympathetic to cases where students are experiencing the impact of exceptional caring or employment commitments.
- PGR students may also submit Special Circumstances, where they are taking taught courses.
- At the point of examination, students may make the Board of Examiners aware of the impact of Covid-19 on the research by submitting a brief statement to that effect at the point they submit their thesis.

The revised paper was to be circulated to members as soon as possible for information. A formal email communication about this would be sent to relevant staff in Schools and Colleges in the week beginning 25 January 2020. The email would make clear that Academic Services would provide more detailed guidance on implementing the measures in due course, and that colleagues in Schools should provide any information about specific wishes regarding the coverage of the guidance to their College Offices. This email would be followed up with an email to students, which would be supported by web content.

> **ACTION: Professor Harrison and Dr Bunni to refine Professor Harrison's supporting paper on mitigating the impact of covid-19 on student assessment and re-circulate to the Committee for information. The relevant information was to be circulated to staff and students as agreed.**

6. **Virtual Boards of Examiners – amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations (APRC 20/21 2C)**

   Dr Adam Bunni presented this paper. The Committee approved a permanent amendment to the Taught Assessment Regulations from 2021/22, permitting meetings of Boards of Examiners to be held in-person or virtually, as considered appropriate by the relevant Convener.

7. **Coursework extensions – review of current policy (APRC 20/21 2D)**

   The Committee received this paper which provided information about the first semester of handling of coursework extension requests by the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service. Whilst it was recognised by the Committee that further consultation around the proposals would be required, it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to take this forward in the current academic year. The Committee agreed to return to this item in 2021/22, when there would be a full year of data available from the ESC service.

8. **CSE: Geophysics degrees placement year weighting (APRC 20/21 2E)**

   Professor Judy Hardy presented this paper which was approved by the Committee.

9. **Academic year dates 2022/23 and provisional academic year dates 2023/24 and 2024/25 (APRC 20/21 2F)**

The academic year dates for 2022/23 and provisional academic year dates 2023/24 and 2024/25 were approved.

There were some programmes to add to the non-standard academic year programme list which included the new Masters of Nursing (MN) and the MSc Mathematical Economics and Econometrics degree.

> **ACTION: Ailsa Taylor to convey the newly approved academic year dates to Communications and Marketing so that they can publish on the semester dates website, and add the new programmes to the non-standard academic year dates published on the web.**

10. **Any Other Business**

The Committee agreed to create a small sub-group of the existing Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) validation panel to consider some non-credit courses (approx. 5-6) in the short-term, borrowing the process currently used by the Business School.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2021

**Edinburgh Futures Institute Postgraduate Taught Programmes: preliminary
discussion about potential opt-outs for Regulations**

Description of paper

1. EFI's distinctive academic vision, and the innovative and nature of its planned
   suite of new educational programmes, are likely to test the boundaries of the
   University's academic regulations and policies.

2. EFI is in the process of developing a suite of new PGT programmes. It intends to
   seek formal approval in April 2021 for the first six of these programmes and to
   launch them in 2022-23. While EFI's Curriculum Oversight Board has not yet
   considered full proposals for these programmes, EFI anticipates that the
   proposals include some approaches not anticipated by the University's current
   regulations for the substantive project / dissertation element, and duration of
   study. EFI is seeking the Committee's views on our proposed approaches to
   addressing these regulatory issues, with a view to submitting formal proposals for
   opt-outs in spring 2021, after the EFI Curriculum Board has considered full
   proposals for the programmes at its meeting in April 2021.

3. It is likely that some other areas of the University may also benefit from
   equivalent changes to these regulations. For example, the Bayes Centre has
   signalled that they may be interested in offering a greater degree of flexibility in
   relation to duration of study for students taking Data, Science, Technology and
   Innovation courses on a Postgraduate Professional Development basis.
   Therefore, there may be a case for the Committee considering broader changes
   to the regulations, rather than opt-outs that only apply to EFI.

4. In addition to developing a suite of PGT programmes, EFI is developing
   proposals for a new UG programme with a view to launching in 23-24. We plan to
   bring a paper to the Senate Education Committee during this session setting out
   emerging thinking for strategic discussion. Should the UG proposals raise any
   regulatory or policy issues, we would bring a paper to this Committee in due
   course.

Action requested / recommendation
5. We are asking the Committee to confirm whether it is supportive of EFI's
   proposed approach to addressing the regulatory issues set out in the paper.

Background and context
6. EFI is in the process of developing a suite of new interdisciplinary PGT
   programmes. It intends to seek formal approval for the first six of these
   programmes in April 2021 and to launch them in 2022-23. These programmes
   are:

- Storytelling Futures
- Data, Inequality and Society
- Education Futures
- Service Management and Design
- Creative Industries
- Future Governance

Discussion

7. We are seeking the Committee's views on the how to approach the following regulatory issues in relation to these programmes.

Regulatory issues associated with the project component

<u>Overview of planned arrangements for the project</u>

8. Rather than taking a sequential approach (in which a student would complete 120 credits of taught elements before beginning a dissertation), as is most common in the University, EFI proposes that students on these PGT programmes would provisionally identify their substantive project topic relatively early on in their programme, and work on it in parallel with the taught components. The project would form a spine, rather than just an end-point, to their studies. During Semester 1, academic staff would supervise students on a group basis. Students would undertake initial project definition, and begin to undertake research skills and methods training (both as an element of compulsory credit-bearing courses, via non-credit guidance and training, and by constructing their own training programmes). During Semester 2, EFI would assign individual supervisors. Students would then firm up their project definition. They would undertake the more substantive work on their projects during the summer.

9. EFI proposes this approach in order to address the lack of knowledge integration which is a risk of highly interdisciplinary programmes. Students would base taught course choice at least in part on the knowledge they feel they need to complete their project, and would be encouraged to regularly re-visit their project idea and reflect on it, change it, adapt and refine it in light of the courses they take and the ways of understanding that they are introduced to. It would give a consistent point of reference to their studies.

10. The University's Models of Degree Types requires taught Masters programmes to include "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". These EFI PGT programmes would fulfil this requirement for 60 credits of research / dissertation, since they would include:

- **A 20-credit 'integration' course**. During Semesters One and Two, students would reflect on and synthesise their learning in relation to their project. EFI would require students to post blogs at least 8 times per semester, and would

provide clear criteria for topics to cover in these blogs (eg accounts of methods training and implications for their project, accounts of changes in thinking regarding project design, reflections on different disciplinary perspectives in relation to their project and so on.) EFI would arrange for students to provide peer feedback on each other's blogs. EFI plans to arrange for teaching assistants to monitor the student blogs and prompt/support students who are not completing them – they would not provide feedback on content, but rather would support the process and flag to supervisors where there is a risk of failure of this part of the assessment. At the end of semester 1, students would synthesise all their 'integration' posts and write a 1,000 word reflective summary of them, relating their learning back to their project – their supervisor would provide formative feedback on this summary early in semester 2. Over April students would reflect on all their 'integration' posts from the year and present them as a coherent final project plan (approximately 2,000 words) in early May. While the Board of Examiners would not ratify the formal result for this course until the end of the programme, the supervisor would provide students with informal feedback on their project plan as soon as the internal marking is complete, to allow them to take it into account when undertaking the 40 credit project output.

- **A 40-credit project course.** Students would submit their project report in mid-August. EFI will welcome creative approaches to the project assessment output, for example visualisations, reports, video productions and artefacts, as well as more conventional dissertation-style reports. For text-only reports, a word-limit of 13,000 will apply. EFI will establish guidelines for the appropriate volume of text and non-text outputs for approaches in creative formats.

11. For part-time students, we would establish equivalent timescales for the different stages of the project. For example, our current thinking is that students on a structured part-time version of the programme would participate in group supervision and submit blogs during year one (but at half the frequency of full-time students), and EFI would assign them an individual supervisor at the start of Semester One of year two. They would then submit their project plan (for the 'integration' course) during Semester Two, and submit their project report by August of year two.

12. While the proposed arrangements would align with the requirements of the Model of Degree Types, they would pose some questions for associated regulations around assessment and progression.

Pass / Fail assessment

13. EFI plans to assess the 20 credit 'integration' course on a Pass / Fail basis, on the basis of evidence of (1) active engagement and meaningful, consistent reflection in the blog, and (2) sufficient quality of the project plan. Pass / Fail is particularly appropriate to an innovative approach like this one, since it can support risk-taking by students. Where we are asking students to think 'big' in their reflections, making connections between often very different disciplinary understandings and using multiple modes to present and share their work, it makes sense to support risk-taking in this way. It is not unprecedented for PGT

programmes to take a Pass / Fail approach to the methods and project plan element of the project – for example, some programmes in the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures take this approach. While Taught Assessment Regulation 35.3 permits a Boards of Studies to operate pass / fail courses for postgraduate taught programmes, the use of pass / fail for the project component creates some knock-on regulatory consequences for retrieval of failure and for calculations of awards.

Retrieving failure on the 20 credit 'Integration' course

14. It would be disproportionate to prevent a student from completing the programme were they to fail a single 20 credit course. Therefore, EFI should offer an opportunity for students to retrieve failure on this course. EFI proposes to mitigate student failure on this course via credit on aggregate. Taught Assessment Regulation 57 works on the basis that only taught courses can qualify for 'credit on aggregate'. EFI proposes to allow this project-related course to count towards credit on aggregate as if it were a taught component of the programme. In practice, this would mean calculating credit on aggregate on the basis of 140 credits rather than 120 credits (ie students would have to pass 100 out of 140 credits not 80 out of 120 to qualify for credit on aggregate), but with the result of the Integration course not counting when calculating the average mark for the 140 credits.

15. We have considered the alternate option of giving students an opportunity to resubmit should they fail this Integration course, and have concluded that this is impractical. If students do not submit the work until early May, it would be challenging for staff to complete assessment and moderation of the work in time for the June Board of Examiners. It would also leave insufficient time for the student to resubmit the failed work (and for a member of staff to assess the resubmission) after the June Board of Examiner to allow them to know whether they have passed until they are very far advanced in their work on the overall project. Given this, there would be little advantage to the students in allowing them the opportunity to resubmit at that stage. In addition, since successful completion of the course requires active engagement with the blogging process, it is not clear how submission could work for students who did not meet that requirement.

Arrangements for progression

16. Given that the project will run in parallel with taught elements of the programme, there will not be a formal progression point between the taught element and the project component. This is allowable under Taught Assessment Regulation 56.

Calculation of Merit and Distinction

17. Given the integrated nature of the project and taught elements, and that the Board of Examiners will only assign marks for 40 credits of the project, we plan to calculate Merit and Distinction based on a single average mark calculated from both the taught and project / dissertation elements. That is, to achieve Merit, a student must have an average of at least 60% across all courses, rather than the

normal requirement to achieve at least 60% for the project / dissertation and an average of at least 60% in the remaining taught elements. To achieve a Distinction, the equivalent would apply, but with a requirement to achieve at least 70%. When calculating average marks for these purposes, EFI proposes to disregard the 'Integration' course, given that it is based on Pass / Fail, and that assigning a nominal mark of 50% for a pass would disadvantage students when calculating Merit and Distinction.

Potential for group projects for one programme

18. For one of the planned EFI PGT programmes, the MSc in Creative Industries, EFI is proposing that the substantial project element will be based on group rather than individual assessment. The programme as a whole will include a balance of individual learning and reflection with group-based projects. It will differentiate the programme from comparator programmes in the UK, which focus on individual learning and assessment. During market research into the programme, external stakeholders emphasised that the programme should produce graduates with collaborative skills that would allow them to work with a range of parties with different expertise and points of view.

19. While we are finalising the detailed arrangements for the substantive project for this programme, we anticipate that the components of assessment for the course would include a team project report of 13,000 words (60%), team presentation (25%) and peer review (15%). The proposal assumes groups of 5-7 students. In order to mitigate any risks associated with free-riding and team conflicts, the programme team will train the students on team-working skills, and require each team to develop a behavioural contract. While neither the Taught Assessment Regulations or the Models for Degree Types specify that the substantive project / dissertation cannot include group assessment elements, the Models for Degree Types document does imply that the project / dissertation focuses on individual rather than group proficiency in research skills. Therefore, we would welcome any comments from the Committee on this approach, before submitting final proposals to the EFI Curriculum Oversight Board.

Regulatory issues associated with flexibility in duration of study and lifelong learning

20. EFI plans to offer all programmes in the following modes of study:

- Full-time – one year, 180 credits
- Structured part-time – two years (90 credits per year)
- Part-time intermittent – up to three years in the first instance as the portfolio is established
- Lifelong learning – to accumulate credit without needing to register for a particular award

21. In order to encourage lifelong learning students to continue studying, EFI plans to take the following approach:

- **Allow them to remain registered on a lifelong learning basis without a specific time limit.**

- **Offer the opportunity to transfer onto a programme leading to a named award**, subject to meeting the entry requirements for the programme. At the point of deciding whether to allow a student to transfer, EFI would decide whether all the credit the student has accumulated to date could count towards the programme. This would allow EFI to confirm that the relevant courses remain sufficiently current, as well as whether they fit the requirements for the relevant programme. Once the student transfers onto the programme leading to the named award, the prescribed period for that programme would apply (counting from the point that the student transfers). We are in discussions with CAHSS Postgraduate Admissions about the detailed arrangements for ensuring students have met the entry requirements.

- In order to provide flexible pathways for lifelong learning students who have accumulated the relevant number of credits but not taken the right combination to make them eligible for a named award, **EFI will offer a suite of generic awards** (MSc 'Interdisciplinary Futures', Postgraduate Diploma in 'Interdisciplinary Futures', Postgraduate Certificate in 'Interdisciplinary Futures'). Lifelong learning students would be able to transfer onto these generic awards at any point, and, once on them, would be subject to the prescribed period for that programme. Given that lifelong learning students would not necessarily have undertaken a project, we plan that eligibility for the MSc in Interdisciplinary Futures would be based on completion of any combination of 180 credits of EFI PGT courses, with no requirement to undertake a project. For this MSc, EFI plans to calculate credit on aggregate on the basis of students passing 120 out of 180 credits, and to base decisions about Merit and Distinction on average marks across the full 180 credits.

22. The proposed approach raises some regulatory issues:

- Postgraduate Degree Regulation 27 - Prescribed Period of Study. This limits the prescribed period for a PG Certificate to two years (maximum five years with concession / interruption of studies), the PG Diploma to four years (maximum eight with concession / interruption of studies), and the Masters six years (eleven with concession / interruption of studies). EFI would not want any time limits to apply to students studying on a lifelong basis.

- Postgraduate Degree Regulation 16 – Recognition of Prior Learning. This states that "The Head of College has the authority to recognise the transfer of a student's credit previously gained either at the University or another institution and to count it towards their intended award…The maximum number of credits that the Colleges will grant RPL for taught programmes is one-third of the total credits for the award for which the student is applying." EFI would like students to transfer from studying with EFI on a lifelong learning basis to study towards a named award without limit on the proportion of credits that they could count.

- Postgraduate Degree Regulation 60 - Application for Associated Postgraduate Diploma or Masters. This regulation says "A candidate who already holds a postgraduate certificate or diploma from the University of Edinburgh may be permitted by the appropriate College to apply for candidature for the associated postgraduate diploma or masters degree, provided that not more than five years have elapsed between their first graduation and acceptance as a candidate for the subsequent award." EFI wants to be able to transfer students who hold a generic EFI PG Certificates or Diplomas onto a named degree programme without time limitation.

- The Models for Degree Types states that PGT degree programmes must include 60 credits of project / dissertation. We understand that the Senate Education Committee recently recommended that the University offer fully-taught PGT programmes, but that the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committees has not considered how to translate that recommendation into formal policy.

23. The idea of allowing students to register indefinitely on a lifelong learning basis without a prescribed period of study raises some system and business process issues. Discussions with Student Systems suggest that these can be resolved, albeit with an administrative overhead for EFI.

24. The operation of a published 'prescribed period of study' makes it clear to prospective and current students that the University has no obligation to keep offering a programme, or particular courses within it, on a longer basis. There is therefore a risk that not applying a prescribed period for lifelong learning study at EFI could raise expectation and create legal obligations to keep running this provision on an ongoing basis. While we would allow lifelong learning students to remain registered on an ongoing basis and to accumulate credit that could make them eligible for an award, we would make it clear in marketing materials that we would not have any obligation on the University to continue to offer specific courses or awards on an ongoing basis. It is likely that this approach will avoid any material consumer rights risks.

Resource implications

25. The launch of the new EFI PGT programmes has a range of staffing, estates and facilities and other resourcing issues. However, the specific regulatory issues highlighted in this paper do not raise any material resourcing issues, beyond the administrative issues highlighted in the body of the paper.

Risk management

26. By ensuring that the programmes are based on a well thought-through regulatory approach that has University-level support, EFI will minimise any risks associated with the arrangements for the project and flexibility in duration of study and lifelong learning.

Equality & diversity

27. The proposed arrangements for the project do not raise any equality and diversity issues. The proposed arrangements for duration of study and lifelong learning will provide greater flexibility of study, which will enable students from a diverse range of backgrounds to study with EFI.

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

28. EFI will inform the EFI Curriculum Oversight Board of the Committee's advice on the issues set out in this paper.

Author	**Presenter**
Prof Sian Bayne	Tom Ward
EFI Director of Education	
Tom Ward	
EFI Head of Education Administration	
and Change management	

13 March 2021

Freedom of Information
Disclosable

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2021

Covid-19: further mitigation measures; Board of Examiners guidance

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes some additional concessions to regulations in order to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon students' degree outcomes, to complement those already agreed by APRC in January 2021. The paper also provides, for information, the draft guidance for Boards of Examiners about the Covid-19 mitigation measures in place this year (Appendix 1).

Action requested / recommendation

2. APRC is asked to consider and approve the proposed additional concessions, in sections 6 and 8.

Background and context

3. At the January 2021 meeting, APRC approved a range of measures to mitigate the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic upon students' performance in assessment. These cover the following areas:

   - Automatic approval of 7-day extensions (where extensions are normally offered);
   - Waiving requirements for formal documentary evidence to support Special Circumstances applications;
   - Up to 40 credits to be awarded on aggregate at pre-Honours level;
   - Up to 60 credits to be awarded on aggregate at Honours and postgraduate taught level;
   - Borderlines for classification and progression purposes expanded to 3% below the boundary.

Discussion

4. In the process of consulting Schools on the draft guidance supporting these measures, colleagues have proposed the addition of two further measures, both of which were in place during the 2019/20 session:

   a) Credit on aggregate for Ordinary/General degrees

5. We propose to permit students in the final year of a General or Ordinary degree to qualify for up to 40 credits to be awarded on aggregate. This would apply where the student has achieved passes in at least 80 credits' worth of courses in their final year, and has an average of at least 40% across 120 credits' worth of courses, including any failed courses.

6. This concession would pose no significant risk to standards, and would serve to reduce the need to offer resit assessment to some students for failed courses. This would be particularly beneficial where the course in question may not otherwise need to offer resit assessment.

b) Resubmission of Master's dissertations/research projects

7. We propose to extend the PGT dissertation resubmission window to 40-49 (as opposed to 45-49 as it is currently in TAR 58) to allow students who marginally fail the dissertation (relative to the Master's pass of 50) the chance to resubmit. The other provisions of TAR 58 will continue to apply, i.e. those relating to the time allowed for resubmission (3 months- 58.6), limited additional supervision (58.5), and the mark for the resubmitted dissertation being capped at 50 (58.8). This resubmission would be to cover the current assessment period only in the first instance.

8. The proposal is likely to carry minimal resource implications, since it should lead to only a very small increase in the number of students qualifying for resubmission on any given programme. TAR 58.5 sets a clear limit around the volume of additional supervision students can expect, stating that they will receive further written advice from their supervisor on one occasion only. The proposal carries no risk to standards, since students will still be expected to pass the dissertation or research project in order to be awarded the Master's.

Guidance for Boards of Examiners

9. Appendix 1 includes draft guidance for Boards of Examiners covering the package of measures introduced in response to the impact of Covid-19 on student assessment. Academic Services have developed this guidance in collaboration with a "critical friends" group of senior professional services staff from Schools, Colleges, and Student Systems. A draft of the guidance has also been shared more widely with staff in Schools to provide comment. The content is likely to be subject to periodic updates, and does not represent a departure from the concessions already agreed by APRC, so is not being submitted for formal approval by the Committee.

10. The guidance is currently presented in a single document, but will ultimately be presented as a SharePoint site, with separate sections for different stages of study (e.g. UG pre-Honours; UG Honours). The guidance will also be supported by case studies, to illustrate the application of the measures. Academic Services will be working on these case studies with the "critical friends" group over the coming weeks.

Resource implications

11. Resource implications of some of the potential options are considered in the discussion section of the paper.

Risk management

12. Possible risks of some of the potential options are considered in the discussion section of the paper.

Equality & diversity

13. The possible impact of some of the options on particular groups of students are covered in the discussion section of the paper.

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

14. If the additional concessions are approved, reference to these will be added to staff and student web pages covering the package of measures in place. Academic Services will draft a communication for Colleges to share with Schools, highlighting the additional concessions. Academic Services will also amend the draft guidance for Boards of Examiners to make reference to the additional measures.

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APPENDIX 1

2020/21 Covid-19 Academic Mitigation: Guidance for Boards of Examiners

A. General provisions

Moderation of course results- marking adjustments

1. Schools have taken steps to make changes to teaching and assessment on courses this session, in order to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon students' performance in assessment. The Special Circumstances process allows Boards of Examiners to apply further mitigation where an individual student has experienced unique impact. Assessments for courses should undergo the normal internal moderation process to ensure marking is fair and consistent. The moderation process can result in marking adjustments being made. In some subject areas, scaling or standard-setting is used routinely to arrive at final marks for assessment. Students must be made aware of the routine use of scaling or standard-setting in advance through the relevant statement of assessment. Schools are encouraged to consider the continuing impact of the pandemic upon students this session. Where the moderation process indicates that marks for an assessment should be decreased, this should only be carried out where it is absolutely necessary in order to ensure robust outcomes.

    [Taught Assessment Regulations](#) (see Regulation 31: Moderation and standard-setting)

    [Guidance on moderation](#)

2. This section provides additional guidance about exceptional scenarios where it may be necessary to consider **increasing** marks for courses, in view of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This guidance applies to courses whose assessment will be completed during Semester 2 of the current (2020/21) session. As part of the internal moderation process, Course Organisers, Examinations teams, and Boards of Examiners should consider whether there is evidence to suggest that results for a course have been unreasonably depressed for any reason. This may be particularly relevant where further changes were made to teaching or assessment, following the return to lockdown measures in the UK in early 2021; or, where students may have struggled to meet some learning outcomes due to the impact of the pandemic. However, Schools and Boards of Examiners may be satisfied that further changes to teaching or assessment have effectively mitigated any detrimental impact upon students' performance, and may not therefore need to take further steps.

Consideration during the marking process

3. Course Organisers should consider where it may be necessary to provide additional guidance to markers about issues which may have impacted upon students' performance in assessment for the course, and ensure that they provide this guidance, or amended marking criteria in advance of the marking process. For example, markers may be asked to take into consideration the fact that students may have had more limited access than usual to primary (e.g. physical) resources, and

should not therefore be penalised for using a smaller, or different range of sources than usual.

Consideration by the Board of Examiners

4. In most cases, it should not be necessary for Boards to consider adjustments to marks, where markers have been provided with guidance to allow them to mark work in a way that takes account of students' opportunity to meet the learning outcomes at the time when the work was being completed. However, there may be situations where a Course Organiser or staff member with responsibility for examinations raises concerns with the Board of Examiners about student outcomes for a course, which have not been adequately mitigated through the marking process. These concerns may relate to, for example:

    a. Average marks for a course which are much lower than usual;
    b. More lower marks than usual for a course;
    c. Higher than usual failure rates for a course;
    d. Student concerns raised about a course or assessment, which the Course Organiser or staff responsible for examinations agree warrant scrutiny;
    e. Concerns raised by an External Examiner regarding a component of assessment, or course profile.

5. In these situations, the Board of Examiners should consider the evidence available to determine whether it may be appropriate to make marking adjustments. Boards of Examiners should take account of any information provided to them by the Course Organiser about the delivery of the course, and should compare student performance with final results from previous years, where these are available. In most cases, the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic will require Boards to consider results from 2018/19 and earlier. Boards of Examiners should be mindful of reasonable annual fluctuations in course results.

6. Where the Board of Examiners agrees that results for a course have been unreasonably depressed, they should consider making marking adjustments to address this. Where marking adjustments are made in line with this guidance, they should be applied to the benefit of each individual student. It is preferable to make marking adjustments to individual components of assessment for courses, but in the context of this mitigation, it is also possible to make adjustments to final (aggregated) course results, where necessary. Adjustments may therefore be made by:

    a. increasing marks for a component of assessment (or multiple components) for all students;
    b. discounting a mark for a component of assessment for any students whose course result would benefit from this; or
    c. increasing final (aggregated) course results for all students.

7. Boards of Examiners must always seek to involve the relevant Course Organiser and should also involve the External Examiner in discussion of any proposed marking adjustments.

B. Undergraduate students: Pre-Honours years

Decisions about course outcomes

a) **Moderation of course results- marking adjustments**

8. Boards of Examiners should consider whether there is evidence that course results have been unreasonably depressed for a cohort due to the impact of the pandemic, in line with sections 1-7 of this guidance.

b) **Resit assessment**

9. Students who are awarded a fail result for a course may be asked to complete reassessments during the summer vacation. In line with the Taught Assessment Regulations (27.3), reassessment need not take the same form as the original form of assessment. However, Boards must offer reassessment in a form that would not require physical attendance in Edinburgh, except where physical attendance is required to meet professional or statutory regulatory body requirements.

c) **Borderlines for passing a course**

10. Boards of Examiners can award credit for a course which a student has marginally failed, where the student has had Special Circumstances accepted relating to that course. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners can consider awarding credit to students in this position, where their final mark for the course is 37-39% (normally 38-39%). There may be courses for which professional or statutory regulatory body requirements mean that students must have achieved a mark of 40% in order to be awarded a pass. Since Boards of Examiners have already been held for courses completed in Semester 1, the extended borderline for marginal fails at course level applies only to courses whose assessment will be completed in Semester 2.

Decisions about progression

a) **Credit on aggregate**

11. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, students in pre-Honours years can qualify for up to 40 credits to be awarded on aggregate for failed courses.

12. The expectation is that credit on aggregate will be awarded for failed courses which are not "core" courses (i.e. courses which must be taken and passed). This means that it can be awarded for courses which are "compulsory", but where there is no specific requirement to pass them, and for "optional" courses, including those sometimes referred to as "outside" courses. However, Boards of Examiners responsible for making progression decisions may also award credit on aggregate for "core" courses at their discretion.

13. In order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate in up to 40 credits' worth of courses, a student must:

   a. have achieved a final result of 40% or more in the other 80 or more credits in their year of study; AND
   b. have achieved an average of 40% or more across all 120 credits of courses.

14. Where a course Board of Examiners has awarded a null sit for a failed course due to upheld Special Circumstances, the Board of Examiners responsible for making a progression decision can nonetheless consider awarding credit on aggregate for the affected course, where this will be in a student's interest. The Board making the progression decision must discount the result from the course awarded a null sit for the purposes of calculating eligibility for credit on aggregate. For example, where a student had been awarded a null sit for the final assessment for a 20-credit course, they would be required to have passes in at least 80-credits' worth of courses, and an average of 40% or more across 100 credits (i.e. excluding the course awarded a null sit).

b) Reassessment

15. Where a student has failed a course which does not qualify for the award of credit on aggregate (e.g. due to it being a "core" course), Boards of Examiners will offer students reassessment opportunities as set by the relevant Course Board of Examiners.

c) "Elevated hurdles"

16. Some programmes operate "elevated hurdles" for some courses in Years 1 or 2, e.g. a requirement to pass a specific course or courses at 50% at the first attempt. Progression Boards should waive these requirements wherever possible. Examples of situations where it is acceptable to retain "elevated hurdles" include:

   a. Where professional or accrediting body requirements dictate that a higher level of performance or achievement of a particular learning outcome at the relevant stage is required;
   b. Where students are expected to demonstrate a high level of language competency before a period of study abroad.

C. Undergraduate students: Honours years (including Integrated Master's)

Decisions about course outcomes

a) Moderation of Course results- marking adjustments

17. Boards of Examiners should consider whether there is evidence that course results have been unreasonably depressed for a cohort due to the impact of the pandemic, in line with sections 1-7 of this guidance.

b) Borderlines for passing a course

18. Boards of Examiners can award credit for a course which a student has marginally failed, where the student has had Special Circumstances accepted relating to that course. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners can consider awarding credit to students in this position, where their final mark for the course is 37-39% (normally 38-39%). There may be courses for which professional or statutory regulatory body requirements mean that students must have achieved a mark of 40% in order to be awarded a pass.

Decisions about progression

19. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, students in Honours years can qualify for up to 60 credits to be awarded on aggregate for failed courses. There may be specific courses for which credit cannot be awarded on aggregate, for example due to professional or accrediting body requirements, or programme-specific rules stipulated in the Degree Programme Table.

20. In order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate in up to 60 credits' worth of courses, a student must:

    a. have achieved a final result of 40% or more in the other 60 or more credits in their year of study; AND
    b. have achieved an average of 40% or more across all 120 credits of courses.

21. Where a Board of Examiners has recommended that a course result be discounted from progression and classification calculations due to upheld Special Circumstances (11.2 d and e in the Special Circumstances Policy), the Board making the progression decision may discount the result from that course for the purposes of calculating eligibility for credit on aggregate. For example, where a Course Board had recommended discounting two, 20-credit courses from a student's profile for progression/classification purposes, the student would be required to have passes in at least 60-credits' worth of courses, and an average of 40% or more across 80 credits (i.e. excluding the courses discounted due to Special Circumstances).

22. On undergraduate Honours programmes, there is no specific requirement to pass the dissertation or research project, unless this has been specified in programme information for a particular programme (for example if it is a core course). Boards of Examiners must therefore award credit on aggregate for the dissertation or research project, where a student qualifies.

23. Borderlines apply to decisions relating to additional programme requirements for progression ("elevated hurdles"), for example where a programme requires an average of 50% across a number of courses in Year 3. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners/ Progression Boards must consider students within 3% below the boundary for progression as borderline cases (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means, for example, that students who have achieved an average of 47.00-49.99% for courses in which an average of 50% was required must be considered as borderline cases.

24. Boards of Examiners/ Progression Boards should use their normal, published procedures for considering cases involving students who fall within the borderline for progression purposes.

Decisions about degree classification

a) Discounting courses from Semester 2, 2019/20 ("no detriment")

25. Most students due to finish Honours degrees in the current session completed courses which were due to count towards their final degree classification in 2019/20 (either as Year 3 Honours students, or Year 3/4 Integrated Master's students).

26. Many courses completed in Semester 2 of 2019/20 were subject to the provisions of the "no detriment" rules in place during that session. Under these rules, Boards of Examiners deciding upon degree classification for students completing their programmes this year may be required to discount some results for courses from 2019/20 when classifying degrees.

27. This will only apply to programmes which base final classification on the credit-weighted average result of all courses taken at Honours level, with no distinction drawn between different years of study. Programmes which calculate separate Year averages for the purposes of classification (usually where different weightings are apportioned to different years) will have taken decisions regarding which course results to discount for classification purposes at the end of 2019/20, and must not take further action in relation to these courses.

28. Boards of Examiners should discount specified course results from 2019/20 when determining final classification in the following circumstances:

    a. Where a final examination for a Semester 2 course in 2019/20 was replaced by a different form of assessment AND the course Board determined that it was not possible to consider removing components of assessment from the course outcome, the Board of Examiners responsible for classification **MUST** discount/disregard the course result from the classification calculation, where this result would reduce the student's average; these courses may be flagged in EUCLID as SE or ME;
    b. There may be other courses which the relevant Course Board in 2019/20 regarded as negatively affected by the pandemic, where they have recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting/disregarding results from the classification calculation, where the result would reduce the student's average; these courses may be flagged in EUCLID as SE or ME;
    c. A Board of Examiners in 2019/20 recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting a specific course or courses when calculating classification for an individual student due to upheld Special Circumstances in 2019/20.

29. Where a Board is considering disregarding a course result, they should do so where that result is lower than the student's credit-weighted average for all other Honours courses that were not regarded as eligible to be discounted. For example, where two, 20-credit courses are eligible for discounting, the decision as to whether to discount either course should involve comparing the final mark for each course with the credit-weighted average mark for the remaining 200 credits used for classification.

30. There is no minimum volume of credits which Boards are required to rely upon when making decisions regarding Honours degree classification. Where they are assigning a classification to an individual student, Boards will need to be satisfied that they have seen sufficient evidence of performance at the required level to justify the award. Where a Board is concerned that a student's final classification has been significantly affected by Covid-19, or other, upheld Special Circumstances, but is not satisfied that it has sufficient evidence of performance to classify the degree, it should consider where it may be appropriate to offer the student null sits and reassessment for some affected assessments.

b) Discounting courses from 2020/21

31. The "no detriment" rules in place for Semester 2, 2019/20 do not apply to courses completed by students during 2020/21.

32. Boards need only consider discounting specific courses for classification purposes where:

    d. The ESC team has upheld Special Circumstances for an individual student and a Special Circumstances Committee or Course Board has recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting results for a specific course or courses when calculating classification for that student;

    e. In exceptional circumstances, a Course Board has recommended that results for a course are discounted for classification purposes for all students who have completed that course, or a subset of students (where different groups of students have been affected differently), due to significant concerns regarding the fairness or robustness of results for the course. Where this is recommended, the course result should only be discounted for any affected students whose programme average for classification purposes would benefit from this.

33. On undergraduate Honours programmes, there is no specific requirement to pass the dissertation or research project, unless this has been specified in programme information for a particular programme. Boards of Examiners may therefore consider discounting the result for a dissertation or research project when determining classification, where a Special Circumstances Committee has recommended this for an individual student.

c) Borderlines for classification

34. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners must consider students within 3% below the boundary for classification as borderline cases (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means that Programme Boards must consider whether, for example, students with a programme average of 67.00 to 69.99% qualify for an upgrade to a First Class degree.

35. The programme average used to determine whether a student falls into a borderline category is the credit-weighted average of courses counting towards classification, with the exception of any courses discounted for classification purposes (i.e. under the "no detriment" rules, or due to Special Circumstances). On some programmes, the programme average is calculated as an average of two or more separate Year

averages.

36. Programme Boards will use their normal procedures for determining whether students falling in the borderline category qualify for upgrade to the higher class. These procedures should be publicised to students in programme handbooks, School web pages, or similar.

37. As usual, Boards must be satisfied that students have provided sufficient evidence that they are capable of performance in the higher class, in order to qualify for an upgrade.

d) **Students repeating courses or assessments from 2019/20 courses**

38. Some students may have been given null sits for courses or individual assessments in 2019/20, or extended time to complete dissertations, which meant that these elements were ultimately completed in the 2020/21 session. Where a student has completed all elements of a course or dissertation in the 2020/21 session, they should be treated like other students in the current cohort. This means that any mitigations applied to the 2019/20 cohort on the same course do not apply.

39. However, where a student has retained marks for some components of assessment for a course completed in 2019/20, the Board should apply any mitigations which were applied to the 2019/20 cohort on that course, where these benefit the individual student. This means that, for example, "no detriment" rules may apply to a course, where some components of assessment were completed in 2019/20, and others in 2020/21.

D. **Postgraduate Taught students: full-time Master's programmes (includes Master's by Research)**

Decisions about course outcomes

a) **Moderation of course results- marking adjustments**

40. Boards of Examiners should consider whether there is evidence that course results have been unreasonably depressed for a cohort due to the impact of the pandemic, in line with sections 1-7 of this guidance.

b) **Borderlines for passing a course**

41. Boards of Examiners can award credit for a course which a student has marginally failed, where the student has had Special Circumstances accepted relating to that course. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners can consider awarding credit to students in this position, where their final mark for the course is 37-39% (normally 38-39%). There may be courses for which professional or statutory regulatory body requirements mean that students must have achieved a mark of 40% in order to be awarded a pass.

Decisions about progression

a) Credit on aggregate

42. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, postgraduate taught students can qualify for up to 60 credits to be awarded on aggregate for failed courses. There may be specific courses for which credit cannot be awarded on aggregate, for example due to professional or accrediting body requirements, or programme-specific rules stipulated in the Degree Programme Table.

43. Credit on aggregate can only be awarded for taught courses, and cannot be awarded for the dissertation/research project component.

44. In order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate in up to 60 credits' worth of courses, a student must:

   a. have achieved passes (40% or more) in the other 60 or more credits in the taught component; AND
   b. have achieved an average of 40% or more across all 120 credits of courses.

45. Where a Board of Examiners has recommended that a course result be discounted from progression and classification calculations due to upheld Special Circumstances (11.2 d and e in the Special Circumstances Policy), the Board making the progression decision may discount the result from that course for the purposes of calculating eligibility for credit on aggregate. For example, where a Course Board had recommended discounting a 20-credit course from a student's profile for progression/classification purposes, the student would be required to have passes in at least 60-credits' worth of courses, with an average of 40% or more across 100 credits (i.e. excluding the course handled under Special Circumstances).

b) Progression requirements

46. In order to progress to the dissertation/research project component, students will be required to achieve a result of 50% or more in a minimum of 60 credits' worth of taught courses (as opposed to the usual, 80 credits), and achieve an average of 50% or more across all 120 credits' worth of courses (except where any course results have been discounted for progression purposes due to upheld Special Circumstances).

c) Borderlines for progression

47. Borderlines for progression apply to the taught component. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners must consider students within 3% below the boundary for progression as borderline cases (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means that students who have achieved an average of 47.00-49.99% for the taught component must be considered as borderline cases.

48. Boards of Examiners should use their normal procedures for considering cases involving students who fall within the borderline for progression purposes.

49. Boards of Examiners should also consider cases where a student has achieved less than the required volume of credit at 50% to progress to the dissertation/research project component, but has achieved results of 47-49% in one or more courses. For example, Boards may consider allowing a student to progress who has achieved 50% or more in 40 credits of courses, but has one 20-credit course with a result of 47-49%, as well as an average for all courses of more than 50%.

Decisions about classification (Merit/Distinction)

a) **Discounting courses from 2020/21**

50. The "no detriment" rules in place for Semester 2, 2019/20 do not apply to courses completed by students during 2020/21.

51. Boards need only consider discounting specific taught courses for classification purposes where:

   f. The ESC team has accepted Special Circumstances for an individual student, and a Special Circumstances Committee or Course Board has recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting results for a specific course or courses when calculating classification for that student;
   g. In exceptional circumstances, a Course Board has recommended that results for a course are discounted for classification purposes for all students who have completed that course, due to significant concerns regarding the fairness or robustness of results for the course, either because of the impact of Covid-19, or for some other reason.

52. Boards cannot discount the dissertation/research project component from the classification calculation.

b) **Borderlines for classification**

53. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners must consider students within 3% below the boundary for classification as borderline cases (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means that Programme Boards must consider whether, for example, students with an average for the taught component of 67.00-69.99%, or a mark of 67-69 for the dissertation/research project qualify for an upgrade to a Distinction.

54. The average for the taught component used to determine whether a student falls into a borderline category is the credit-weighted average of all courses (including any courses awarded credit on aggregate), with the exception of any courses discounted for classification purposes (due to Special Circumstances).

55. Where a student falls into the borderline category for either the taught component, or the dissertation/research project, but has achieved the higher class in the other component, the Board of Examiners **must** award the higher class. For example, a student who has achieved an average of 60% for the taught component, and achieved a mark of 57 in the dissertation/research project must be awarded the degree with Merit. Where, for example, a student has an average of 57% for the taught component, and a mark of 70 in the dissertation/research project, the student

must be awarded the degree with Merit.

56. Where a student falls into the borderline category for both components, programme Boards will use their normal procedures for determining whether they qualify for upgrade to the higher class. These procedures should already be publicised to students in programme handbooks, School web pages, or similar.

c) Students repeating courses or assessments from 2019/20 courses

57. Some students may have been given null sits for courses or individual assessments in 2019/20, or extended time to complete dissertations, which meant that these elements were ultimately completed in the 2020/21 session. Where a student has completed all elements of a course or dissertation in the 2020/21 session, they should be treated like other students in the current cohort. This means that any mitigations applied to the 2019/20 cohort on the same course do not apply.

58. However, where a student has retained marks for some components of assessment for a course completed in 2019/20, or the student was continuing work on a dissertation which they started in 2019/20, the Board should apply any mitigations which were applied to the 2019/20 cohort on that course. This means that, for example, "no detriment" rules may apply to a course, where some components of assessment were completed in 2019/20, and others in 2020/21.

E. Postgraduate taught programmes- part-time programmes

Decisions about course outcomes

a) Moderation of course results- marking adjustments

59. Boards of Examiners should consider whether there is evidence that course results have been unreasonably depressed for a cohort due to the impact of the pandemic, in line with sections 1-7 of this guidance.

b) Borderlines for passing a course

60. Boards of Examiners can award credit for a course which a student has marginally failed, where the student has had Special Circumstances accepted relating to that course. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, Boards of Examiners can consider awarding credit to students in this position, where their final mark for the course is 37-39% (normally 38-39%). There may be courses for which professional or statutory regulatory body requirements mean that students must have achieved a mark of 40% in order to be awarded a pass.

Decisions about progression or award

a) Discounting courses from Semester 2, 2019/20 ("no detriment")

61. Most students due to complete the Diploma or Master's stage of part-time Master's programmes in the current session completed taught courses which were due to count towards their programme during Semester 2 of 2019/20.

62. Many courses completed in Semester 2 of 2019/20 were subject to the provisions of the "no detriment" rules in place during that session. Under these rules, Boards of Examiners deciding upon final outcomes for students completing their programmes this year may be required to discount some course results when making decisions about the award of credit on aggregate, progression, or Merit and Distinction.

63. Boards of Examiners should discount specified course results from 2019/20 when calculating eligibility for credit on aggregate, progression, or Merit and Distinction in the following circumstances:

   h. Where a final examination for a Semester 2 course in 2019/20 was replaced by a different form of assessment AND the course Board determined that it was not possible to consider removing components of assessment from the course outcome, the Board of Examiners responsible for classification **MUST** discount/disregard the course result from programme-level decisions, where this result would reduce the student's average; these courses may be flagged in EUCLID as SE or ME;
   i. There may be other courses which the relevant Course Board in 2019/20 regarded as negatively affected by the pandemic, where they have recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting/disregarding results from programme-level decisions, where the result would reduce the student's average; these courses may be flagged in EUCLID as SE or ME;
   j. A Board of Examiners in 2019/20 recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting a specific course or courses from programme-level decisions for an individual student due to accepted Special Circumstances.

64. Where a Board is considering disregarding a course result, they should do so where that result is lower than the student's credit-weighted average for all other taught courses that were not regarded as liable to be discounted.

b) Discounting courses from 2020/21

65. The "no detriment" rules in place for Semester 2, 2019/20 do not apply to courses completed by students during 2020/21.

66. Boards need only consider discounting specific taught courses for classification purposes where:

   k. The ESC team has accepted Special Circumstances for an individual student, and a Special Circumstances Committee or Course Board has recommended that the Programme Board consider discounting results for a specific course or courses when calculating classification for that student;
   l. In exceptional circumstances, a Course Board has recommended that results for a course are discounted for classification purposes for all students who have completed that course, due to significant concerns regarding the fairness or robustness of results for the course, either because of the impact of Covid-19, or for some other reason.

67. Boards cannot discount the dissertation/research project component from the classification calculation.

c) Credit on aggregate

68. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, postgraduate taught students can qualify for up to 60 credits to be awarded on aggregate for failed courses during the taught component, or Diploma stage of their programme. Students pursuing the Certificate stage of their programme can qualify for up to 30 credits to be awarded on aggregate.

69. Students can qualify for the award of credit on aggregate for courses taken in the current session (i.e. 2020/21), and for courses taken in previous years. This includes situations where, for example, a part-time student had already failed the usual maximum volume of credit for award on aggregate (40 credits) before starting 2020/21, and has failed a further 20 credits in 2020/21.

70. There may be specific courses for which credit cannot be awarded on aggregate, for example due to professional or accrediting body requirements, or programme-specific rules stipulated in the Degree Programme Table.

71. Credit on aggregate can only be awarded for taught courses, and cannot be awarded for the dissertation/research project component.

72. In order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate in up to 60 credits' worth of courses at the Diploma stage of a programme, a student must:

    a. have achieved passes (40% or more) in the other 60 or more credits in the taught component; AND
    b. have achieved an average of 40% or more across all 120 credits of courses (with the exception of any courses discounted under the "no detriment" rules, or due to upheld Special Circumstances).

73. In order to qualify for the award of credit on aggregate in up to 30 credits' worth of courses at the Certificate stage of a programme, a student must:

    a. have achieved passes (40% or more) in the other 30 or more credits in the taught component; AND
    b. have achieved an average of 40% or more across all 60 credits of courses counting towards the Certificate (with the exception of any courses discounted under the "no detriment" rules, or due to upheld Special Circumstances).

74. Where a Board of Examiners has recommended that a course result be discounted from progression and classification calculations under the "no detriment" rules, or due to upheld Special Circumstances (11.2 d and e in the Special Circumstances Policy), the Board making the progression decision may discount the result from that course for the purposes of calculating eligibility for credit on aggregate. For example, where a Course Board had recommended discounting a 20-credit course from a student's profile for progression/classification purposes for the Diploma, the student would be required to have passes in at least 60-credits' worth of courses, and an average of 40% or more across 100 credits (i.e. excluding the discounted course).

d) Progression requirements

75. In order to progress to the dissertation/research project component, students will be required to achieve a result of ==50% or more in a minimum of 60 credits' worth of taught courses== (as opposed to the usual, 80 credits), and achieve an average of 50% or more across all 120 credits' worth of courses (except where any course results have been discounted for progression purposes due to upheld Special Circumstances).

e) Borderlines for progression

76. Borderlines for progression apply to the taught component. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, ==Boards of Examiners must consider students within 3% below the boundary for progression as borderline cases== (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means that students who have achieved an average of 47.00-49.99% for the taught component must be considered as borderline cases.

77. Boards of Examiners should use their normal procedures for considering cases involving students who fall within the borderline for progression purposes.

78. Boards of Examiners should also consider cases where a student has achieved less than the required volume of credit at 50% to progress to the dissertation/research project component, but has achieved results of 47-49% in one or more courses.

f) Borderlines for classification

79. In line with a concession to the Taught Assessment Regulations, ==Boards of Examiners must consider students within 3% below the boundary for classification as borderline cases== (as opposed to the normal, 2% borderline). This means that Programme Boards must consider whether, for example, students with an average for the taught component of 67.00-69.99%, or a mark of 67-69 for the dissertation/research project qualify for an upgrade to a Distinction.

80. The average for the taught component used to determine whether a student falls into a borderline category is the credit-weighted average of all courses, with the exception of any courses discounted for classification purposes (under "no detriment" rules, or due to Special Circumstances).

81. Where a student falls into the borderline category for either the taught component, or the dissertation/research project, but has achieved the higher class in the other component, the Board of Examiners **must** award the higher class. For example, a student who has achieved an average of 57% for the taught component, and achieved a mark of 60 in the dissertation/research project must be awarded the degree with Merit.

82. Where a student falls into the borderline category for both components, programme Boards will use their normal procedures for determining whether they qualify for upgrade to the higher class. These procedures should be publicised to students in programme handbooks, School web pages, or similar.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2021

PhD by Research Oral Examinations by Video Link

Description of paper
1. Revised policy on conducting PhD oral examination, also known as viva, remotely by video link.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For approval.

Background and context
3. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, it was necessary to move to remote vivas for defense of PhD theses. The previous guidance on holding oral examinations for PhD thesis was reviewed to take account of learning experience during this period. It is proposed to republish this as mandatory policy to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place where a remote viva is required. The policy was developed by the Doctoral College Operational Group in consultation with Academic Services, the Doctoral College and Colleges.

Discussion
4. During 2019/20 and 2020/21, Colleges have had a significant increase in requests for remote viva by video for the reasons stated above and currently all vivas are being held remotely by video. Colleagues report that remote vivas have worked well and there have been no significant issues associated with them.

5. The policy is designed for operation during "business as usual' to provide for the option of a remote viva and state what is required where one or more of the participants is not able to attend in person in Edinburgh. The full policy content is attached as Appendix 1.

6. The current Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees state that, "The examiners will hold an oral examination to assess a student's doctoral or MPhil thesis. Oral examination may be used as part of the assessment process for other research degrees." The regulations do not state that the viva will be held in person or in Edinburgh, therefore the policy is consistent with the regulations and clarifies that remote viva is an option.

Resource implications
7. Resources for setting up and holding PhD oral examinations are expected to be met from within existing College or School resources.

Risk management
8. The policy is intended to provide an optional remote viva where this is appropriate. There are risks associated with remote examination and these are

covered in section 3 of the policy. Experience over the past months has shown that risks can be mitigated.

Equality & diversity

9. The policy is intended to provide an option for remote examination where it is appropriate and no significant equality impacts are anticipated. Colleges will assess equality implications when granting approval for remote vivas. To provide accessible content, Academic Services will publish the policy as HTML web content.

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

10. Academic Services will include the policy as part of the annual communication on updated policies and regulations. Colleges should also communicate via appropriate channels locally.

Author
Susan Hunter, Academic Services
Kirsty Woomble, Head of PGR Student Office, College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences

Presenter
Professor Antony Maciocia

Freedom of Information
The paper is open.

PhD by Research oral examinations by video link

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Purpose of Policy

The policy provides principles for holding a postgraduate research oral (viva voce) examination remotely by video link. See Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

Scope: Mandatory Policy

Internal examiners for postgraduate research thesis assessment. Academic and support staff involved in postgraduate research degree examinations and administration. Postgraduate research students.

Contact Officer	Susan Hunter	Academic Policy Officer	susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 2005	Starts: 2005	Equality impact assessment: Covered by Assessment Regulations	Amendments: 28.04.15 05.05.16	Next Review: 2021/22

Approving authority	Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
Consultation undertaken	Doctoral College, APRC
Section responsible for guidance maintenance & review	Academic Policy Officer with responsibility for postgraduate research, Academic Services
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study www.drps.ed.ac.uk/
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code Research Degrees
Guidance superseded by this guidance	Previous versions of this guidance
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4990
Keywords	Viva, PhD oral examination, video-linked viva, video-linked oral

PhD by Research oral examinations by video link

Introduction

1. The University regards the physical attendance of all parties at the oral examination as most conducive to effective participation. However, some circumstances make it appropriate to consider conducting the oral examination by video link. Experience has shown that conducting oral examinations with some, or all, participants joining remotely does not reduce the quality or fairness of the examination. When conducting an oral examination with (some or all) participants appearing via video link, the following principles must be observed.

Approval

2. The authority for any decision to conduct an oral examination by video link lies with the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters, based on written application from Schools. Alternatively, where a College explicitly delegates this authority to Schools, the College must keep a record of the decisions taken.

3. The student and each of the examiners must signify in writing their agreement to conduct the examination in this way. Prior to making a decision, they should have the benefits and difficulties of the technology explained. For example, the risks of loss of connection during the examination; scheduling the examination at a conventional time across different time zones may be problematic; possible time delay that could slow the flow of discussion; and that the normal forms of cueing and interrupting do not work in the same way as in face-to-face contact.

4. The student should not feel under any pressure to agree to being examined by video link, but having given such an assurance, a student will not normally be permitted to appeal against an adverse result on grounds connected with their ability to operate the system. Where a student has questions or concerns about the process, they should discuss these with their supervisor.

Criteria

5. An application to conduct an oral examination remotely will be considered where the circumstances make it unreasonable to expect physical attendance by any of the attendees.

6. The oral examination should normally be held between two sites only, with the student accompanied by one of the examiners. A supervisor may attend, if appropriate, under the normal rules of attendance. Exceptionally, more sites may be used.

7. Where the student cannot be accompanied by one of the examiners, the Internal Examiner or Non-Examining Chair (where one is appointed) should check that the student has support available to them (for example from a friend, family member, or supervisor).

Operation of the oral examination

8. The chair of the oral examination should ensure that compatible versions of the chosen media are to be used and adequate telecommunications links are in place.

9. Where the student and an examiner are at the same site, flexible seating arrangements should be made that encourage direct interaction between the student and examiner, rather than with the camera.

10. If the internal and external examiners are at separate sites, they must take account of their need to consult privately with each other on the conduct of the examination: how the pre-oral discussion should be conducted; the form and sequence of questions; who should take the lead at various stages of the oral; what graphics, and document viewing facilities might be required. Examiners must not be in contact with each other until each has submitted their Part I report.

11. As part of the video link, examiners should discuss and agree privately (after the student has left the call) the content of Part II of the examiners' report. Their final signed report must then be submitted in the usual way.

12. Recording of any part of a video link oral examination is not permitted.

25 May 2021

Senate Academic Progress and Regulation Committee

25 March 2021

Extensions to Correction Periods in Doctoral Degrees

Description of paper
1. In all colleges there are a number of students who have been requesting fairly long or repeated extensions to their correction periods. This paper describes a practical approach to dealing with this situation in the short to medium term but also suggests alternative approaches for the longer term.

Action requested / recommendation
2. We would like to propose that the concession to grant such extensions in exceptional circumstances be delegated to Colleges so long as the combined correction extensions and programme extensions do not exceed 24 months in total and subject to guidance. We would also propose that this be included in regulation from 2022 and that a further light touch review takes place in the future to consider use of AIS during this period.

Background and context
3. Currently authorising programme extensions is delegated to Colleges up to 24 months for doctoral degrees with the constraint that single extensions should not exceed 12 months and that repeated extensions should be granted in increasingly exceptional cases.

4. Corrections periods to theses depend on the outcome of the viva. For (b) outcomes the maximum is set at 3 months, for (d) it is set at 12 months, but the default is 6 months, for (e) outcomes it is 24 months and the default is 12 months. For (c) it is set at 4 months. Notes that outcomes (c), (e)-(j) are very rare.

5. For (b), there is typically less commitment required from supervision (and, indeed, this is one of the criteria used to judge whether correction should be "major" or "minor").

6. Extensions requests are often for reasons of "special circumstances" and are not connected with the need to spend time on research or writing.

7. In CSE, there are 9 current cases, 6 of which are covid related and involve extensions of between 1 and 6 months. In CMVM there have been 15 requests from 11 students. Eight have so far completed with 3 still ongoing. In CAHSS there are 22 current cases.

8. I do not have data showing how many students fail to be awarded a PhD having been given minor or major corrections but I cannot think of any recent cases and so I believe it is a very small number. It will happen in a few cases where students do not need the PhD for employment and choose not to continue.

Discussion

9. While we would not want students to be continuing when there was little chance of success, it is hard to justify blocking a student from making corrections even if the period is somewhat longer than proposed by the examiners.

10. The pandemic has exacerbated this issue and we are seeing quite a few students who have significant difficulties in making any corrections. Access to supervisors has also been a problem. The concept of extension has also been confused by our funding bodies which have insisted that the students are not interrupted (suspended) but instead given extensions.

11. We may wish to treat the different outcomes differently. For a (b) and (d), the student has essentially passed, and the corrections cannot really be rejected in practice. All such students are re-matriculated and so subject to matriculation or continuation fees. On top of which the student is likely to be keen to finish. There is a cost to us in the form of supervision, access to facilities and administration but the direct cost is small especially where no study space is provided. The time limit is really a measure of the scale of the corrections. For (c), there is a new viva required and then subsequent evaluation. For (e), the student is very much regarded again as a student with an extension given by the combined maximum end date and the period given for resubmission.

12. For (e), it seems clear that we can treat the student in concession terms as if they have never submitted in the first place but have been granted an extension.

13. Generally, when granting extensions, we look for agreement by the student, primary supervisor and School/Deanery/Institute. We also look for a plan for completion. This last part is crucial, and we will tend to send extension requests back if the plan is absent or unsatisfactory.

14. Since students are rematriculated, it also makes sense to consistently apply AIS to this period. This would potentially remove the need for an extension and provide a more honest record of the corrections period in our systems. Currently we do often not do this, and it is a moot point whether it is possible within our current regulations.

Resource implications

15. There would be a small reduction in resources as a small number of concessions would not need to go to APRC for approval.
16. All students in the correction period are matriculated and so subject to matriculation or continuation fees. If a student is on interruption the fee is suspended.

Risk management

17. There is little risk either way. Allowing a student who may never complete to take longer has small resource implications, but these are offset if they can improve. Stopping a student from continuing may result in a considerable loss of work.

This is mitigated by allowing a student to re-enrol later, albeit at some cost to the student.

Equality & diversity

18. The implied relaxation of the rules may be beneficial to vulnerable students with unseen disabilities or considerable caring responsibilities.

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

19. The Doctoral College would disseminate and oversee its implementation.

Author

Antony Maciocia
(on behalf of the Doctoral College)
12ᵗʰ March 2021

Presenter

Antony Maciocia

Freedom of Information

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Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25th March 2020

CAHSS: Non-standard Academic Year for Executive MBA Part-time

Description of paper

1. The paper includes a proposal for a non-standard academic year for students completing the Executive MBA (Part-time).

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) is asked approve a permanent change to the academic calendar for the Executive MBA (part-time) programme. It is intended that teaching will start in January with induction events in December.

Background and context

3. APRC previously agreed to a January start for teaching in 2020/21 due to Covid-19. This request reflects lessons learnt from that experience. The programme concerned is self-contained and does not involve shared teaching with other programmes.

Discussion

In June 2020, approval was granted for a temporary change to the academic calendar for the EMBA programme. This saw teaching begin in January 2021, rather than September 2020. The School ran induction events in December 2020, mirroring how they had previously run such activities in August ahead staring teaching in September.

Although proposed as a response to disruption caused by Covid-19, the revised start date for the programme has proved beneficial with regards to student recruitment, cohort building and staff commitments.

With regards to recruitment, the later start date has allowed for recruitment for this programme to be more clearly differentiated from recruitment to the full-time MBA programme (the two degrees target different markets) and the separation of recruitment cycles allowed for more focused recruitment strategies for the EMBA. The later start date also attracted support from applicants who, as part-time student often had family commitments and appreciated the increased gap between summer family holidays, the deadline for making decisions about offers, and starting teaching. These points are supported by a comparative analysis of the 2018 and 2020 recruitment cycles. Recruitment in 2020 was 28% higher than the previous recruitment cycle.

The running of distinct induction events targeted specifically at the full-time (August) and part-time (December) cohorts appears to have assisted in fostering a better sense of cohort identity and are perceived as having improved the student experience. Staff feedback has also indicated that the split of launch dates allowed

for better workload management, and better focus on the specific needs of the two cohorts.

As with the previous request, the later start date will maintain the academic integrity of the programme with the total length of study unchanged. The EMBA is a fully enclosed programme with a distinctive cohort of students. As such, College support for this proposal on the understanding that it does not impact teaching for other programmes.

Resource implications
4. Resourcing implications have been considered at School and College level. Benefits to staff workload are one of the main motivations for the proposal.

Risk management

5. The closed nature of the programme means there are no specific risks identified with this proposal.

Equality & diversity
6. Equality and diversity has been considered as part of the programme design and delivery.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
7. The College Office will communicate the outcome of the decision to all key stakeholders involved in future delivery of the programme on behalf of the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval.

Author	**Presenter**
Dr Paul Norris	*Dr. Paul Norris*
16/03/2021	*Dean Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)*

Freedom of Information Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2021

Request Amendment to Start of Semester 2 for Postgraduate Taught Programmes in CMVM in 2021/22 academic year

Description of paper
1. This paper proposes an amendment to the 2021/22 published Semester 2/Term 2 start date for the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine's (CMVM) Online Learning (OL) Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes, and those on-campus PGT programmes with aligned timetables.

Action requested / recommendation
2. The Committee is asked to approve an amendment to the 2021/22 published Semester 2/Term 2 start date for CMVM OL and aligned on-campus PGT programmes to 10th of January 2022. This would bring the Semester 2/Term 2 start date forward by one week (see Appendix for list of programmes).

Background and context
3. For the 2021/22 Academic Year, the published teaching timetable is:
    *   Semester 1: 20th of September - 3rd of December 2021;
    *   Semester 2: 17th of January – 27th of May 2022;

4. CMVM OL PGT programmes are structured with 3 Terms of teaching, each of 10 weeks duration (with a break of 1 week between Weeks 5 and 6 of each Term). Term 1 coincides with University Semester 1, Term 2 currently coincides with Semester 2 start date; however a third Term is included:
    *   Term 1: 20th of September - 3rd of December 2021;
    *   Term 2: 17th of January – 1st of April 2022;
    *   Term 3: 18th of April – 1st of July 2022.

With this timescale in mind, the submission date of the final assessments at the end of Term 3 would be mid-July 2022. After allowing sufficient time for marking and moderation, the Exam Boards to ratify marks and progress students would then be held in late July/early August. This does not allow sufficient time to adequately complete marking, moderation and preparation of marks before the Exam Boards, nor does it accommodate the additional time required for the submission and ratification of assessments with agreed extensions.

Discussion
5. The late July/August Exam Boards manage the majority of student progression/exit award decisions for OL PGT students at Certificate and Diploma stages. For some programmes, dissertation marks and ratification of degree awards are also made at this time. This timescale does not provide ample time to allow students to make appropriate decisions over progression on their

programme, and /or consult with Personal Tutors, if necessary, in time for the next academic year,

6. Exam Boards cannot be delayed as students on OL programmes who hope to progress to the next stage of their studies must be informed of ratification and progression decisions with sufficient notice prior matriculation for the next academic year.

7. PGT staff (both Professional Service and Academic colleagues) are already operating under tight schedules to ensure all marking, moderation and associated administrative processes have been completed prior to Exam Boards. Delaying the start of Semester 2/Term 2 by an extra week in January 2022 will have a significant effect, further exasperating pressures on staff (for reference, 2020/21 Semester 2/Term 2 started on 11th January 2021).

8. University Staff need to be able to take leave between academic years

APRC is therefore requested to approve an amendment to the 2021/22 Semester 2 (Term 2) start date for CMVM OL and aligned on campus PGT programmes (see Appendix for list of programmes)

- Term 1: 20th of September - 3rd of December 2021;
- Term 2: **10th of January – 25th of March 2022**;
- Term 3: **11th of April - 24th of June 2022**.

Resource implications
9. None

Risk management
10. Only a very small number of CMVM students begin their PGT studies in Semester 2. The Welcome activities for these students, given their small numbers, can be adequately delivered between 5th January 2022 and 10th January 2022.

Equality & diversity
11. Permitting the changed start date for Semester 2 for CMVM OL (and aligned on campus PGT) programmes will have positive implications for equality and diversity. Colleagues will have the same amount of time as the current academic year to complete marking, moderation and administrative processes prior to exam boards, thereby not increasing stresses on individual staff.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
12. If APRC approves the updated timetable, Deanery/R(D)SVS Directors of PGT within CMVM will communicate with PGT programme teams. This will be disseminated to students and dates published on Deanery/R(D)SVS websites (*e.g.* https://www.ed.ac.uk/vet/staff-students/taught-postgraduates/semester-dates). Additionally it will be requested of Academic Services to update this information on these pages https://www.ed.ac.uk/semester-dates/programmes-with-non-standard-academic-years

Author(s)

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Presenter

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Supported by:
CMVM PG Learning and Teaching Committee – 10/03/2021

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Appendix – Programmes Impacted

Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Medicine

<u>Postgraduate Online Learning</u>

Advanced Clinical Practice (Online Learning) (MVetSci)
Advanced Veterinary Practice (Online Learning) (RCVS Certificate)
Applied Conservation Genetics and Wildlife Forensics (Online Learning) (MSc)
Applied Poultry Science (Online Learning) (MSc)
Clinical Animal Behaviour (Online Learning) (MSc)
Conservation Medicine (Online Learning) (MVetSci)
Equine Science (Online Learning) (MSc)
Food Safety (Online Learning) (MSc)
Global Food Security and Nutrition (Online Learning) (MSc)
International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law (Online Learning) (MSc)
One Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (Online Learning) (MSc)
Veterinary Epidemiology (Online Learning) (MSc)

Edinburgh Medical School

<u>Postgraduate Online Learning</u>

Anatomical Sciences (Online Learning) (PgDip)
Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
Clinical Education (Online Learning) (MSc)
Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning) (MSc)
Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (Online Learning) (MSc)
Clinical Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (ChM)
Clinical Trials (Online Learning) (MSc)
Critical Care (Online Learning) (MSc)
Data Science, Health and Social Care (Online Learning) (MSc)
Dental Sedation and Anxiety Management (Online Learning) (PgCert)
Epidemiology (Online Learning) (MSc)
Family Medicine (Online Learning) (MFM)
General Surgery (Online Learning) (ChM)
Global e-Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
Global Health and Infectious Diseases (Online Learning) (MSc)
Global Health Challenges (Online Learning) (PgCert)
Global Health Studies (Online Learning) (PgCert)
Imaging (Online Learning) (MSc)
Integrated Global Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc)
International Animal Health (Online Learning) (MSc)
Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc)
Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factors (Online Learning) (MSc)
Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (MSc)
Public Health (Online Learning) (MPH) (Full-time)
Public Health (Online Learning) (MPH) (Part-time)

Science Communication and Public Engagement (Online Learning) (MSc)
Stem Cells and Translational Neurology (Online Learning) (MSc)
Surgical Sciences (Online Learning) (MSc)
Trauma and Orthopaedics (Online Learning) (ChM)
Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (MSc)
Urology (Online Learning) (ChM)
Vascular and Endovascular Surgery (Online Learning) (ChM)

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2020

Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22

Description of paper

1. This paper contains the draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations for 2021/22. A "Key Changes" section is included to draw the Committee's attention to the key changes.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval.

Background and context

3. Annual review of degree regulations.

Discussion

4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations for academic year 2021/22. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments. Academic Services will submit a paper to the University Court, presenting the draft "Resolution" for its 26 April 2021 meeting and final Resolution at its 14 June 2021 meeting.

5. When changes were invited from Schools and Colleges by Academic Services this year for the 2021/22 regulations, we asked for essential changes only. This was based on the understanding that we could not expect staff in Schools and Colleges to engage with consultation around more complex or controversial issues at this time.

Resource implications

6. Any issues around resource will be covered in the key changes section.

Risk management

7. Any issues around risk management will be covered in the key changes section.

Equality & diversity

8. Any issues around equality and diversity will be covered in the key changes section.

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

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

Author
Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer and Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services, March 2021

Presenter
Dr Adam Bunni

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Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22

Key Changes

Links have been updated throughout the regulations were necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
9 Timing of admittance onto degree programmes and courses	Clarifies that two week rule also applies to courses which are not "core" or "compulsory"
47 Conflicting studies	Removes prohibition on concurrent degree programmes- remains at Colleges' discretion.
64 BA (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)	Further clarification from CAHSS about this degree.

Extract from Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22: Updated Regulations

Timing of admittance onto degree programmes and courses

9.   Students should commence their degree programme at the start of the academic year, and should commence the courses that they are enrolled on at the start of semester in which the courses are taught. No student will be admitted to a degree programme more than two weeks after the start of the academic year without the permission of the Head of College. No student will be enrolled on a course ~~that is part of their degree programme~~ more than two weeks after the start of semester in which the course is taught without the permission of the Head of College. Where a student withdraws from a course more than six weeks after the start of the relevant semester, the course enrolment remains on the student's record. Students in Honours years are not permitted to withdraw from a course marked as optional on the Degree Programme Table more than six weeks after the start of the relevant semester in order to substitute the course with another optional course <u>in a subsequent semester</u>, unless the relevant Board of Examiners has awarded a null sit for the course under the Special Circumstances procedure.

Conflicting Studies

47.   Students registered on a programme of study at this University may not undertake any other concurrent credit bearing studies in this (or in any other) institution, unless the College has granted permission. The College must be satisfied that any additional credit-bearing studies will not restrict the student's ability to complete their existing programme of study. ~~Students will not be permitted to undertake concurrent degree programmes in any circumstances.~~

BA (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)

64.

To qualify for the award of the degree of BA (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) students must have obtained 360 credit points from passes (or accreditation of prior learning) normally at the rate of 120 credit points per year.

The overall curriculum must include at least:

360 credit points, of which at least 240 credit points should must be at SCQF level 8, 9 or 10. Courses at SCQF level 8,9 or 10 must include:, comprising:

- A minimum of 200 credit points from courses in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- A minimum of 140 credit points in a major subject of study in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (which may be part of the 200 credit points listed in the point above) comprising related and consecutive courses in this subject over three years of which 60 credit points must be at SCQF level 9 or 10.

In addition, there must be at least 40 credit points at SCQF levels 7-10 in each of a minimum of two other subjects of study defined as 40 credits at SCQF levels 7-10.

Students have a free choice of the remaining credits at SCQF levels 7-10.

BA (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) in a designated discipline:

To qualify for the award of the BA (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) in a designated discipline students must have obtained 360 credit points (or accreditation of prior learning) normally at the rate of 120 credit points per year.

The overall curriculum must include at least:

360 credit points, of which at least 240 credit points mustshould be at SCQF level 8, 9 or 10. Courses at SCQF level 8,9 or 10 must include:, comprising:

- A minimum of 200 credit points from courses in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- A minimum of 160 credit points in a major subject of study in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (which may be part of the 200 credits listed in the point above) comprising related and consecutive courses in this subject over three years of which 80 credit points must be at SCQF level 9 or 10.

In addition, there must be at least 40 credit points at SCQF levels 7-10 in each of a minimum of two other subjects of study defined as 40 credits at SCQF levels 7-10.

Students have a free choice of the remaining credits at SCQF levels 7-10.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

25 March 2020

Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22

Description of paper
1. This paper contains the draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations for 2021/22. A "Key Changes" section is included to draw the Committee's attention to the key changes.

Action requested / recommendation
2. For discussion and approval.

Background and context
3. Annual review of degree regulations.

Discussion
4. APRC is invited to discuss the draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations for academic year 2021/22. Following this meeting, Academic Services will amend the draft regulations to take account of any Committee comments. Academic Services will submit a paper to the University Court, presenting the draft "Resolution" for its 26 April 2021 meeting and final Resolution at its 14 June 2021 meeting.

5. When changes were invited from Schools and Colleges by Academic Services this year for the 2021/22 regulations, we asked for essential changes only. This was based on the understanding that we could not expect staff in Schools and Colleges to engage with consultation around more complex or controversial issues at this time.

Resource implications
6. Any issues around resource will be covered in the key changes section.

Risk management
7. Any issues around risk management will be covered in the key changes section.

Equality & diversity
8. Any issues around equality and diversity will be covered in the key changes section.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
9. Academic Services will communicate approved regulations in the annual email update to Schools and Colleges on regulations and policies. Academic Services will also cover any changes to regulations in Boards of Examiners briefings and other relevant briefing events for staff in Schools and Colleges.

Author
Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer and Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services, March 2021

Presenter
Dr Adam Bunni

Freedom of Information   Open

Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22

Key Changes

Links have been updated throughout the regulations were necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
12 Conflicting Studies	Removed prohibition on concurrent degree programmes. Leaving this at Colleges' discretion. This proposed change is based on discussions with Colleges and admissions colleagues during the current session, in which it was established that it was not uncommon for students to undertake, for example, a part-time Master's programme at UoE, while also completing a part-time PhD programme elsewhere. The proposal presents minimal risk, since it reverts to the regulation in place before 2020/21. Colleges will still be entitled to refuse to allow concurrent study, where this may have a detrimental impact upon a student's ability to complete their programme.
16 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Added "(or 80 credits where a masters programme is comprised of 240 credits)" for consistency with granting RPL for one-third of total credits for taught programmes.

Extract from Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22: Updated Regulations

Conflicting Studies

12.   Students registered on a programme of study at this University may not undertake any other concurrent credit bearing studies in this (or in any other) institution, unless the College has granted permission. The College must be satisfied that any additional credit-bearing studies will not restrict the student's ability to complete their existing programme of study. Students will not be permitted to undertake concurrent degree programmes in any circumstances.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

16.   RPL can only be recognised at the point of admission to the University. The Head of College has the authority to recognise the transfer of a student's credit

previously gained either at the University or another institution and to count it towards their intended award. Before approval is granted the College must be satisfied that the learning to be recognised and transferred provides an adequate current basis for the programme or courses as set out in the appropriate Degree Programme Table. The maximum number of credits that the Colleges will grant RPL for taught programmes is one-third of the total credits for the award for which the student is applying, that is 20 credits for a postgraduate certificate; 40 credits for a postgraduate diploma; and 60 credits for a masters(or 80 credits where a masters programme is comprised of 240 credits). For research programmes, the maximum number of credits that the Colleges will grant RPL is 360 credits.

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March 2021