

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee  
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 30 May 2019 in the Assembly Room, Edinburgh  
Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI), High School Yards**

**AGENDA**

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2019** Enclosed
  2. **Matters Arising**
    - a) Electronic business 11 April 2019 - Postgraduate Taught Master's degrees involving a dissertation/research project
    - b) Electronic business 11 April 2019 - Joint PhD Programmes: Public Thesis Defence
    - c) Electronic business 7 May 2019 - External Examiners for Taught Programmes: policy review
- For discussion**
3. **Academic Misconduct - Revised Investigation Procedures and Proposed Future Work** CSPC 18/19 5 A
  4. **Update on Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions Project** CSPC 18/19 5 B
  5. **Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Financial issues** CSPC 18/19 5 C
  6. **Support for Study** CLOSED (D)
  7. **Proposed change to Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure** CSPC 18/19 5 E
  8. **Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy** CLOSED (F)
  9. **Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression** CSPC 18/19 5 G
  10. **Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20 – Tier 4 Students** CSPC 18/19 5 H
  11. **Draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20** CSPC 18/19 5 I
  12. **Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20** CSPC 18/19 5 J
- For information/formal business**
13. **Student Discipline Committee Membership 2019/20** CSPC 18/19 5 K
  14. **Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2019/20** CSPC 18/19 5 L

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|-----|---|----------------|
| 15. | <b>Jointly delivered PhDs with European partners – public defence</b> | CLOSED (M)     |
| 16. | <b>Senate Themes for 2019/20 Meetings</b>                             | CSPC 18/19 5 N |
| 17. | <b>Performance Sport Policy</b>                                       | CSPC 18/19 5 O |
| 18. | <b>Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting 22 March 2019</b>             | CSPC 18/19 5 P |
| 19. | <b>Any Other Business</b>   |                |

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee (CSPC)  
held at 2.00pm on Thursday 21 March 2019 in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

**Present:**

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)
Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Claire Vallance	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Representative of Researcher Experience Committee
Ellie Tudhope	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development
Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration

**In attendance:**

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

**Apologies for absence:**

Diva Mukherji	Vice President Education Students' Association
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 24 January 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

**2. Matters Arising**

**a. Postgraduate Assessment and Progression**

Dr Bunni updated the Committee on the initial responses from Schools to the Committee's proposal to explore Model C – retaining the current pass marks whilst removing the progression hurdle.

**b. Support for Study**

Tom Ward noted that the Committee would consider further proposals on this policy in May, following further consultation.

**3. Wednesday Afternoon Teaching (CSPC 18/19 4 A)**

The Committee noted the analysis of current adherence to the Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance, provided by the Head of Timetabling and Examination

Services. The paper acknowledged that core teaching should only take place on Wednesday afternoons in exceptional circumstances and noted the concern by students that that this Policy was not being implemented in full in some cases, and that this was disproportionately weighted towards PGT activity.

While there was no appetite by the Committee to conduct a wider review of the Policy, it agreed that the Wednesday afternoon hard constraint should only be relaxed where colleges have approved exemptions. The Committee therefore approved the following actions:

- That Timetabling and Examination Services would only agree to schedule teaching activities on a Wednesday afternoon once colleges had approved requests for exemptions to the policy and had informed Timetabling and Examination Services of this approval
- That Timetabling and Examination Services would give colleges a list of those courses that are currently scheduling teaching activities for Wednesday afternoons
- That Timetabling and Examination Services and Academic Services would provide colleges with guidance on what criteria to apply when considering requests for exemptions

The Committee also made the following points in discussion:

- The constraint on Wednesday afternoon teaching should not necessarily extend to teaching for members of staff on credit-bearing courses (e.g. the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice).
- Timetabling and Examination Services should convey to colleges the current disproportionate weighting towards PGT activity on Wednesday afternoons
- Preventing courses from teaching on Wednesday afternoons could potentially reduce the flexibility of the curriculum in some cases; it was not yet known whether some students would prefer this flexibility to free Wednesday afternoons.

<b>Action:</b> Timetabling and Examination Services and Academic Services to liaise with colleges on exemptions from the Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance
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#### **4. Academic Year Dates (CSPC 18/19 4 B)**

The Committee noted the further analysis by the Head of Timetabling and Examination Services which assessed the options for compressing the December 2020 examination dates into the optimally identified 10-day period for the first semester of 2020/21. The analysis identified that the 2020/21 December examination diet could be delivered within a 10-day period in the event that additional estate provision of 400-500 seats were secured, along with holding examinations on Saturdays.

The Director of Student Systems and Administration indicated that she was confident that the department could secure the additional budget in order to rent external space for this purpose, and that the Committee should therefore plan on the basis that the University could deliver this option.

The Committee endorsed this proposal as a solution to the challenge created by Semester 1 starting a week later in 2020, and made the following observations:

- This proposal could be rolled forward for future years in which the academic year followed the same pattern
- Academic Services would prepare a communication to Schools to encourage them to avoid teaching on the Thursday and Friday preceding the revision period in 2020/21.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to prepare a communication to Schools about the revision period 2020/21
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## 5. Service Excellence

### a. Service Excellence Programme: Student Administration and Support Update

Brian Butler, the Service Excellence Programme Manager, updated the Committee on the Service Excellence Programme project on Student Administration and Support, presenting a proposed future model.

Under the proposed model, Service Excellence would implement student hubs at school level, which will serve to provide information to students without them needing to engage with a range of different University structures. In order to be effective, the model would require clear responsibilities at University, college and school level. The proposed model would involve transferring to school level a range of individual student-related functions currently handled at college level.

The proposed model will be presented to the Student Administration and Support Board at the end of April.

The Committee noted that some areas of administration would still require college scrutiny, for example where there is a need for a separation of decision-making from the local area. The Service Excellence Programme Manager confirmed that the next stage of the process would determine whether there would be any exceptions to the proposed model. The Committee also noted that, prior to transferring any functions to School level, the University would need to establish that all Schools would have the infrastructure and management arrangements to deal with the functions in a rigorous way.

### b. Service Excellence Programme: Study and Work Away – Proposed change in arrangements for progression boards and Exchange Coordinators (CSPC 18/19 4 C)

The Committee approved proposals to change the planned progression board arrangements for students returning from optional study abroad, which would allow College Progression Boards in the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering continue to fulfil these functions in 2019/20, rather than a Board at University level. The Committee also agreed to change the planned current arrangements for the Study and Work Away Service to take on responsibilities held by Exchange Coordinators.

The Committee noted that proposals would involve changes to Undergraduate Degree Regulations 27-34 and that these changes would be added to those proposed in Paper CSPC 18/19 4 E.

The Committee noted that Service Excellence should agree the name of the Work and Study Away Service by early in the following week in order to include this with the Degree Regulations.

**Action:** Academic Services to update the Degree Regulations to reflect changes to Regulations 27-34

**Action:** Service Excellence to notify Academic Services of the name of the Work and Study Away Service

**c. Service Excellence Programme: Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (CSPC 18/19 4 D)**

The Committee noted the update on the proposals for the Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions project, and that the Service Excellence Programme planned to submit proposals for policy changes to the Committee for its approval at a later date.

**6. Degree Regulations**

**a. Draft Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 E)**

The Committee discussed and agreed the Undergraduate Degree Regulations for the academic year 2019/20, subject to adjustment to Regulation 5 (Disclosure of Criminal Offences) which Academic Services would agree with colleges after the meeting (this would apply to both undergraduate and postgraduate degree regulations).

**Action:** Academic Services to agree wording with colleges for Regulation 5.

**b. Draft Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 F)**

The Committee discussed and agreed the Postgraduate Degree Regulations for the academic year 2019/20, subject to adjustments to Regulation 7 (Disclosure of Criminal Offences). Academic Services also agreed to consider the wording for Regulation 9 further, since the question was raised as to whether this could apply to students on CDT programmes.

**Action:** Academic Services to agree wording with colleges for Regulations 7 and 9.

**7. Curriculum Opt-Outs**

**a. Update on planned MBChB for Healthcare Practitioners (Closed - G)**

The Committee noted the revised proposals for the programme, which reflected the changes agreed by the short-term task group appointed by CSPC at its last meeting.

**b. CMVM: Paediatric Emergency and Critical Care Medicine Cert/Dip/MSc Programme (CSPC 18/19 4 H)**

**c. CMVM: MSc Clinical Education: proposal route to complete degree without dissertation/research project (CSPC 18/19 4 I)**

The Committee noted the requests for both these programmes to offer an alternative to undertaking a dissertation in the final MSc year. The Committee agreed that, before reaching a decision, it would appoint a short-term task group to agree the criteria to apply when considering the academic rationale for these and other similar cases in future, and that this group would then decide on these two proposals on behalf of CSPC.

**Action:** Academic Services to set up the short-term task group to discuss the opt-out from a Master's dissertation.

#### **8. Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure: Proposed Amendments and Opt-Outs (CSPC 18/19 4 J)**

The Committee approved the proposed amendments and request for an exemption to the Policy, subject to minor adjustments to the wording.

#### **9. New Degree Programmes: Collaboration with the Gujarat Biotechnology University (Closed - K)**

Professor David Gray, Head of the School of Biological Sciences presented the paper which included preliminary information on the planned collaboration with the Gujarat Biotechnology University (GBU) to deliver postgraduate Master's degree programmes in Biotechnology.

The Committee considered the proposals and observed that the School should clarify following in future proposals:

- The use of technology for the programme, specifically whether it would be underpinned by Edinburgh VLEs and supported by the Information Services Group staff.
- The student and academic support infrastructure and the training which GBU would provide in relation to this support.
- The mechanisms for the student voice, including Staff-Student Liaison Committees and Course Enhancement Questionnaires.
- The ownership of the programme's intellectual property.
- Whether the regulatory arrangements would follow the University of Edinburgh's, or whether these would be replicated, and subsequently owned by GBU.

The Committee observed that, unlike other dual award arrangements, GBU would be entitled to award a degree for a programme of studies that it had not been delivering itself in the first few years; this issue would require further scrutiny by CSPC before the Committee was invited to approve the dual element.

#### **10. Distance Learning at Scale (Closed - L)**

The Committee considered and approved the non-standard credit structure for a University of Edinburgh 'MicroMaster's' and non-standard approaches to allowing repeats of the MicroMaster's assessment and email communications, noting the following against each of the three exemptions:

- The non-standard 30-credit MicroMaster's course structure, which represented an opt-out from the University's Framework Curriculum – the Committee noted

that colleges had agreed that a MicroMaster's would be a 30-credit award; the term 'MicroMaster's' was a brand name, however, and other institutions awarded different credit loads for awards with the same name. The University should therefore be mindful of this when marketing these programmes.

- The non-standard approach to allowing students to repeat the MicroMaster's Capstone assessment, which represents an opt-out from the Taught Assessment Regulations – the Committee agreed that the School Board of Studies would need to consider how to take account of resit results for the MicroMaster's when making progression and award decisions on the proposed Master's programme.
- The non-standard approach to email communications for MicroMaster's students, which represents a slightly different way of operating from that set out in the Policy on University use of Email as a Method of Contacting Students.

## **11. Senate Committees**

### **a. Review of the Structure of the Senate Committees – initial proposals for consultation (CSPC 18/19 4 M)**

The Committee discussed the proposals and suggested 'Academic Regulations and Policy' as its future title. The Committee also noted the importance of ensuring that its membership included the expertise required to consider an increasingly diverse set of issues, and agreed that the best approach to this was to co-opt members on a case-by-case basis, so that the Committee would not become too large in future.

### **b. Senate Committees Planning 2019/20 (CSPC 18/19 4 N)**

The Committee identified that agreement around an institution-wide algorithm for borderlines should be included in its priorities for the coming session.

## **12. Additions to the membership of the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee (CSPC 18/19 4 O)**

The Committee approved the addition of two members of staff to the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee.

## **13. Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee (CSPC 18/19 4 P)**

The Committee noted the report from the meeting of the Knowledge Strategy Committee on 18 January 2019.

## **14. Any Other Business**

Professor Murray thanked Tom Ward for his valuable contribution to CSPC as Director of Academic Services.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Academic Misconduct – Revised Investigation Procedures and Proposed Future Work**

### **Executive Summary**

Section A of this paper includes a revised draft version of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures for approval. Section B of this paper proposes optional future work to add additional guidance to the Procedures document or create a combined policy and procedures document.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Promoting academic integrity among students and taking action to address academic misconduct is crucial to the University's strategic aim of Leadership in Learning.

### **Action requested**

For approval – Committee members are asked to approve a revised version of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

For discussion – Committee members are invited to discuss and provide their views on the proposed options for future working relating to academic misconduct.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will publicise any changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures via the New and Updated Policies email to Schools and Colleges in June 2019.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The proposed changes to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures involve only minor changes to existing practice, and do not therefore carry any resource implications. The proposed additional work to create policy and guidance would require the time of Academic Services staff, and the time of relevant College and other staff members required for the consultation process.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

In order to safeguard the value and integrity of the awards offered by the University, it is vital that the University can have confidence that work for which students are awarded credit is their own. The University therefore needs to ensure adequate processes are in place to deal effectively with suspected occurrences of academic misconduct.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No equality and diversity implications have been identified during the consultation process. The procedures have been restructured to improve the clarity of the

document, and to make allowances for students who find it difficult to attend meetings in person or are not based on campus in Edinburgh.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

#### **Key words**

Academic misconduct, Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Contract Cheating.

#### **Originator of the paper**

Dr Charlotte Matheson, Academic Services, 21 May 2019.

# Academic Misconduct - Revised Investigation Procedures and Proposed Future Work

## Section A - Revised Investigation Procedures

### 1. Background

The Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures were scheduled for review during the 2018/19 academic year. Academic Services have reviewed the procedures, with significant input from all three College Academic Misconduct Officers. School Academic Misconduct Officers and Edinburgh University Students' Association have also been consulted and provided feedback as part of this process.

We propose a number of amendments to the Academic procedures document (Appendix A), including significant changes to the structure of the document to streamline processes and make them easier to understand. The current published version of the procedures is available online at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>.

### 2. Summary of Changes

The following is a summary of the key changes to the document:

Change	Draft document section
The structure of the document has been significantly changed. It is now broken into the following four 'umbrella' sections and renumbered in accordance with the new structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Suspected academic misconduct in assessed work submitted for taught courses</li> <li>B. Suspected academic misconduct in work submitted for postgraduate research programmes (other than taught components, which are investigated in line with A)</li> <li>C. Suspected academic misconduct by graduates of the University</li> <li>D. Review of a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) decision</li> </ul>	Whole document
A new section has been added at the beginning of the document to define Academic Misconduct and explain the purpose of the document.	1
The criteria for a School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) to deal with a case of suspected academic misconduct have been changed to better reflect current practice.  The current published procedures state:  "A SAMO will be able to deal with the case if it meets all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is a first offence; <b>and</b></li> <li>• the student is a first or second year undergraduate, or a postgraduate taught student in their first semester of study at a UK university, or a visiting student; <b>and</b></li> <li>• the SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through genuine lack of understanding (poor scholarship) rather than any deliberate intention to cheat; <b>and</b></li> <li>• the SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty."</li> </ul> The proposed new procedures state:  "A SAMO will be able to deal with the case if it meets all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a first offence (the relevant College can advise where it is a potential repeat offence); <b>and</b></li> </ul>	3.2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through a genuine lack of understanding by the student; <b>and</b></li> <li>• the SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty.</li> </ul> <p>In cases where the SAMO is unsure about whether the criteria above apply, the SAMO should consult the CAMO, who will determine whether the SAMO can deal with the case.”</p>	
The procedures now specify that where a case has been identified as poor scholarship rather than academic misconduct, “the SAMO or another relevant member of academic staff will address the issue with the student in assessment feedback, by email, or in a meeting. If appropriate, the assessment will be returned to the marker to determine a mark that fairly reflects the student’s own contribution.”	3.4
The document now specifies that SAMO may choose to invite a student to a preliminary meeting before deciding how to progress with a case. If the student does not attend, no adverse conclusions will be drawn.	3.5
For cases of suspected academic misconduct in taught courses, the CAMO now notifies the student’s Personal Tutor at the point that the student is initially contacted about the alleged offence, rather than later in the process.	4.2
The document now specifies that the SAMO can decide whether to conduct an interview electronically or offer the student a chance to make a written submission (in cases where the student is unable to attend in person).	4.5
The procedures now allow the panel to invite an academic staff member with relevant specialist knowledge to attend a student’s interview with the CAMO to provide specialist knowledge to assist the panel in making a decision (e.g. a language expert). The expert witness does not form part of the panel and is not involved in decision-making.	4.6
The revised procedure specifies that if an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld in relation to a student registered on a programme with Fitness to Practise requirements, further action may be taken under the relevant College Fitness to Practise Procedure. This will not involve reinvestigating the allegation of academic misconduct.	4.12
The revised document clarifies what is meant by “face value” mark and how mark penalties are deducted. It also clarifies what is meant by “splitting” a mark between two or more students.	5.4
The revised procedure allows for a formal warning to be issued by the CAMO in addition to any penalty/penalties. This has been added at the request of CAMOs.	5.4
The procedures now requires there to be a justifiable reason for the Board of Examiners to be able to challenge a CAMO’s decision.	14.1
A number of small wording changes have been made to improve the clarity of the document.	Whole document

## **Section B – Proposed Future Policy and Guidance Work**

### **3. Background**

In addition to revising the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures, Academic Services have carried out initial work to assess the viability of and need for policy work relating to the detection and prevention of academic misconduct. Currently, a small number of Russell Group and Scottish universities have implemented academic misconduct policies (e.g. York University), or policies relating to the use of text matching software such as Turnitin (e.g. Cambridge University), some of which are published in a combined document with their academic misconduct investigation procedures. However, these policies vary greatly in terms of their area of focus and level of detail.

Two key themes that emerge from current Russell Group and Scottish university policies relating to academic misconduct are (i) contract cheating and the use of essay mills and (ii) the use of text matching software.

(i) Contract cheating and the use of essay mills

Contract cheating in universities continues to be a cause of media interest. It has also been consistently highlighted as an area of concern by College Academic Misconduct Officers and School Academic Misconduct Officers during CAMO and SAMO meetings. Work produced by “essay mills” (companies which produce tailored essays in exchange for money, allowing students to pass off the work as their own) is not normally picked up by text matching software, making it particularly difficult to identify.

There has been strong support from UK universities for a change in legislation in regard to essay mills and the business of contract cheating. In September 2018, 45 UK Vice-Chancellors and heads of organisation sent an open letter to Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds, calling for a legislative ban on essay mills and the advertising of contract cheating services. Essay mills still remain legal in the UK, and although the UK government has stated that it is exploring options to combat essay mills, the response of the Universities Minister at the time placed the onus on institutions to find ways to address the issue.

In October 2017, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) released a guidance document for Higher Education institutions “Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education: How to Address Contract Cheating, the Use of Third-Party Services and Essay Mills”. This document outlines a number of key action points for universities, including the advice to “Provide information that focuses specifically on the implications of using third-party assistance in cheating” (page 9). The University does not currently provide a centralised source of information for students which specifically outlines the implications of using of third-party assistance for written assessments, although ‘cheating’ is listed as an academic misconduct offence in the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures, and information is available via both the Institute for Academic Development and the Advice Place regarding good academic practice. Whilst the proposed draft Academic Misconduct Procedures have been revised to specifically mention contract cheating as an academic misconduct offence, a more detailed policy statement which provides a definition of contract cheating would better fit the advice provided by the QAA.

In March 2019 Turnitin released Authorship Investigate, a tool which it claims can identify contract cheating through the use of linguistic analysis and natural language processing. Learning, Teaching and Web Services are currently monitoring feedback on the software from other institutions, but there are no immediate plans to buy this service. It is likely that significant University-wide consultation would be required, and recurrent funding secured, before any investment in this software could take place.

(ii) The use of text matching software

Turnitin text matching software is used widely across the University to check originality in written coursework submissions, but there are currently no policy guidelines regarding its use. Setting out clear expectations around the expected use of the tool is likely to result in a more consistent student experience and would potentially enable more consistent staff training in the use of the tool. However, there are limitations in the software that make it unsuitable for use in certain types of assessments and across the University there is debate

over its use in formative assessments, for PGR assessments, as an educational tool and in some cases the ethics of using the service itself.

In March 2019, Academic Services contacted School Academic Misconduct Officers asking them to provide answers to a short survey regarding the use of Turnitin within their respective schools to understand better the different ways in which the tool is used. SAMOs from twelve Schools responded, and their responses indicated the following:

- SAMOs reported that, to their knowledge, most undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses use Turnitin as a blanket tool for text matching for written summative coursework assessments;
- In cases where Turnitin is not used to detect possible plagiarism in summative coursework assessments, this is typically either because Turnitin is not a suitable tool for the type of assessment or because the assessment is small and worth only a few percentage points. Turnitin is not suitable for text matching in assessments written in a language other than English, or for assessments which rely heavily on the use of images, computer code or mathematical symbols;
- Five out of twelve SAMOs reported that Turnitin is used for formative assessments in some courses within their schools. However, this use is not consistent across or between schools;
- Only one SAMO was aware of published School guidelines regarding the use of Turnitin, although other SAMOs reported schools having standard, but unpublished, procedures for text matching for further investigation through Turnitin;
- The majority of schools do not use Turnitin for PGR assessments, although some use Turnitin as an educational and screening tool at certain points throughout the PhD prior to submission (e.g. during annual reviews);
- Some course organisers allow students to check their work for originality prior to submitting it, allowing the use of Turnitin as an educational tool. However, this practice is not common and is viewed as undesirable by other members of staff who believe that using Turnitin in this way does not help students to gain a good understanding of good academic practice, and may enable students to find ways to cheat.

These responses indicate a wide variation in the use of Turnitin across different schools and courses. It is also not clear from these responses the extent to which the use of Turnitin is being driven by widespread use of associated marking tools (Grademark) in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in particular.

#### **4. Options for future work**

The University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures set out the University's procedures for dealing with suspected academic misconduct by students or graduates of the University. However, academic misconduct policy statements currently sit within Section 30 of the Taught Assessment Regulations (Appendix B) and Regulation 26 of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Appendix C). There is no separate document outlining the University's policy on academic misconduct.

##### Option One – Guidance Appended to Academic Misconduct Procedures

There is scope for further non-mandatory guidance to be appended to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures, provided as web content, or both. This guidance would provide a more detailed explanation of the key types of academic misconduct referred to within the procedures document (including contract cheating), provide advice on maintaining academic integrity and clearly delineate the difference between proofreading, editing and ghost-writing.

The proposed guidelines would cover the following areas:

- Academic misconduct (general)
  - Further information about key terms used in the Procedures document (e.g. 'contract cheating', 'self-plagiarism');
  - Emphasis on the importance of academic integrity.
- Contract cheating
  - Key differences between proofreading and more substantive editing or ghost writing by a third party;
  - Key considerations that students should be aware of when engaging the services of a proof-reader.
- Turnitin
  - Information about students' intellectual property rights in relation to work submitted via Turnitin;
  - Specific considerations for examiners to be aware of when considering the use of Turnitin for PGR thesis submissions;
  - Information and recommendations about the use of Turnitin as an educational tool (e.g. the use of the tool for students to check their work prior to submission to identify potential causes for concern);
  - Recommendations for other opportunities for students to engage in learning opportunities in relation to academic integrity, especially where they are not given access to the use of Turnitin as an educational tool;
  - Guidance regarding informing students about how Turnitin will be used for specific courses or programmes.

#### Option Two – Combined Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures Document

In addition to the above, there is also scope to extract the policy statements on suspected academic misconduct from both the Taught Assessment Regulations and the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees and combine these into an Academic Misconduct Policy and Investigation Procedures document. Creating a single policy and procedures document would have the advantage of making the information more visible and easier to publicise.

The proposed policy would cover the following key points

- That all instances of alleged academic misconduct will be investigated under the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures;
- That academic misconduct can still take place even when a student has no intention to deceive;
- That alleged academic misconduct will not be excused by a student previously having got away with similar behaviour in the past;
- That the use of any third parties (such as essay mills, family members or friends) to write or significantly edit a student's work constitutes academic misconduct;
- Definitions of key terms.

The policy would be included as a preface to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures and the document would be renamed "Academic Misconduct Policy and Investigation Procedures".

#### **5. Timelines for proposed options for future work**

Option One could be completed over the summer and brought to the Committee by electronic business for implementation from the beginning of the 2019/20 academic session.

Option Two could be completed in time for the 2020/2021 academic year.

#### **6. Requested Actions**

The Committee is invited to **approve** the revised Procedures (Appendix A), for implementation from the beginning of the 2019/20 academic session.

The Committee is also asked to **discuss** the options for future work and **advise** which, if any, of the options they support.

## Appendix A: Revised Academic Misconduct Procedures



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

### Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

#### Purpose of Procedure

This document sets out the University's procedures for dealing with suspected cases of academic misconduct by students or graduates of the University. These procedures apply to all types of academic misconduct including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit and personation.

The University takes very seriously any suspected incidences of academic misconduct and aims to ensure that all suspected cases are investigated efficiently and dealt with appropriately.

#### Scope: Mandatory Procedure

All staff and students

<b>Contact Officer</b>	Charlotte Matheson	Academic Policy Officer	<a href="mailto:charlotte.matheson@ed.ac.uk">charlotte.matheson@ed.ac.uk</a>
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#### Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 01.10.12	<b>Starts:</b> 01.08.2018	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b>	<b>Amendments:</b> 11.12.15 02.06.16, 16.06.17 05.07.18	<b>Next Review:</b> 2023/24
<b>Approving authority</b>	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)				
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	College Academic Misconduct Officers, College administrative staff dealing with academic misconduct, EUSA.				
<b>Section responsible for procedure maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	Academic Misconduct Report Form Code of Student Conduct Code of Student Conduct Guidance				
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	UK Quality Code – B6				
<b>Procedures superseded by this procedure</b>	Previous versions of the Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct				
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
<b>Keywords</b>	Academic misconduct, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit, personation				



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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### 1. Definition of Academic Misconduct

- 1.1 Academic misconduct is defined by the University as the use of unfair means in any University assessment. This includes assisting a student to make use of unfair means, and doing anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment. Examples of misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, self-plagiarism (that is, submitting the same work for credit twice at the same or different institutions), collusion, falsification, cheating (including contract cheating, where a student pays for work to be written or edited by somebody else), deceit, and personation (that is, impersonating another student or allowing another person to impersonate a student in an assessment).
- 1.2 These procedures explain how the University investigates allegations of academic misconduct in relation to any work submitted for assessment. The University may also investigate cases where a student is alleged to have committed an act of academic misconduct in a piece of work which has not been submitted for assessment at the University (e.g. a conference paper or publication) under the Code of Student Conduct, where this may represent a breach of the Code:  
  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/codeofstudentconduct.pdf>
- 1.3 Staff investigating allegations of academic misconduct will make a decision based on the balance of probabilities. This means that they will be satisfied that an academic misconduct offence has been committed if they consider that, on the evidence available, it is more likely than not that an offence has been committed.

#### **A. Suspected academic misconduct in assessed work submitted for taught courses**

### 2. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct in taught courses

- 2.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a student may have committed an academic misconduct offence in an assessed piece of work submitted for a taught course must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form. They will submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO), informing the relevant Course Organiser. The work under investigation will be assessed and awarded a face value mark prior to referral to the SAMO. The face value mark is the mark that the work is believed to merit based solely on the content as presented, assuming no academic misconduct has taken place.
- 2.2 The Academic Misconduct Report Form is available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>

### 3. Investigation by the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) – suspected academic misconduct in taught courses

- 3.1 The SAMO is responsible for deciding whether there is a case to answer. The SAMO will discuss the case with the relevant Course Organiser and/or marker and can consult with the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) if necessary. If the SAMO decides that there



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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are grounds for investigation, they will determine whether they are able to deal with the case or whether it needs to be referred to a CAMO.

- 3.2 A SAMO will be able to deal with the case if it meets all of the following criteria:
- it is a first offence (the relevant College can advise where it is a potential repeat offence); **and**
  - the SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through a genuine lack of understanding by the student; **and**
  - the SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty.

In cases where the SAMO is unsure about whether the criteria above apply, the SAMO should consult the CAMO, who will determine whether the SAMO can deal with the case.

- 3.3 The SAMO cannot apply a mark penalty or make any alteration to marks for cases outlined above in 3.2.

- 3.4 For cases identified by the SAMO as poor scholarship rather than academic misconduct, the SAMO or another relevant member of academic staff will address the issue with the student in assessment feedback, by email, or in a meeting. If appropriate, the SAMO will return the assessment to the marker to determine a mark that fairly reflects the student's own contribution.

- 3.5 A SAMO may, at their discretion, invite a student to a preliminary meeting before deciding how to proceed with the case. The student may be accompanied to that meeting by a member of the University community, e.g. their Personal Tutor or an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place. The SAMO or CAMO may not draw any inference if the student chooses not to attend the meeting. If the student is unable to attend in person, the SAMO will consult with the student and select one of the following options:

- To conduct the meeting electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.); **or**
- To offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.

- 3.6 The SAMO will refer all cases which fail to meet the criteria set out at 3.2 above to the CAMO. Allegations of serious misconduct, including examination misconduct and contract cheating, will always be referred to the CAMO.

- 3.7 When referring a case to the CAMO, the SAMO must complete the relevant section of the Academic Misconduct Report Form and submit this with any relevant documentation to the College Academic Misconduct Administrator.

### 4. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - suspected academic misconduct in taught courses

- 4.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied. As part of this investigation, the CAMO should ascertain whether or not this is the student's first academic misconduct offence.

- 4.2 If the CAMO considers there is a case to answer, they will write to the student suspected of academic misconduct describing the alleged offence and inviting the student to respond to the



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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evidence reported by the School. The CAMO will copy the initial correspondence to the student's Personal Tutor and encourage the student to speak with their Personal Tutor.

- 4.3 Where the student acknowledges the offence and there is sufficient information for the CAMO to make a decision, the CAMO may decide that there is no need for a formal academic misconduct interview. In such cases the CAMO will write to the student and the SAMO, to inform them of the outcome and any penalty decision. The SAMO will advise the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners of the decision and any penalty to be enacted (see Section 6). If the CAMO's recommendations relate to specific staff members, the SAMO will forward each recommendation to the relevant staff member. Where appropriate, the SAMO, or another member of academic staff, will also offer to meet with the student concerned in order to provide advice on academic best practice
- 4.4 In all other cases, the CAMO will invite the student to attend an interview. The interview will be conducted by a panel chaired by the CAMO (or nominee), and including at least one representative SAMO from that College (not from the same School as the student). The CAMO will be assisted by a note-taker who will take a record of the meeting.
- 4.5 Where the CAMO conducts an interview with the student, this should be held in person wherever possible. The student may be accompanied by a member of the University community, e.g. an adviser from the Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place, or their Personal Tutor. If the student is unable to attend in person, the CAMO will consult with the student and select one of the following options:
  - To conduct the interview electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.); **or**
  - To offer the student the opportunity to make a written submission.
- 4.6 In exceptional cases, the panel may invite an academic staff member with relevant specialist knowledge to attend the interview as an expert witness. In such cases, the expert will provide specialist knowledge to assist the panel in making a decision. However, the expert will not form part of the panel, and will not be involved in any decision making.
- 4.7 The purpose of the interview will be to enable the panel to obtain further relevant information about the alleged academic misconduct offence and to allow the student the opportunity to put forward their response to the allegation. The panel will take this information into account when deciding on any penalty to be applied.
- 4.8 Following the interview, the CAMO will send a confidential report of the meeting to the student. The student will be given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the report. The CAMO will then approve a final version of the report.
- 4.9 The CAMO, in consultation with the rest of the panel, will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 5.1 below). The CAMO will inform the student of the decision as soon as possible following the outcome of the meeting.
- 4.10 The CAMO will send a report of the meeting, the outcome, and any recommendations arising from the case, to the reporting SAMO.
- 4.11 The SAMO will forward the outcome of the case, including any penalty to be enacted, to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners (see section 6). If the CAMO's recommendations relate to specific staff members, the SAMO will forward each recommendation to the relevant staff member.



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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- 4.12 If an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld in relation to a student registered on a programme with Fitness to Practise requirements, further action may be taken under the relevant College Fitness to Practise Procedure. This will not involve reinvestigating the allegation of academic misconduct.
- 5. Penalty decisions available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - academic misconduct in taught courses**
- 5.1 In deciding whether or not it is appropriate to apply a penalty, and which penalty to apply, the CAMO will take into account the severity, perceived intent and benefit to the student of the academic misconduct, as well as any previous academic misconduct offences.
- 5.2 Any penalty will apply **only** to the specific work under investigation, which in itself may represent only a part of the overall course assessment. The College will retain a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript. In cases where one or more students have colluded on a piece of work, penalty decisions for each student will be made on an individual basis.
- 5.3 Where the student claims that the affected assessment was impacted by special circumstances, the CAMO will advise the student to request consideration of these by the appropriate Special Circumstances Committee. The CAMO will not take account of special circumstances in reaching a penalty decision.
- 5.4 The following options are available to the CAMO:
- (a) To decide that there is no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
  - (b) In the case of a first offence which is a result of poor scholarly practice rather than any deliberate attempt to deceive, the CAMO may decide that a mark penalty will not be appropriate;
  - (c) A penalty deducting 10, 20 or 30 marks from the face value mark will be applied. The penalty applied should be proportionate to the offence. The face value mark must be expressed as a percentage using the relevant [Common Marking Scheme](#) (e.g., 15/20 must be presented as 75% so that, for example, a 30 mark penalty would reduce the mark to 45%);
  - (d) The mark is to be reduced to zero;
  - (e) In cases where students have colluded in producing a piece of work, the face value mark may be split (not necessarily equally) between the students involved. For instance, a face value mark of 70 may be split equally between two students, so that each student receives a mark of 35;
  - (f) In serious cases or where the student has a record of having committed a number of previous academic misconduct offences, the CAMO may decide to refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

The CAMO may choose to issue a formal warning in addition to one or more of the above.

### **6. Application of penalties by the Board of Examiners - taught courses**

- 6.1 The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty determined by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO). It cannot apply any additional penalty for the offence. If the student has submitted Special Circumstances relating to the affected assessment the Board will take into account the decision of the Special Circumstances Committee when reaching its decision, in accordance with the Special Circumstances Policy:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances/>

### **B. Suspected academic misconduct in work submitted for postgraduate research programmes (other than taught components, which are investigated in line with A)**

#### **7. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct in postgraduate programmes**

- 7.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a student undertaking a postgraduate research programme may have committed an academic misconduct offence (in the thesis or other work submitted for assessment and/or progression) must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form in conjunction with the relevant SAMO. They must submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the CAMO.

- 7.2 The Academic Misconduct Report Form is available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>

#### **8. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) – suspected academic misconduct in postgraduate programmes**

- 8.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied.

- 8.2 If the CAMO considers that there is a case to answer, the CAMO will arrange for an academic misconduct panel comprising the CAMO and one other relevant academic member of staff (for example a relevant College Dean or a Graduate School Director or School Academic Misconduct Officer from a different School in the same College) to interview the student, following the same procedure as outlined in 4.5-4.8.

- 8.3 The CAMO, in consultation with the rest of the panel, will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 9.1 below). The CAMO will inform the student of the decision as soon as possible following the outcome of the meeting. The CAMO will provide the student's principal supervisor with an outline of the decision.



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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- 8.4 Except in cases referred for further consideration under the Code of Student Conduct, once the CAMO has approved the report of the meeting and decided on the penalty (if any) to be applied, the CAMO will submit a written report to the SAMO for forwarding to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. This will include details of any penalty which the Board must apply in light of the decision (see section 9 below).
- 9. Penalty decisions available to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) – academic misconduct in postgraduate programmes**
- 9.1 In deciding whether or not it is appropriate to apply a penalty, and which penalty to apply, the CAMO will take into account the severity, perceived intent and benefit to the student of the academic misconduct, as well as any previous academic misconduct offences.
- 9.2 Where the student claims that the affected assessment was impacted by special circumstances, the CAMO will advise the student to request consideration of these by the appropriate Special Circumstances Committee. The CAMO will not take account of special circumstances in reaching a penalty decision.
- 9.3 The following options are available to the CAMO:
- (a) Decide that there is no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
  - (b) Allow the student to edit and resubmit the work having corrected the affected section(s)\*;
  - (c) Instruct the examiners to reassess the work with the affected sections removed (without offering the student the chance to edit)\*;
  - (d) Deem the thesis (or dissertation, or other assessment or components of assessment) to have failed and instruct the Board of Examiners accordingly;
  - (e) In serious cases or where the student has a record of having committed a number of previous academic misconduct offences, the CAMO may decide to refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:  
  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>
- \*Options (b) and (c) may involve the thesis no longer being fit for a specific award.
- 9.5 Where the work affected has been submitted for annual review the CAMO will submit a report, including a recommendation, to the student's annual review panel.
- 9.6 The relevant College will keep a record of any penalties applied by the CAMO, but this will not appear on a student's transcript.
- 10. Application of penalties by the Board of Examiners – postgraduate programmes**



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- 10.1 The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty determined by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO). It cannot apply any additional penalty for the offence. If the student has submitted Special Circumstances relating to the affected assessment the Board will take into account the decision of the Special Circumstances Committee when reaching its decision, in accordance with the Special Circumstances Policy:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/special-circumstances/>

### 11. Students funded by UK Research Councils

- 11.1 Where there is evidence that a student who is receiving funding from one of the UK Research Councils may have committed an act of academic misconduct in their research, the University is required to report this to the relevant Research Council. Staff reporting suspected academic misconduct to the relevant CAMO should indicate on the Academic Misconduct Report form where a student is funded by a UK Research Council. Should the CAMO decide that there is a case to answer, they will notify the School, who will inform the relevant Research Council of the allegations against the student, and provide updates on the outcome of the case.
- 11.2 Policies and guidance relating to research integrity for students funded through UK research councils are published by UK Research and Innovation (formerly known as Research Councils UK), and can be found online at:

<https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/research-integrity/>

### C. Suspected academic misconduct by graduates of the University

#### 12. Reporting of suspected academic misconduct – graduates

- 12.1 Any member of staff who has evidence that a graduate of the University may have committed an academic misconduct offence that could impact upon the award, or classification of award, including the award of postgraduate Merit or Distinction, must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form in conjunction with the relevant SAMO. They should submit the form and any other relevant documentation to the CAMO.

#### 13. Investigation by College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) - graduates

- 13.1 If the CAMO considers there is a case to answer, the CAMO will write to the graduate notifying them of the allegations and inviting them to attend an interview. The interview procedures for graduates are identical to the investigation and interview procedures for enrolled students (sections 4.2 to 5.4 for taught courses, and 8.2 to 9.6 for research programmes).
- 13.2 Following investigation the following options are open to the CAMO:
- (a) If there is no case to answer, or if it is concluded that academic misconduct is proven but was taken into account at the time of the original award, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. No further action will be taken;



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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- (b) If the allegation is found to be proven, but is unlikely to have impacted on the award or classification of award (including the award of postgraduate Merit or Distinction) made to the graduate, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. No further action will be taken;
- (c) If the allegation is found to be proven, and is likely to have impacted on the award or class of award made to the graduate, the CAMO will refer the case for disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. In such cases, the CAMO investigation is equivalent to that of the Conduct Investigator for other student conduct cases, and no further investigation is required under the Code of Student Conduct. The CAMO may refer the case to a Student Discipline Officer, or to the Student Discipline Committee, as appropriate. If referring to the Student Discipline Committee, the CAMO should contact the Secretary to the Student Discipline Committee to discuss the matter. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to Student Discipline Officers and the Student Discipline Committee under the Code of Student Conduct are available at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/codeofstudentconduct.pdf>

### D. Review of a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) decision

#### 14. Request for a review by the Board of Examiners

- 14.1 If the Board of Examiners believes that there is a justifiable reason to challenge the CAMO's decision about the penalty to be applied, the Convener may request that the decision be referred for review by the CAMOs of the University's other two Colleges jointly. The relevant Convener will submit a request in writing to the relevant contact in Academic Services, outlining the reasons for challenging the decision. The Convener will write to the student to inform them that their case has been referred for review, explaining that the final course result has therefore not yet been agreed.
- 14.2 Academic Services will arrange for the case to be reviewed by the CAMOs of the other two Colleges. The original investigating CAMO will be required to submit a copy of all of the case documentation which was considered by the CAMO along with copies of the report and decision letter. Each CAMO will be sent the documentation and will be asked to come to a decision separately before meeting to discuss the case; this meeting may be held by correspondence. The CAMOs may decide to invite the student to a further academic misconduct interview, following the same procedure as outlined in section 4.5. The CAMOs may be assisted by a note-taker who will take a record of the meeting.
- 14.3 Once the meeting and any further academic misconduct interview has been held, the two reviewing CAMOs will make a joint decision about whether or not to uphold the original investigating CAMO's decision, to rescind a penalty or to apply an alternative penalty. In determining an alternative penalty, the reviewing CAMOs may only choose from those penalties listed in 5.4 (for work submitted as part of a taught course), 9.3 (for students undertaking postgraduate research programmes) and 13.2 (for graduates).
- 14.4 Academic Services will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the student in writing of the joint CAMO decision. The original investigating CAMO will be informed of the outcome of the review. The Board will be required to adhere to that decision and cannot



## Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures

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request a further review. The Convener of the Board of Examiners will write to the student to inform them of the final course result agreed by the Board.

### 15. Student right of appeal

- 15.1 CAMO decisions resulting in mark penalties are ratified by Boards of Examiners. Students have a right to appeal decisions made by Boards of Examiners, including decisions affected by the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation. Students wishing to submit an academic appeal should refer to the University's Student Appeal Regulations and related guidance at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals>

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## **Appendix B – Extract from Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19**

### **Regulation 26 Academic misconduct**

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

#### **Application of the regulation**

26.1 Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or your own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to cheat. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.

26.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.

26.3 A student who has submitted work for one course at this or another University must not submit the same work or part of the work to attempt to achieve academic credit Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19 Policy Title 27 through another course. See also the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations at: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

26.4 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proofreaders should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place:

[www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support\\_and\\_advice/the\\_advice\\_place/academic/peerproofreading/](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/peerproofreading/)

26.5 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission.

26.6 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website. [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct)



## **Appendix C – Extract from Taught Assessment Regulations Academic Year 2018/19**

### **Regulation 30 Academic misconduct**

It is an offence for any student to make use of unfair means in any University assessment, to assist a student to make use of such unfair means, to do anything prejudicial to the good conduct of the assessment, or to impersonate another student or allow another person to impersonate them in an assessment. Any student found to have cheated or attempted to cheat in an assessment may be deemed to have failed that assessment and disciplinary action may be taken.

#### **Application of the regulation**

- 30.1 Marks or grades can only be given for original work by students at the University. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another or one's own previously assessed original work. It is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, may be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The innocent misuse or quotation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement can constitute plagiarism, even when there is no deliberate intent to deceive. Work may be deemed to be plagiarised if it consists of close paraphrasing or unacknowledged summary of a source, as well as word-for-word transcription, or if it involves the use of essays or answers produced by another individual or service. Any failure adequately to acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work could lead to lower marks and to disciplinary action being taken.
- 30.2 It is academically fraudulent and an offence against the University's Code of Student Conduct for a student to invent or falsify data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material contributing to any student's assessed work or for a student knowingly to make use of such material. It is also an offence against University's Code of Student Conduct for students to collude in the submission of work that is intended for the assessment of individual academic performance or for a student to allow their work to be used by another student for fraudulent purposes.
- 30.3 Students need to be careful when asking peers to proof-read their work. Proofreaders should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English. They should not advise on subject matter or argumentation. Edinburgh University Students' Association runs a peer proof-reading scheme and information can be sought from the Advice Place:  
[https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support\\_and\\_advice/the\\_advice\\_place/academic/peerproofreading/](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/peerproofreading/)
- 30.4 Students need to be careful to avoid academic misconduct when submitting group projects and to be clear about their individual contribution to the submission. 30.5 Information on academic misconduct and plagiarism, and how such cases will be handled, is given on the Academic Services website. [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct)
- 30.6 Exam hall regulations can be found at:  
[www.docs.sasq.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf](http://www.docs.sasq.ed.ac.uk/registry/exams/ExamHallRegs.pdf)

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Update on Special Circumstances & Coursework Extensions project**

### **Executive Summary**

*This paper is an update from the latest on the above project since March 2019.*

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

*This aligns with the University's commitment to the Service Excellence Programme. The project sits within the 'Student Administration & Support' strand of the programme.*

### **Action requested**

*CSPC is asked to consider & reflect on the information given, and provide feedback where relevant.*

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

*Any agreed action will be communicated to the SCEC Project Board and SA&S Board.*

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

*Resource implications and staff profiles are being recalculated along with the changing scope of the project, and will be presented to CSPC later in the year*

#### **2. Risk assessment**

*The project has a comprehensive Risk Log managed by the project manager, and reported to the SA&S Programme*

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

*An Equality Impact Assessment has taken place conducted by the project team, with ongoing work throughout the project*

#### **4. Freedom of information**

*The paper is open*

**Key words**

Service Excellence Programme, Student Administration & Support, Special Circumstances, Coursework Extensions

**Originator of the paper**

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# Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (SCEC)

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**CSPC, 30 May 2019**

## Summary

This paper provides an update on progress of the SCEC project. Since the last meeting of CSPC, work has been underway on a variety of staff and student workshops (details below), School and College engagement, and system development.

The project had intended to bring policy changes related to Coursework Extensions to the May CSPC meeting, specifically on:

1. Self-certification by students
2. Standard 7-day (calendar) extension on coursework, where extensions permitted at all
3. Requirement for schools to capture reason for assessments deviating from defaulted 7-day extension standard
4. No requirement for schools to process requests for late submission

The SCEC Project Board agreed on 10 May to delay policy changes until the September CSPC meeting to enable awareness to be raised of the proposed changes within Schools. The current proposal within the business case is for coursework extensions to be primarily processed by the dedicated team, with automation introduced where possible.

The project team has developed a plan for engaging with schools, with the objective of bringing a finalised set of policy changes for coursework extensions to the September CSPC meeting for approval.

System changes to allow recording of the data required to support the policy will be developed and tested in preparation.

Further workshops and other student/staff engagement are being scheduled throughout May and June, and those will inform final policy changes required for Special Circumstances applications, for approval at the November 2019 CSPC meeting.

## Workshops Summary of Decisions (For Information)

### Application validity

- The dedicated team will review all evidence related to the situation, and ensure it validates the circumstances described
- Rejection of applications relating to multiple previous applications must be escalated within the dedicated team for approval before notification to schools/students

### Application Outcomes

- Schools will consider appropriate outcomes for valid applications and make recommendations to Board of Examiners
- Board of Examiners within schools will ratify outcomes

### Evidence

- Deadlines for evidence pending should be related to key dates timeline and is suggested as 2 days before the published mark deadline.
- Valid applications should be passed to Schools even where evidence is pending
- BoE dates will be captured (noting they are subject to change)

### Staff Data Protection

- A robust privacy notice at the start of the process is required to ensure compliance with regulations and fulfilment of our obligations to students, with appropriate guidance made available
- User roles will provide enforced controls on access to sensitive data and reduce the risk of privacy breaches
- Project still to consider the privacy of applications when they leave the system
- Project need to consider protected characteristics data and third party consent
- Some SCC members are not UOE staff, we should consider how they access the system

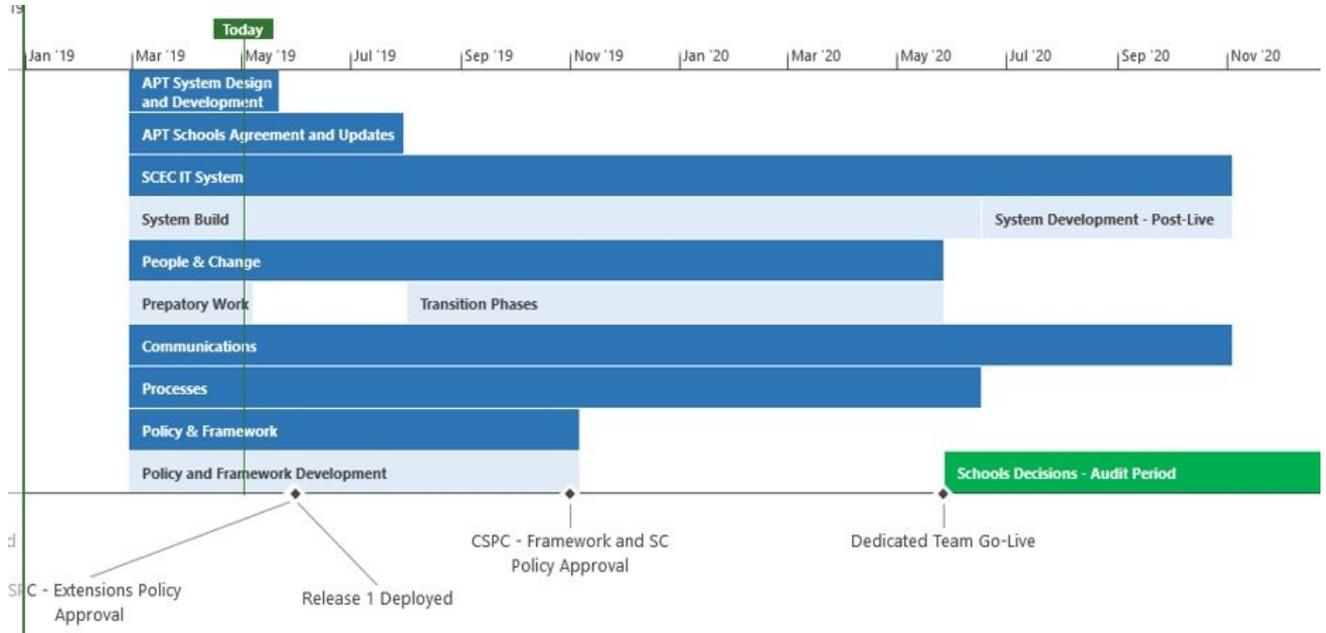
### Students

- Project must make it clear the system is not integrated with Learn, but a link may be made available in Learn by their School
- Application form prototype was received well, and suggestions made on editing, back buttons and time to complete information

### Framework

- The framework will be a guidance support tool, underpinning policy to deliver an appropriate level of consistency
- A plan has been drawn up for both development and maintenance of the framework, with review every year
- Further investigation on how the framework is presented is ongoing, along with work on each category of the SC policy

## Timeline



## Next steps

We expect policy changes for coursework extensions to be submitted to CSPC for approval in September 2019, and Special Circumstances in November 2019. These will be informed by the outputs of the continuing workshops.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Financial Issues**

### **Executive Summary**

At its meeting on 25 January 2018, the Committee discussed guidance for Schools with regard to the acceptability of coursework extensions based on employment commitments. As part of this discussion, the Committee agreed to consider further the approach to requests for coursework extensions and special circumstances from students experiencing financial pressures.

The Taught Assessment Regulations and Special Circumstances Policy currently state explicitly that students cannot apply for consideration based on financial issues. The Committee agreed that it would like to explore whether this is a common position within the sector and carry out some benchmarking on this issue.

Academic Services has carried out this benchmarking and the results are summarised in this paper.

In addition to this, relevant committees in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences have requested that CSPC consider proposals to amend the grounds for consideration of coursework extension requests and special circumstances.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Application of the University's regulations in a way which is consistent and equitable to students is a priority for the Committee.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is invited to discuss the paper and consider the proposals in section 4.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will communicate any changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations or Special Circumstances Policy to Schools and Colleges in the "New and Updated Policies" web page, which is highlighted to relevant staff in an email in June 2019, and to students in an email newsletter early in 2019/20.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are no significant resource implications involved in the proposed changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations or Special Circumstances Policy. It is possible that there may be an increase in the number of applications received via these processes, but this is unlikely to be significant.

**2. Risk assessment**

There are no risks associated with this paper.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

Some students, especially those with underlying mental health conditions, may experience a more detrimental impact upon their wellbeing and their studies as a result of financial issues or the death of a pet. Allowing consideration of applications for coursework extensions and special circumstances on these grounds may therefore provide particular benefit to these students.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words**

Special circumstances, coursework extensions

**Originator of the paper**

Theresa Sheppard and Adam Bunni, Academic Services, May 2019

# **Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Financial Issues**

## **1. Background**

### **a) Previous discussion at CSPC**

At its meeting on 25 January 2018, the Committee discussed guidance for Schools with regard to the acceptability of coursework extensions based on employment commitments. As part of this discussion, the Committee agreed to consider further the current position on requests for coursework extensions or special circumstances from students experiencing financial issues.

The Taught Assessment Regulations and Special Circumstances Policy currently state explicitly that students cannot apply for extensions or special circumstances based on financial issues. The Committee agreed that it would like to explore whether this is a common position within the sector and carry out some benchmarking on this issue.

Academic Services has carried out this benchmarking and the results are summarised in section 2 of this paper.

### **b) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences proposals**

In the current session, the Learning and Teaching, and Postgraduate Studies Committees in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences have considered the current policy position precluding application for coursework extensions or special circumstances based on financial issues, and on the death of a pet (for special circumstances). The College have requested that CSPC remove both of these circumstances from the list of those unlikely to be considered for coursework extensions and special circumstances, but do not propose to add either to the list of those circumstances likely to be accepted ("good reasons").

### **c) Service Excellence: Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions (SCEC) Project**

In line with the proposed changes to the process of handling requests for coursework extensions and Special Circumstances discussed at previous meetings of CSPC, this project is due to recommend changes to the Taught Assessment Regulations and Special Circumstances Policy in the 2019/20 session for introduction from 2020/21. The project is also seeking to develop a framework supporting decision-making in relation to special circumstances requests.

## **2. Benchmarking summary- financial issues**

Academic Services considered the Special Circumstances Policy, or equivalent, of the following 14 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Cardiff

- Dundee
- Durham
- Exeter
- Glasgow
- Imperial College London
- King's College London
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- London School of Economics
- Manchester
- St Andrews

Of the 14 HEIs, three (Birmingham, Imperial College London and Manchester) indicated that financial circumstances would be considered in requests for extensions; four (Cardiff, Dundee, Exeter and Leeds) stated specifically that they would not be. In the remaining seven institutions' policies, financial issues were not mentioned.

The three HEIs which stated that financial issues would be considered as grounds for mitigation worded this in their Special Circumstances policies (or equivalent) as follows:

*Birmingham:*

"The following are valid reasons for making a claim for ECs if you are able to show they have prevented you from studying and/or doing your assessments. There are many more reasons than those listed below...

v. Financial hardship that you could not have foreseen or controlled."

*Imperial College London:*

"Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of mitigating circumstances which, with relevant evidence, are likely to be accepted:

- significant family crisis or major financial problems leading to acute stress;"

*Manchester:*

"Possible mitigating circumstances include:

- significant family or personal crises or major financial problems leading to acute stress;"

Academic Services contacted Manchester University to ask for more detail about how this policy worked in practice, and the evidence which a student would need to provide when requesting an extension for financial reasons. Manchester responded that Schools tended to receive applications in relation to the following:

- Financial difficulties of parents (following separation/divorce/job loss/long-term or terminal illness) which meant that they were no longer able to financially support and the student had to get a job to support themselves at short-notice.
- Financial difficulties of the student if they were a part-time or mature student, particularly those with family commitments. It might have been the case that a student's partner had been made redundant and the student now had to take on employment in addition to their studies in order to support the family financially.

In terms of the evidence provided, this depended on the individual circumstances and might include legal paperwork, letters from employers, hospital documentation, or a counsellor's letter (especially where the student didn't want to ask a parent for evidence because they were trying not to disclose to them that the situation was having an effect on their studies).

### **3. Implications of a change in policy regarding financial issues**

Were the University to change the existing policy regarding financial issues by not only suggesting that these are no longer excluded from consideration for extensions or special circumstances, but going further to encourage students to apply based on financial issues, it would have a number of significant implications, including those referred to below:

#### **i) Employment commitments**

From the current session, students have been permitted to apply for coursework extensions (but not special circumstances) based on "exceptional and significant change in employment commitments, where this is beyond the student's control". The guidance the University provides on this issue, which was approved by CSPC in January 2018 (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/academic-procedures/coursework-extensions>), states that students may not apply based on the need to work additional hours in paid employment in order to address financial issues.

Institutions such as Manchester which currently permit mitigating circumstances applications based on financial issues currently consider cases where financial hardship has led to the student needing to spend more time in paid work. Taking a similar approach at this University would therefore represent a change in policy relating to employment commitments. Were the University to allow applications for special circumstances on the basis of financial issues, it would also make it more difficult to justify the current policy that applications based on exceptional employment commitments will not be accepted for special circumstances (but only for coursework extensions).

#### **ii) Student debt**

Students who default on payment of academic fees (including tuition fees) to the University may have their access to University IT services withdrawn after a certain period, before ultimately being excluded from the University. Were the University to permit applications for coursework extensions and special circumstances based on financial issues, these would be likely to include those based on circumstances where students had experienced (for example) a loss of IT services as a result of their debt to the University. Staff considering applications of this type would need to do so in such a way which did not imply any judgement regarding the operation of the University's policies on academic debt.

#### **iii) Students' responsibility**

Both coursework extensions and special circumstances require that requests may only be made where the circumstances are "beyond the student's control". Financial issues are often complex, and it may be uncomfortable and challenging for staff considering applications to seek to make a judgement regarding whether the student's circumstances were beyond their control.

#### **4. Action for CSPC**

In light of the issues raised above, we are asking CSPC to consider the proposal from CAHSS to remove reference to “financial issues” and “death of a pet” from the list of circumstances unlikely to be accepted as valid reasons for coursework extensions or Special Circumstances. These would not, however, be added to the list of circumstances likely to be accepted. This reflects the position taken at the majority of institutions covered by the benchmarking analysis.

The general criteria for coursework extensions and special circumstances would continue to apply, such that any circumstances must be exceptional for the individual student, beyond that student’s control, and must have had an adverse impact (“significant adverse impact” in the case of special circumstances) upon the student’s ability to complete or perform in assessment.

CSPC could also request that the SCEC project within Service Excellence consider the question of how the impact of financial issues (e.g. in causing stress/anxiety) could be addressed in the coursework extension and special circumstances processes as part of their discussions around the decision-making framework for these processes.

CSPC: 30.05.19  
H/02/27/02

**CSPC 18/19 5 E**

The University of Edinburgh  
Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Proposed Change to Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure**

### **Executive Summary**

Changes to the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure to take into account the new requirement for continuing students to complete Annual Registration.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

To improve student experience and ensure compliance with statutory reporting requirements

### **Action requested**

For approval

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Students will be informed of the new requirement as they approach their anniversary date

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The proposed policy changes for continuing students introduce the risk that students could be cancelled or withdrawn for not completing the new annual registration process. To reduce this risk:

- The project introducing the changes will develop a communications plan to ensure students are aware of the coming changes to matriculation.
- The project team and Student Record Operations will ensure that appropriate communications are sent to students at the point of matriculation each year and that the risks of not becoming fully matriculated are highlighted.
- Student Record Operations will work with Schools to ensure they have awareness of students at risk of being cancelled before any cancellations are carried out.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed change does not carry equality and diversity implications.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

#### **Key words**

#### **Originator of the paper**

Paula Webster, Head of Student Data and Surveys, Student Systems

### **Proposed Change to Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure**

To comply with statutory data return requirements the university will ask continuing students to complete an online data collection task, "Annual Registration" when they return to study from the 2019/20 academic year. The task will closely resemble the task students complete when they first matriculate. The process will start during the 2019/20 academic year and will be a requirement for all students from the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

As part of this process students will:

- Be required to accept the academic regulations
- Have the opportunity to update key data items e.g. their contact details
- Have the opportunity to be automatically enrolled on the electoral register

The current Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure needs to be updated to include the new stage in the process for continuing students. Proposed changes are included as tracked changes in Appendix One.

## Appendix One

# Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

### Purpose of Procedure

The Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure applies to circumstances where a student voluntarily wishes to leave the University permanently, and also circumstances where a student is required to leave the University permanently.

### Scope: Mandatory Procedure

The procedure applies to all students who withdraw or are excluded from the University and to University staff managing this procedure.

### Contact Officer

Stuart Fitzpatrick

Academic Policy Officer

[Stuart.Fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Stuart.Fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk)

### Document control

Dates	Approved: 26.04.12	Starts: 01.08.18	Equality impact assessment: 13.11.14	Amendments: 29.10.12, 30.06.14 20.11.14 09.01.15 16.02.15 18.08.16 29.06.18	Next Review: 2022/23

### Approving authority

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on behalf of Senatus

### Consultation undertaken

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

### Section responsible for procedure maintenance & review

Academic Services

<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	Assessment regulations, principles and guidelines <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policiesregulations/regulations/assessment">www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policiesregulations/regulations/assessment</a>
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	n/a
<b>Procedures superseded by this procedure</b>	Revises the University's Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies (April 2011)
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.
<b>Keywords</b>	Withdrawal, exclusion, permanent withdrawal, voluntary withdrawal

1. This procedure is designed to:
  - (i) state the obligations on both the University and its students within the withdrawal and exclusion processes;
  - (ii) provide clear guidance on the process to be followed when a student has failed to satisfy the criteria for progression;
  - (iii) take into account the requirements of UK immigration legislation.
  
2. The following terminology is used:
  - (i) withdrawal from studies - this is a voluntary decision by the student to terminate their studies at the University.
  - (ii) exclusion from studies - this is where a student is required to leave the University. This may be for academic or other reasons (see 8-29 below).
  
3. This procedure makes reference to the College, School and to the Head of College or Head of School. It is for Colleges, Schools and their Heads to determine local arrangements for the delegation of their authority.

4. There are separate procedures for interruption of studies (which is a temporary suspension of studies).

#### **Withdrawal from studies**

5. Any student may withdraw from their studies at the University at any point in the year. However, a student may not voluntarily withdraw after the University has decided to exclude the student.

6. Before applying to withdraw, the student is strongly advised to consult their Personal Tutor/ Programme Director/ Supervisor, or the Students' Association Advice Place, in order to consider the implications of withdrawal. These include matters such as: access to the University's facilities; financial issues (for example scholarships, fees, external financial issues relating to the Student Loans Company/Student Awards Agency for Scotland etc.); Tier 4 visas; exit awards; readmission.

7. Students wishing to withdraw must signal their intention by completing a standard University form (Withdrawal Form – Student) available at [www.ed.ac.uk/schoolsdepartments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schoolsdepartments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)

#### **Exclusion from studies**

##### A. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress (Taught and Masters by Research programmes)

8. The criteria for progression on a programme of study depend on the nature of the programme and / or year of study. These will be contained in the University's assessment and degree regulations (see the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study at <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>), Degree Programme Tables, and there may be additional information within College or School guidance, or in course and programme handbooks. This policy should be read in conjunction with those documents.

9. The [Taught Assessment Regulation on 'Publication of Results'](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf) sets out responsibilities for communicating final programme outcomes to students where they have failed to meet programme requirements:  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>.

Provisions relating to Masters by Research students are covered in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research degrees:  
[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr\\_assessmentregulations.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf)

10. Where the relevant Board of Examiners has recommended a student for exclusion from studies for unsatisfactory academic progress, the Head of School

(or delegated authorising officer) will invite the student for interview. The interview provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation.

11. The interview may be carried out electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.). The outcome of the interview will be one of the following:

- (i) The student is permitted to progress to the next year of study;
- (ii) The student cannot progress to the next year of study on their current programme but is permitted to continue their studies under other options permitted in the University regulations;
- (iii) The student may voluntarily withdraw permanently from studies. This option will not be available if the student has already been notified in writing of exclusion from studies;
- (iv) The student may be excluded from the University. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an exit qualification will be explored.

12. The full range of options does not apply in every case, as it may depend on the year and nature of the programme and the status of the student. Exclusion from studies will only be invoked after other available options have been considered.

13. Where the student does not attend the interview, the Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.

14. The Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will decide which option to apply, and will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.

15. The Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will send a copy of the communication to the Personal Tutor/Programme Director. The School must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

#### B. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress (Doctoral or MPhil programmes)

16. Students are subject to annual progression review under the terms set out in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#). Following an annual progression review, the relevant Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School may determine that a student has made unsatisfactory academic progress and recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee that the student be excluded from study.

17. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will inform the student that exclusion from study for unsatisfactory academic progress has been recommended, and offer the student

the opportunity to attend an interview. Where an interview is held, this provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation. The interview may be carried out electronically (eg. by video, web-camera, etc).

18. Where the student does not attend the interview, the Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.

19. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will determine whether to exclude the student from study, or to consider one of the alternative options available to it under the provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

20. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible following the interview. This communication should clearly set out the decision reached, and any of the terms attached.

21. The College is responsible for sending a copy of the communication to the student's Supervisor. The College must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

#### C. Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement

22. Students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. The Degree Programme Table or programme handbook sets out programme requirements for engagement. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will invite for interview any student who has been referred for Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement.

23. The interview may be carried out electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.). Where the student does not attend the interview, the Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.

24. The outcome of the interview will be one of the following:

- (i) The student is excluded due to non-attendance or non-engagement. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an exit qualification will be explored;
- (ii) The student is permitted to continue their studies under options permitted in University regulations.

25. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will decide which option to apply, and will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The

communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.

26. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will send a copy of the communication to the Personal Tutor/Programme Director/Supervisor. The College must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

Students holding Tier 4 visas:

27. The Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy sets out the University's responsibilities as a sponsor of international students within the UK immigration system, which includes the requirement to evidence Tier 4 student attendance and engagement at key points in the session. The policy ensures that the University has relevant guidance for staff and mitigates risk related to the University's sponsor licence by ensuring that we have robust student attendance and engagement procedures in place:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tier4studentattendanceengagementpolicy.pdf>

28. Where a student holding a Tier 4 visa is excluded or withdraws from the University for any reason, the Compliance Manager (Student Administration) will report the student to the Home Office and end the sponsorship of their visa.

#### D. Exclusion under Fitness to Practise procedures

29. In line with the provisions of the University's Degree Regulations, Colleges may exclude students who have failed to meet Fitness to Practise requirements for their programmes. Programme Handbooks include information regarding Fitness to Practise requirements for programmes, where such requirements exist. Colleges publicise procedures relating to Fitness to Practise.

#### E. Exclusion for non-matriculation

New students:

30. Matriculation consists of three components: (i) registration, which includes international check-in where relevant; (ii) confirmation of attendance; (iii) full admission (i.e. adhering to other related admissions requirements).  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm)

In order to matriculate, a new student must:

- (i) within two weeks of their start date, be "registered" or have their "attendance confirmed";

(ii) within five weeks of their start date, have completed both of these matriculation activities.

31. Any student failing to meet these requirements will be deemed not to have commenced their studies, and will be excluded from the University and have their record cancelled.

32. A new student will not be fully matriculated until they provide the appropriate documentation at the start of their studies, including immigration documentation where required.

Continuing students:

33. Matriculation consists of two components (i) registration; (ii) confirmation of attendance.

In order to matriculate, a continuing student must:

(i) Within two weeks of their anniversary date, be "registered" or have their "attendance confirmed";

(ii) Within five weeks of their anniversary date, have completed both of these matriculation actions

34. Any student failing to meet these requirements will be

33. If a continuing student fails to have their attendance confirmed within five weeks of the anniversary of their start date they are deemed not to have commenced their studies, and are will be excluded and their record cancelled.

35.34. Further details on matriculation are available from Student Systems: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/students/matriculation/matriculation-intro>

F. Exclusion for lapse of time

35. A student who is past the maximum end-date of their studies will be excluded by the University. Before such an exclusion is enforced, the University will seek to make contact with the student to inform them of the exclusion timetable.

36. Postgraduate research students who fail to submit a thesis by the deadline specified by the regulations will be excluded.

37. A research postgraduate who has been examined but not carried out the required corrections or re-submission within one month of the maximum

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timescale stipulated by the relevant College Postgraduate Committee will be excluded.

#### G. Exclusion for disciplinary offence

38. The University's Student Discipline Committee may impose permanent exclusion of a student from the University. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) sets out expectations for student behaviour and the procedures the University uses to resolve matters when students' behaviour is unacceptable.

#### H. Exclusion for debt

39. Exclusion can also result from non-payment of any debt to the University as detailed in the [Policy on Collection of Student Fees and Related Charges](#)

### **Appeals**

40. All individuals who have been excluded, irrespective of the reason for exclusion, may lodge an appeal against the exclusion through the normal University appeal procedure. Appeals should be sent directly to Academic Services at the email address [academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk)

41. Details of the appeal procedure can be found at:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals>

42. For individuals who are excluded for disciplinary reasons, details of the discipline procedures, including the appeal procedures can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline)

### **Readmission**

43. After withdrawal or exclusion an individual is no longer a student of the University and loses student status and access to University facilities. After withdrawal or exclusion, a former student wishing to be considered for return to study at the University must go through the normal application procedures.

44. A former PhD student who has been excluded through lapse of time is entitled to ask the College to reinstate their registration at a later date to permit examination of a completed thesis. A decision as to whether or not a candidate should be reinstated will be taken by the College, and factors such as the passage of time and its implications for the topic of study will be taken into account. Approval of such a reinstatement is exceptional and attracts a fee.

**29 June 2018**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper presents the results of consultation undertaken by Academic Services at CPSC's request regarding the proposal to remove the Postgraduate Taught progression hurdle and adjust the awarding criteria for Master's level degrees.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper supports the University's strategic goal of "leadership in learning".

### **Action requested**

For discussion and approval.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The paper proposes no change to current practice.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
- 2. Risk assessment**
- 3. Equality and Diversity**

The paper proposes no change to current policy or practice. Issues relating to tuition fees would be for consideration by Fees Strategy Group.

- 4. Freedom of information**  
Open paper

### **Key words**

**Postgraduate Taught Assessment, Progression, Hurdle, Award Criteria, Masters**

### **Originator of the paper**

Stuart Fitzpatrick and Adam Bunni, Academic Services

15 May 2019

# Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression

May 2019

## 1. Background

1.1 At its meeting of 24 January 2019, CSPC received a paper (CSPC 18/19 3 C), which provided an update on matters of Postgraduate Assessment and Progression. This paper (CSPC 18/19 3 C) gave further outlines of potential models and considerations regarding next steps in Postgraduate Taught assessment and progression matters, namely the removal of the progression hurdle between the taught and research element of the Master's degree, and the modification of the awarding criteria for the Master's degree. Following consideration of options outlined in this paper, CSPC had instructed Academic Services to carry out consultation with the University's three colleges on option C, as it was outlined in the paper received on 24 January 2019.

1.2 Option C outlined that the University would retain the current pass mark at Master's level (50) whilst removing the progression hurdle (obtaining an average of 50 over 120 credits, and passing a minimum of 80 credits). Model C outlined that in order to facilitate this change, adjustments to the awarding criteria for the Master's degree would be of benefit.

1.3 Colleges and their constituent Schools were invited to comment on the proposal, which was in two parts. The first part involved removing the progression hurdle between the Taught and Dissertation components of Master's degree programmes, so that students would no longer be required to achieve a minimum level of performance in the taught element in order to undertake a dissertation or research project. Students could choose to undertake the dissertation or research project, even if they could only subsequently qualify for the award of a Certificate or Diploma. The second part involved adjustment to the criteria for award of a Master's degree. This proposal outlined that students were required to pass all courses (including the award of credit on aggregate for up to 40 credits), achieve an average across the programme (taught and research component taken together) of 50% or more, achieve a mark of 50% or more in the dissertation, along with satisfying any other specific requirements for the award of Master's as outlined in relevant Programme Handbooks.

1.4 The adjustment to the criteria for award were proposed as a way of addressing the issue that removal of the progression hurdle whilst maintaining the current awarding criteria had the potential to result in situations where students would have obtained 180 credits but would have been ineligible for a Master's degree based on the current awarding criteria.

1.5 The consultation document which Colleges and Schools were presented with is attached as an appendix to this paper.

## 2. Consultation

2.1 Academic Services attended relevant College level committees to present the proposals, as outlined in the consultation document, and to receive views and feedback from the Committees. The consultation document was also sent to each College's academic administration, for dissemination to relevant members of staff in each School to allow for a focused discussion on the proposal to take place in each School. The consultation document was also sent to the Students' Association. At the time of writing, the Students' Association had no specific views on the proposals contained within the consultation document.

### **3. Consultation Responses**

#### **College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

3.1 There was no clear consensus within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Whilst a number of responses indicated that the proposals contained within the consultation document seemed logical, especially in relation to how students were currently charged (specifically in relation to the fact that students who do not proceed to the dissertation or research project phase are not reimbursed if they do not progress), of the 10 responses received, only 5 indicated that they were in support of the proposal. Of those 5, only 2 supported it fully, with the remaining three noting concern which mostly centred around additional supervisory loads and the ability of weaker students to perform adequately in the dissertation or research project.

3.2 One School responded that whilst they supported the adjustments to the awarding criteria, they were firmly against the removal of the progression hurdle, again citing student ability and potential for increased supervisory workload.

3.3 Of the four Schools that did not express support, all noted serious misgivings around removing the progression hurdle, as they felt it operated well in its current form. Further concerns were raised around the perceived watering down of the value of the Edinburgh Master's degree, the potential increased supervisory loads, and the concern that allowing students who were not performing academically well to progress would lead to more time being spent supporting these students.

Overall – 5 broadly supportive, 1 no clear consensus, 4 against.

#### **College of Science and Engineering**

3.4 Similarly to CAHSS, there was no clear consensus within the College of Science and Engineering.

3.5 Of the six respondents, only one School clearly supported the proposed changes. This School noted that removing the progression hurdle offered simplification and supported viewing the programme as a cohesive whole.

3.6 Three schools returned mixed views, noting that the proposed changes could have the potential for alleviating pressure on students in Semester 1, but may have an unintended consequence of having a detrimental effect on students who previously would have been unable to progress into Semester 2 as they began to undertake research. The majority of Schools who returned mixed views did note their concern regarding the preparedness of weaker students for laboratory environments, and noted concerns regarding additional supervisory loads and the potential negative psychological impact that this could have on staff.

3.7 Two Schools were opposed to the proposals, with one School noting that it seemed that another approach would be amending pass marks, due to the fact that the pass mark utilised for courses at Master's level was not deemed 'high enough' for the degree itself. Of the two Schools opposed, additional supervisory loads were again noted as an area of concern, in addition to the preparedness of weaker students for largely independent research. The issue of fees, as had been noted within CAHSS responses, was again noted by one School, who suggested a review of how and when students are charged would be welcome.

3.8 There were general observations from CSE regarding the change to awarding criteria. There were noted concerns around perceived grade inflation, and the potential for a cliff edge when it came to introducing any substantial changes to awarding criteria.

Overall – 1 supportive, 3 no clear consensus, 2 against.

### **College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine**

3.9 The Schools and Deaneries within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine were, as a whole, opposed to the removal of the progression hurdle. Of the five Schools and Deaneries, all stated that they were strongly against the proposal. The reasons cited for opposition included challenges of supervising and supporting weaker students, the negative impact that this change could have on students and staff supporting them, the significant commitment of staff time involved, and the fact that students studying at a Master's level required a high degree of autonomy and motivation, which the taught element was designed to test.

3.10 As with both CAHSS and CSE, the issue of the fee structures in place for Postgraduate Taught students was pointed to as an issue. Within some of CMVM's online programmes, students were charged on a course-by-course basis, which was felt to be fairer than charging up-front with the potential that an individual might not then proceed to complete the programme itself. Schools within CMVM felt that students should not be paying for research aspects of Master's programmes if they were not undertaking the research aspect. Respondents suggested that this was a problem in relation to how fees worked, rather than a problem with how the University taught and delivered programmes.

3.11 Although no Schools or Deaneries within CMVM supported the proposal to remove the progression hurdle, two of the five Schools and Deaneries did specifically note that they supported to proposed change to the awarding criteria in principle. One School noted that this change was unlikely to affect many students, and would reduce discussion around borderlines. One Deanery supported the concept, but stated that it would be desirable that a fixed number of credits be secured at the level of the final classification (e.g. if a student had obtained 65 in the taught element, and obtained an 80 for their dissertation, the overall classification would be that of a distinction. A minimum requirement of credits passed at 70% or above would address this concern).

Overall – 0 supportive, 0 no clear consensus, 5 against (progression hurdle)

Overall – 2 supportive, 0 no clear consensus, 3 against (awarding criteria)

## **4. Analysis**

4.1 Twenty-one Schools responded to the Consultation across the University's three Colleges. The responses received are presented in summary in graph from below

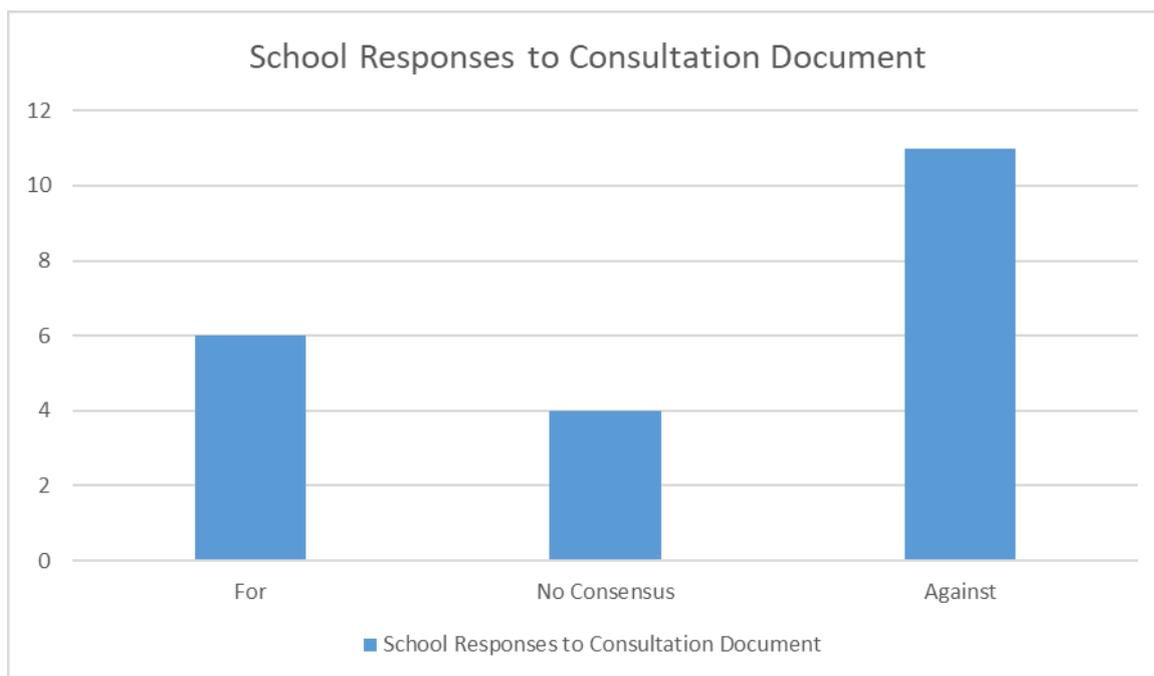


Figure 1 – School Responses to Consultation Document

Response	Total
For	6
No Consensus	4
Against	11

Table 1 – School Responses to Consultation Document

4.2 It should be noted that a number of Schools, although opposed to the removal of the progression hurdle, did express that they supported the idea of amending the awarding criteria in principle. Of the 21 respondents, 9 Schools specifically noted that they supported this idea, although this is less than half.

4.3 A number of Schools across the University's three Colleges noted that the issue of how the University charged students on Postgraduate Taught programmes was an issue, and that they felt that this was deserving of further attention.

4.4 Of those Schools that did not return a consensus view on the proposals, the majority also expressed concerns that mirrored those Schools who did not support the proposals. In summary, these concerns centred on –

- The preparedness of 'weaker' students for the research element of the programme;
- The increase in supervisory load that would occur, especially in supporting weaker students (which many noted to be a significant undertaking).

4.5 Schools regard the current progression hurdle between the taught and research elements of Postgraduate Taught programmes as a mechanism to protect against the above noted concerns.

## 5. Conclusions

### Progression hurdle

- 5.1 Following consultation, it cannot be said that there is majority support for the proposed removal of the progression hurdle at a Postgraduate Taught level.
- 5.2 It should be noted that Taught Assessment Regulation 56 (Postgraduate assessment progression) already allows some programmes to operate without the standard progression hurdle:

“For programmes where the taught and project or dissertation components are taken in parallel, or where there are not identifiable taught and research project or dissertation components, the requirements for progression are determined at programme level, stated in the Programme Handbook.”

In light of the consultation response, we propose that this remains adequate to support those programmes which operate with atypical structures, and do not therefore regard the standard progression hurdle as beneficial. CSPC may wish to remind Colleges and Schools that this is permitted within the Taught Assessment Regulations, without the need for specific concession from CSPC.

### **Award criteria**

6. Although there were a number of Schools that specifically supported changes to the awarding criteria, it equally cannot be said that there is a majority support for changes to the awarding criteria at a Postgraduate Taught level.
- 6.1 Given that there was greater (although not majority) support for a change to the awarding criteria, Academic Services obtained data from Student Systems in regards to the Academic Year 17/18 PGT Master's cohort. If assumptions were made regarding borderlines, and not counting potential Special Circumstances decisions in applying the proposed new criteria, the data obtained from Student Systems indicated that the new criteria could see the number of students awarded the MSc with Merit increase in the region of 3.2%, and the number of students awarded the MSc with Distinction increase in the region of 12.4%.
- 6.2 It should be noted that no respondents to the consultation suggested that there is a problem with the current awarding criteria, nor that these are currently delivering unsatisfactory or inappropriate outcomes. It is also worth considering that the UK Government is taking a keen interest in the issue of perceived grade inflation in Higher Education. In view of these factors, it would therefore seem to pose an unnecessary risk at this time for the University to make a change to award criteria for Master's degrees which would lead to more students achieving higher classifications. **We are therefore proposing that CSPC maintain the existing award criteria for PGT Master's degrees.**

### **Fees**

- 7.1 CSPC are asked to consider whether in light of the feedback received from Colleges, Schools and Deaneries which commented on the current fee structure applied by the University, it might be appropriate to send a paper to Fee Strategy Group regarding the potential for partial refunds for full time Postgraduate taught students who do not progress to the dissertation stage of their programme.

### **CSPC proposal: Postgraduate Taught progression and award, February 2019**

A task group of Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) considered aspects of assessment and progression on postgraduate taught programmes in 2017/18. Following that work, CSPC has agreed to consult Schools and Colleges on proposals relating to the progression hurdle between the taught and research components in Master's programmes, and the related criteria for award of degrees.

Colleges and Schools are invited to comment on the following proposal, which is in two parts:

**i) Remove the progression hurdle between the Taught and Dissertation component of Master's degree programmes**

Most existing taught Master's programmes at the University currently include a progression point between the taught and research components of the programme, preventing progression to the dissertation stage of a programme if the taught component has not been passed at a sufficiently high level (an average of 50% across all courses, with marks of 50% or more in at least 80 credits).

#### **Proposal**

Students would no longer be required to achieve a minimum level of performance in the taught element in order to undertake a dissertation or research project. Students could choose to undertake the dissertation or research project, even if they could only subsequently qualify for the award of a Certificate or Diploma.

#### **Rationale**

The traditional model of two semesters of taught courses followed by a dissertation is becoming less dominant within the University, especially with the growth of online Master's programmes. As different models of Postgraduate Taught study arise, including programmes where research is undertaken alongside taught courses, the progression hurdle becomes less relevant. Students who do not pass all taught components may still benefit from undertaking a dissertation or research project. Additionally, all students are charged a fee to study, which technically covers the dissertation or research project.

Data received from Student Systems indicated that, in Academic Year 2015/16, of 3,627 full time students, 68 (1.9%) did not progress to the dissertation or research project stage of their programme. This indicates that this change would have minimal impact in terms of additional supervisory load on any given programme.

**ii) Adjust the criteria for the award of a Master's degree**

The current criteria for the award of a postgraduate taught Master's degree are that students must:

- (a) have satisfied any requirements for progression (as above), and
- (b) attain an additional 60 credits, by achieving a mark of at least 50% for the

dissertation or project component (if the programme has a dissertation or project element) and

(c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the Master's degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective Programme Handbooks.

### **Proposal**

CSPC proposes to change the criteria for award to the following:

- Pass all courses (including the award of credit on aggregate for up to 40 credits of courses based on an average of 40% – as currently); and
- Achieve an average across the *programme* (taught and research element) of 50% or more; and
- Achieve a result of 50% or more in the dissertation or research project; and
- Satisfy any other specific requirements for the Master's degree programme that are clearly stated in respective Programme Handbooks.

The mechanism for the award of Merit or Distinction would also change to take account of the average mark across the programme:

- Merit: an average of 60% across the *programme*, and a mark of 60 or above in the Dissertation/Research Project;
- Distinction: an average of 70% across the *programme*, and a mark of 70 or above in the Dissertation/Research Project.

### **Rationale**

This change would maintain existing standards in terms of overall performance on the programme, and the importance of the research component. However, it would mean that some students undertaking the dissertation could potentially offset an average of less than 50% in the taught component with a higher mark in the dissertation or research project, and as a result, gain the Master's degree provided they had passed all courses.

### **Considerations**

- Students who had not gained all credits in the Taught element, or who had gained all credits but had an average of below 50%, would need to be provided with advice on their academic standing and the likelihood of being awarded a Master's degree if they undertake the dissertation or research project;
- Assuming that the provisions for the award of credit on aggregate remain the same, decisions regarding credit on aggregate could be made at a Board of Examiners following Semester 2. This would allow students who were less likely to obtain a Master's to make an informed decision on whether to continue on with the Dissertation or Research Project;
- Students who do not meet the requirements for the award of the Master's degree may be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, which may include credits gained for the dissertation or research project;

- A student achieving an average of 40% in any 120 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 80 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. up to 40 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present);
- A student achieving an average of 40% in any 60 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 40 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate (i.e. up to 20 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present).

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

30 May 2019

## **Update to Taught Assessment Regulations**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Attempts for Tier 4 Students**

#### **Executive Summary**

United Kingdom Visa and Immigration service (UKVI) guidelines explicitly state that Tier 4 (T4) students should only be permitted more than 2 resits (ie 3 attempts) at an assessment under exceptional circumstances. This requires a change to para 27.2 of the Taught Assessment Regulations. In addition to this change, guidelines<sup>1</sup> have been developed by the Student Immigration Service to support staff in making these decision.

#### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Retention of our T4 Sponsor Licence is critical to the University's reputation thus ensuring compliance is a strategic imperative.

#### **Action requested**

The Committee are asked to approve the proposed changes.

#### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The revised regulation has been developed in partnership with Academic Services and with input from the Colleges. The change is required with immediate effect in order to be compliant with UKVI regulations. This will be communicated to relevant staff via the Colleges. It will also be covered in Academic Services' New and Updated Policies email communication to staff and accompanying web pages.

#### **Resource/Risk/Compliance**

##### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The process set out in the regulation involves Boards of Examiners applying additional scrutiny to T4 students who are in line for a 4th attempt. However, given that a 4th attempt may only be offered where special circumstances exist, and will not be required where the 3rd attempt is a null sit, it will only happen rarely

##### **2. Risk assessment**

The changes are required in order to ensure compliance with the UKVI legislation:  
Tier 4 of the Points Based System: Guidance for Sponsors:

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

5.130: “In exceptional circumstances we will allow students to re-sit examinations or repeat any part of their course more than twice for any individual examination or module but we may ask you to justify this.”

Whilst the risk of not making the changes may be minimal it would render the University non-compliant in respect of its sponsor obligations.

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed change does impact on equality but, as the University is bound by UKVI legislation which mandates that we deal with T4 students in a specific manner, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

The approach taken to null sits is a positive one from the point of view of treating all students equitably.

### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

#### **Key words**

#### **Tier 4; compliance**

#### **Originator of the paper**

Dawne Hodkinson, Head of Student Immigration

## PROPOSED REVISION TO TAUGHT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Following guidance issued to Colleges regarding fourth attempts at assessment for Tier 4 students, a change is required in the Taught Assessment Regulations to reflect this.

The current academic regulation regarding resits is Regulation 27. The sub section dealing with Tier 4 students:

Current	Proposed
<p>27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals) may have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. UK government legislation in this area supersedes academic regulations. For example, limits on the length of time that a non-EEA national can study in the UK are in place which may reduce a non-EEA student’s scope for taking resits in the same way as EEA/UK students. The International Student Advisory Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations and may be contacted to verify the implication of a resit opportunity for a non-EEA student: Email: <a href="mailto:isas@ed.ac.uk">isas@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>27.12 Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals) have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. Students on a Tier 4 visa can only take a fourth assessment attempt where they have valid special circumstances (in line with the Special Circumstances Policy), and specific additional conditions are met (as outlined below).</p> <p>If a Tier 4 student does seek a fourth assessment attempt, they should apply for this via the Special Circumstances process. Where the student has valid special circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners will determine what action to take. Where the Board of Examiners decides to award the student a null sit for the affected assessment attempt, this will not count as one of the four assessment attempts; null sits for any previous attempts are also not counted towards the total permitted attempts. Where the Board does not award a null sit, but wishes to offer the student a fourth assessment attempt, they may only do so where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) the student has provided satisfactory ‘greater weight’ evidence of their circumstances (in line with para 6.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy);</li> <li>ii) the circumstances that had disrupted the student’s previous attempt(s) have been mitigated or no longer apply.</li> </ul> <p>The Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations. It is able to support Tier 4 students should permission to undertake a fourth assessment attempt affect their visa status (for example, by requiring an extension), and can also support students to understand their immigration status in the event that they are not granted a fourth assessment attempt.</p>



## STUDENT IMMIGRATION SERVICE

### Guidance for Boards of Examiners on resits for Tier 4 students

UKVI regulations<sup>2</sup> require that the University differentiates between Tier 4 and non-Tier 4 students in the granting of a fourth attempt (4<sup>th</sup> sit) for any piece of assessable coursework or examination. A key change to the previously agreed position is that null sits **do not** count in determining the number of previous attempts.

There are, however, additional requirements that have to be met for Tier 4 students. The Exam Board must only grant 4<sup>th</sup> sits in cases where these are met. We may be asked to evidence all or any of this at UKVI audit

#### Procedure

Following an Exam Board, the Chair shall identify all those who have been considered eligible for a 4<sup>th</sup> sit and filter in order to identify any Tier 4 students. Before formalising the decision and communicating the outcome to the Tier 4 students the following additional requirements must be met.

#### Additional requirements for Tier 4 students:

- There must exist evidence of a special circumstance upheld by the relevant Special Circumstances Committee which has had a significant impact on the student's recent academic performance. This evidence must be in line with the 'greater weight' evidence requirement (see para 6.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy).
- There is a reasonable expectation that the student will pass the assessment on this occasion and successfully progress to the next course or part of their programme. This is not an assessment of the student's academic ability. Instead, it is necessary to be satisfied that the circumstances that had disrupted the student's previous attempt(s) have been mitigated or no longer apply.
- The Exam Board shall be responsible for retaining a record of the reason for the decision.

#### Support and guidance

Subject to meeting the requirements above, the decision to award a 4<sup>th</sup> sit is solely at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.

The Student Immigration Service will be available to:

- support staff in the interpretation of these guidelines

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for regulatory information

- support the student where a 4<sup>th</sup> sit is not permitted to ensure that they understand the implications regarding their immigration status
- support the student should a 4<sup>th</sup> sit decision affect their Tier 4 visa, e.g. where an extension or a change of status be required

Please email [student immigration](#) in case of query.

## **APPENDIX 1 Regulatory Information**

Exam boards considering offering a 4<sup>th</sup> sit to a Tier 4 student should refer to the regulations noted below.

### 1. [Tier 4 of the Points Based System: Guidance for Sponsors](#)

5.130: “In exceptional circumstances we will allow students to re-sit examinations or repeat any part of their course more than twice for any individual examination or module but we may ask you to justify this.”

Each case should be considered on its individual facts.

### 2. [UoE Taught Assessment Regulations](#)<sup>3</sup>

27.12: “Students who are subject to immigration control (non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals) may have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. UK government legislation in this area supersedes academic regulations. For example, limits on the length of time that a non-EEA national can study in the UK are in place which may reduce a non-EEA student’s scope for taking resits in the same way as EEA/UK students. The International Student Advisory Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations and may be contacted to verify the implication of a resit opportunity for a non-EEA student”

### 3. [UoE Special Circumstances Policy](#)

Defines and provides examples of special circumstances as “circumstances which are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student’s control and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they had a significant adverse impact on the student’s performance in an assessment, or resulted in non-attendance or a non-submission for a scheduled assessment”.

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<sup>3</sup> The TARs are currently being updated to reflect the changes herein

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper contains the draft Taught Assessment Regulations for 2019/20. A “Key Changes” document is included to draw the Committee’s attention to the key changes.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the Committee’s priority of “good housekeeping” in updating and maintaining the regulatory framework.

### **Action requested**

CSPC is invited to approve the draft Taught Assessment Regulations for academic year 2019/20.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will communicate any changes to 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.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Where the proposed amendments have potential resource implications, these are addressed in the Key Changes document.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

Risks related to the changes to regulation regarding Tier 4 students’ entitlement to resit assessment are addressed in a separate paper to this meeting of CSPC.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed amendments do not carry any new equality and diversity implications.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services  
21 May 2019

## Key Changes to Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20

Regulation	What has changed
<b>22 Availability of assessment examples</b>	<p><b>Amended</b> Clarifies that examples of summative assessments should be available to examiners determining final course results.</p> <p><b>Deleted 22.2</b> This stated:</p> <p>“If a School wishes to determine 50% or more of the marks for a course by coursework, oral, online, peer or self-assessment, then External Examiners need to receive sufficient information about these and samples of these as evidence on which to base their decisions.”</p> <p>It is no longer unusual for courses (especially at PGT level) to be assessed largely based on coursework. No special provision need be made for these courses. The principle applies to all courses that the External Examiner needs to have sufficient access to examples of summative assessment to be satisfied that the outcomes decided by the Board are appropriate.</p>
<b>27 Resit assessment</b>	<p><b>Amended</b> The regulation now states that Visiting Undergraduate Students are entitled to a maximum of two assessment attempts for courses at all levels. The regulation has also been reformulated for clarity.</p> <p>While it should be noted that the status quo from the perspective of the regulations is that Visiting Undergraduates are entitled to resits as non-Honours students, it is our understanding that they are not currently offered the opportunity to resit in all Schools. There are resource implications involved with offering Visiting Students resit assessment, which will have a greater impact in those Schools with the largest numbers of Visiting Students, and especially where large numbers of students may fail courses. In some cases, students’ home institution will have a mechanism for addressing credit shortfalls for returning students, as UoE does. However, some students will wish to avail themselves of resit assessment, either in Edinburgh, or by proctored examination at their home institution.</p> <p>Many Visiting Students take courses at Honours level, for which resit assessment will only normally be offered where students have special circumstances. Where there are no students requiring a resit for special circumstances, Schools would not otherwise need to produce a resit paper.</p> <p>In addition, offering examinations overseas is particularly onerous for Schools and for Student Administration.</p>

From an equality point of view, this change to regulation would place Visiting Undergraduates at a disadvantage relative to other non-Honours students who remain entitled to four assessment attempts for courses. However, given that Visiting Undergraduates are here for a short period on the basis that they require to return to their home institution to continue their programme of study, it is highly unlikely that they would avail themselves of a third or fourth attempt, since these would take place after they had returned to study at their home institution.

**Amended 27.4** Clarifies that students may be permitted to resit a course or component of a course which they have passed, where they have been awarded a null sit for the course or component due to special circumstances.

**Amended 27.9** Clarifies that, where a student is awarded a null sit for an assessment, and achieves a lower mark at the next attempt, they may be awarded the higher (or highest) mark they have achieved in the assessment.

**Amended 27.12** Adds new guidance regarding circumstances in which students on Tier 4 visas may be permitted a fourth assessment attempt for a course.

Information regarding this proposal, including risk and resource implications, is covered in a separate paper to this meeting of CSPC.

**39 Board of Examiners: quorum**

**Amended** Clarifies the meaning of “attendance” and “participation” in the context of meetings of Boards of Examiners.

**40 Undergraduate Progression Board meetings**

**Amended 40.3** College Progression Boards will continue to make progression decisions regarding students who have taken optional periods of study abroad in 2019/20.

**48 Degree examination scripts**

**Amended** Clarifies that examination scripts may be returned to students on SCQF level 7 and 8 courses, but not on courses at levels 9 to 12.

**52 Undergraduate honours assessment progression**

**New 52.5** Clarifies that, where students study abroad for a single semester in their junior Honours year, decisions regarding credit on aggregate are made separately for each semester of that year.

**56 Postgraduate assessment progression**

**New 56.3** Clarifies that information regarding progression requirements on postgraduate taught programmes involving 360 credits is provided in relevant programme handbooks. Distinction.

**57 Postgraduate degree, diploma and certificate award**

**New 57.2** Clarifies that, where postgraduate taught programmes include courses at SCQF level 9 or below, marks for these courses are disregarded when calculating averages for progression and award purposes.

**Amended 57.5** Clarifies that Boards may award a General Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award where a named Diploma is not available.

**64 Status of decisions**

**Amended 64.1** Boards should only consider new information which would constitute Special Circumstances where they believe there is a good reason why this information was not made available at the appropriate time. This brings the provisions of the regulation in line with the grounds for appeal, which refer to “substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in an examination, which **for good reason** was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken”.

**71 Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards**

**Amended** Clarifies the distinction between decisions taken regarding course and programme outcomes. 71.9 provides more information about programme-level decisions, based on guidance produced for Boards during the spring 2018 industrial action.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

## Academic Year ~~2018~~2019/2019

### Regulation 7 Examiners and markers: responsibilities

Examiners and markers need to meet the responsibilities set out in the assessment and degree regulations and comply with quality and standards requirements.

[www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

#### Application of the regulation

- 7.1 The Convener of the Board of Examiners will specify responsibilities and requirements to examiners and markers (see taught assessment regulation 6). In particular, examiners and markers need to meet deadlines, attend relevant meetings and participate in standard-setting discussions when required.
- 7.2 ~~A University briefing document provides information about the storage and disclosure of information about students during marking, and dealing with requests for teaching materials.~~

### Regulation 22 Availability of assessment examples

Sufficient examples of students' summative assessments need to be made available for the scrutiny and use of examiners, including External Examiners, ~~particularly for progression and award decisions~~ where they are making final decisions regarding students' course results.

#### Application of the regulation

- 22.1 If use is made of assessment types which cannot be made available, this should be made explicit to the External Examiner in advance and included in the assessment statement to students.
- ~~22.2 If a School wishes to determine 50% or more of the marks for a course by coursework, oral, online, peer or self-assessment, then External Examiners need to receive sufficient information about these and samples of these as evidence on which to base their decisions.~~
- 22.23 The Convener of the Board of Examiners will consider with the External Examiner whether and how to present information on these assessments to the External and the Board of Examiners. It may be appropriate to record some forms of assessment for consultation by the Board, e.g. major pieces of performed work.



# Taught Assessment Regulations

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### Regulation 27 Resit assessment

The number of assessment attempts students are entitled to for each course depends upon the type of programme the student is taking and the SCQF level of the course.

Honours undergraduate students are entitled to:

- a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 7 and 8;
- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Non-Honours undergraduate students (excluding Visiting Undergraduate Students) are entitled to:

- a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

Visiting undergraduate students are entitled to:

- a maximum of two assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 7 to 11.

Taught postgraduate students are entitled to:

- one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

Undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 7 and 8. Non Honours undergraduate students are entitled to a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses at SCQF level 9 to 11. Honours and taught postgraduate students are entitled to one assessment attempt for courses at SCQF level 9 to 12 unless Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply, in which case a maximum of four assessment attempts are permitted.

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#### Application of the regulation

- 27.1 Boards of Examiners must publish the requirements for resits for those courses that they are responsible for. Boards must take the same approach to resits for all students on a particular course, except where a student's previous attempt is a null sit.
- 27.2 Boards of Examiners must set requirements at resit that are as demanding as those made of students at the first attempt.

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- 27.3 Boards of Examiners will inform students who are required to undertake resit assessment of the format of their resit assessment. Resit methods need not be the same as those used to assess the learning outcomes at the first attempt, but all relevant learning outcomes must be assessed. Resit arrangements must give students a genuine opportunity to pass the course. Boards of Examiners choose between two options to achieve this:
- Carry forward any component of assessment (coursework or examination) that has been passed already and require the student to retake the failed element;
  - Set an assessment covering all learning outcomes for the course, and weight this as 100% of the course result.
- 27.4 Students are not allowed to resit a course or components of a course that they have passed, unless they have been granted a null sit under Special Circumstances (see 27.9). Where a student has been granted a null sit and subsequently resits a course, or components of a course, the mark received for the resit will apply and the mark received for the null sit will be discounted.
- 27.5 The four assessment attempts are the initial assessment and a maximum of three further assessment opportunities, of full assessment, examination or coursework only basis, at the next available opportunities. There may be PSRB requirements which mean that fewer than four assessment attempts are permitted.
- 27.6 The first sitting and subsequent attempts must take place over no more than two academic sessions, unless the relevant College grants an exemption.
- 27.7 Non-attendance or non-submission is considered an assessment attempt.
- 27.8 Some Honours programmes require students to pass specified courses at the first attempt in the first or second year in order to progress to Junior Honours. Any such requirements will be specified in the Degree Programme Table or Programme Handbook for the relevant programme.
- 27.9 Where an assessment attempt has been affected by special circumstances, a Board of Examiners may declare this attempt a null sit. Null sits do not count towards the maximum number of permitted attempts. Where a student receives a lower mark in a subsequent assessment attempt than that achieved in the attempt declared as a null sit, they may be awarded the higher mark for the relevant assessment.
- 27.10 Re-assessment attempts are not generally permitted for courses at SQCF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students since Honours and taught postgraduate programmes permit the award of credit on aggregate (see Taught Assessment Regulations 52, 54, 56, 57). Where resits are permitted for



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Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, any classification decision must use the result obtained on the first attempt.

27.11 The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee decides whether a programme may offer resits which are required for Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements for courses at SCQF level 9 and above for Honours and taught postgraduate students. This decision is based on a case proposed by the relevant College.

27.12 [Students who are subject to immigration control \(non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals\) have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. Students on a Tier 4 visa can only take a fourth assessment attempt where they have valid special circumstances \(in line with the Special Circumstances Policy\), and specific additional conditions are met \(as outlined below\).](#)

[If a Tier 4 student does seek a fourth assessment attempt, they should apply for this via the Special Circumstances process. Where the student has valid special circumstances, the relevant Board of Examiners will determine what action to take. Where the Board of Examiners decides to award the student a null sit for the affected assessment attempt, this will not count as one of the four assessment attempts; null sits for any previous attempts are also not counted towards the total permitted attempts. Where the Board does not award a null sit, but wishes to offer the student a fourth assessment attempt, they may only do so where:](#)

- [i\) the student has provided satisfactory ‘greater weight’ evidence of their circumstances \(in line with para 6.2 of the Special Circumstances Policy\);](#)
- [ii\) the circumstances that had disrupted the student’s previous attempt\(s\) have been mitigated or no longer apply.](#)

[The Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations. It is able to support Tier 4 students should permission to undertake a fourth assessment attempt affect their visa status \(for example, by requiring an extension\), and can also support students to understand their immigration status in the event that they are not granted a fourth assessment attempt.](#)

~~[Students who are subject to immigration control \(non-European Economic Area “EEA” nationals\) may have restrictions on their entitlement to resit as a result of being in the UK on a Tier 4 General visa. UK government legislation in this area supersedes academic regulations. For example, limits on the length of time that a non-EEA national can study in the UK are in place which may reduce a non-EEA student’s scope for taking resits in the same way as EEA/UK students. The The International Student Advisory Student Immigration Service provides advice and guidance to students and staff in relation to the immigration regulations. LINK TO STUDENT IMMIGRATION SERVICE and may be contacted to verify the implication of a resit opportunity for a non-EEA student: Email: \[isas@ed.ac.uk\]\(mailto:isas@ed.ac.uk\)](#)~~



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- 27.13 If repetition of the in-course assessed work is not possible in the vacation, the student, with the permission of the relevant Head of School, may be allowed to repeat any coursework on its own in the following year. Students who do not receive such permission may be permitted by the relevant Head of School to repeat the course, including examination, in the following year.
- 27.14 The full range of marks offered by the relevant Common Marking Scheme is available at resit assessment. Resit marks are not capped.
- 27.15 Where a degree programme's Honours classification is based on the final year only, students are permitted a maximum of four assessment attempts for courses in non-final years.
- 27.16 In the case of collaborative degrees, where not otherwise stipulated in the collaborative agreement, any permitted resit attempt must be within two years of the first attempt.

### Regulation 39 Board of Examiners: quorum

A Board of Examiners meeting is quorate if at least half the internal examiners ~~are present~~ attend and at least one External Examiner participates in and approves the decisions of the Board. No Board may have fewer than two internal examiners ~~present~~ attending. See taught assessment regulation 2.4 for the definition of an internal examiner.

#### Application of the regulation

- 39.1 "Attendance" means being physically present at the meeting of the Board of Examiners. "Participation" by an External Examiner does not require physical presence at the meeting of the Board of Examiners, but involves the External Examiner contributing to the meeting, ideally by video, telephone or web-camera and otherwise by email. The External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board's deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect their participation.
- 39.2 All members of the Board of Examiners should attend meetings of the Board. In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the College and the Convener of the Board, representatives nominated and authorised by them may substitute for internal examiners.
- 39.32 Each subject discipline must be represented and, whenever practicable, an External Examiner from each subject should participate. Where more than one School is involved, the composition of the Board reflects the contribution of the Schools to the assessment of the courses or programmes.



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- 39.43 The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines External Examiners' participation in Boards of Examiners meetings.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf)
- 39.54 If an individual External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, their non-attendance must be approved by the College.
- 39.65 It is not necessary for the same members of a Board of Examiners to attend all meetings of the Board in an academic year, provided each Board is quorate.
- ~~39.6 If no External Examiner can attend a meeting of a Board of Examiners then at least one of them must contribute, ideally by video, telephone or web camera and otherwise by email. The minute needs to reflect their participation.~~

### Regulation 40 Undergraduate Progression Board meetings

Meetings of Undergraduate Progression Boards are held to reach progression decisions. Each undergraduate student's progression status needs to be decided and recorded at least once each year by a Progression Board which is the responsibility of the School that has responsibility for the student's degree programme.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)

#### Application of the regulation

- 40.1 The status, governance, and decision making and reporting responsibilities, of Undergraduate Progression Boards are provided in the Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards.
- 40.2 The Policy on Undergraduate Progression Boards sets out the role of the External Examiner; the quorum; the role of the Special Circumstances Committee; student anonymity in discussions and the role of the Convener of the Board, for example for ensuring the accurate recording, minuting and reporting of decisions of the Board.
- 40.3 College Progression Boards make decisions on the credit obtained by students who have optional periods of study abroad ~~in 2017-18. For decisions in relation to students who had optional periods of study abroad in 2018-19, these responsibilities will be undertaken by a University Progression Board operating under equivalent terms of reference.~~

### Regulation 41 Attendance by non-members at a Board of Examiners meeting



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The Convener of the Board may invite any person [who is not an internal or external examiner but who](#) has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the work under consideration by the Board to be present “in attendance”. People “in attendance” at the meeting of the Board are not involved in the decision making process.

### Regulation 48 Degree examination scripts

Degree examination scripts are received by the University in confidence. Degree examination scripts, or copies of such scripts, may be returned to students on [SCQF Level 7 and 8 \(usually Year 1 and 2 pre-honours\)](#) courses. ~~Scripts will not be returned to students on courses at SCQF levels 9-12 (usually Honours and postgraduate taught level).~~ ~~Degree examination scripts are not returned to students on honours or taught postgraduate courses.~~

#### Application of the regulation

- 48.1 Students are entitled to see their examination scripts to assist with the provision of feedback and their self-reflective learning.
- 48.2 Course organisers, or their delegates, may show and discuss students' examination scripts with them for feedback purposes. Local arrangements are made for ways to implement the opportunity for students to see their exam scripts. [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/feedback](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/feedback)
- 48.3 Other forms of assessed summative work may be returned to students, provided that sufficient documentation is retained for the Board of Examiners and External Examiners. This documentation needs to record those types of assessment which cannot be made available to the Board of Examiners.
- 48.4 The potential return of scripts to students on Year 1 and 2 pre-honours courses does not apply to multiple choice questions which are not defined as degree examination scripts.
- 48.5 Schools will need to make arrangements to make exam scripts available to students taking Year 1 and 2 pre-honours courses to take away (on individual request) after the retention period is over. Schools may wish to decide to keep the scripts for longer than the minimum required retention period, for example in order to make them available for release to the relevant students returning in the following semester (this is at the discretion of individual Schools).

### Regulation 52 Undergraduate honours assessment progression



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The Undergraduate Progression Board has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the next year of honours study. Progressing students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits at SCQF level 9 or above in junior honours and level 10 or above in senior honours for undergraduate Masters degrees; and
- (b) have an overall average of 40% or more for the 120 credits of study taken in the relevant honours year; and
- (c) must satisfy any other specific requirements for the degree programme, as published in the programme handbook.

When all the marks for the taught components of the relevant year of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

### Application of the regulation

52.1 The Undergraduate Progression Board has responsibility for ensuring that students have met the requirements for progression, on the basis of information provided by Boards of Examiners.

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)

52.2 The requirements for degrees are set out in the University's Curriculum Framework:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models\\_for\\_curricula.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/models_for_curricula.pdf)

52.3 In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, in addition to other final course marks.

52.4 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID", as are EUCLID grades for Credit on aggregate (AA, CA and UA).

[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)

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

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### Regulation 56 Postgraduate assessment progression

For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project or dissertation component, students must pass the assessment requirements of the taught



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stage at an appropriate level at the first attempt before progression to the dissertation. In order to progress to the masters dissertation students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 50% for the 120 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme (120 credits) are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses.

For programmes where the taught and project or dissertation components are taken in parallel, or where there are not identifiable taught and research project or dissertation components, the requirements for progression are determined at programme level, stated in the Programme Handbook.

### Application of the regulation

56.1 For programmes where there is an identifiable taught component followed by a project / dissertation component (e.g. 120 credits of taught courses in semesters 1 and 2, followed by a 60 credit project / dissertation component):

- (a) Postgraduate Boards of Examiners are normally convened at least twice during the year for full-time students. The initial meeting to decide matters relating to progression (to masters, or diploma), or failure, is held at the end of the coursework component. A second meeting to consider the dissertation results and the final award of degrees (or diplomas) is held soon after completion of the programme. Both meetings are equally important.
- (b) The Postgraduate Board of Examiners has the responsibility to decide which students can progress to the dissertation required for candidature for the award of a masters degree; or, in the case of other awards, exit either directly or following satisfaction of any outstanding requirement.
- (c) Exceptionally, with the permission of the relevant College Committee, a student who has been unable to sit an examination because of illness or other extenuating circumstance may, if that circumstance is certified, be allowed to progress to the dissertation stage prior to completion of the coursework assessment on condition that the dissertation will subsequently be set aside if the student is eventually unsuccessful in the coursework element of the programme.



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56.2 For MFA programmes (240 credits) where there is an identifiable taught component, in order to progress to masters dissertation/project the student must pass at least 120 credits with a mark of at least 50% in each of the courses which make up these credits, and attain an average of at least 50% for the 180 credits of study examined at the point of decision for progression to dissertation/project, and satisfy any other requirements as outlined in 56 (c) above.

56.3 [For postgraduate taught programmes involving 360 credits, information regarding progression requirements is included in the relevant programme handbook.](#)

56.43 In general failed course are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. In reporting course marks, Schools are required to upload a fail but with credit on aggregate outcome on to the student record system, along with other final course marks.

56.54 In Regulation 56(a) above, where some of the 80 credits are pass/fail courses, then where these courses are passed, they can be included in the 80 credit total. However, a mark of 50% is the mark that is to be applied in calculations under Regulation 56 (b).

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

56.65 PASS marks are defined in the "PASS" section (A1 to PS) of "Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID"  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)

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### Regulation 57 Postgraduate degree, diploma and certificate award

In order to be awarded the certificate students must:

- (a) pass at least 40 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 40% for the 60 credits of study examined for the certificate; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named certificate that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.

In order to be awarded the diploma students must:

- (a) pass at least 80 credits with a mark of at least 40%; and
- (b) attain an average of at least 40% for the 120 credits of study examined for the diploma; and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the named diploma that are clearly stated in respective programme handbooks.



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In order to be awarded a masters degree students must:

- (a) have satisfied any requirements for progression, as laid out in taught assessment regulation 56 above, and
- (b) attain an additional 60 credits, by achieving a mark of at least 50% for the dissertation or project component (if the programme has a dissertation or project element) and
- (c) satisfy any other specific requirements for the masters degree programme, that are clearly stated in respective Programme Handbooks.

When all the marks for the taught components of the programme or diploma are available, if the student has achieved PASS marks in at least 80 credits and has an overall average of 40% or more over the full 120 credits, then they will be awarded credits on aggregate for the failed courses, up to a maximum of 40 credits. For a certificate, a maximum of 20 credits may be awarded on aggregate.

### Application of the regulation

57.1 Boards of Examiners, including those involving subjects from two or more of the Schools, are required to establish guidelines in advance on how the results of individual papers or units of assessment are to be aggregated, averaged or profiled to produce the overall final result. These guidelines are an integral part of the disclosure process and must be published to students within one month of the start of the programme.

57.2 [In line with the Postgraduate Degree Regulations, postgraduate taught programmes may include some courses at SCQF levels below 11. Where courses at SCQF level 9 or below are included in a programme, marks for these courses are disregarded for the purposes of calculating averages for the award of credit on aggregate, progression, award, and the award of Merit and Distinction.](#)

57.32 In general failed courses are not included in the student's transcript, but any failed course for which the student has been awarded credits on aggregate must be shown in the transcript as a fail but with credit on aggregate. Exam Boards must make this distinction clear when reporting course marks.

57.43 The Board of Examiners should take account of any personal circumstances and of the student's general academic record, when determining the award of a degree. However, it is not within the power of a Board of Examiners to recommend the award of a degree without substantial evidence of attainment to at least the lowest level required for the award of that qualification. Boards of Examiners may not be generous in cases of failure other than within the limits already set out in these regulations.

57.54 The [General Postgraduate Degree](#) Regulations permit a General Postgraduate Certificate [or General Postgraduate Diploma](#) to be attained by students who do not



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fulfil the requirements for a specific ~~diploma or Certificate or Diploma~~ award but who have attained ~~a minimum of 60 credits gained from passes in University courses which count towards graduation. FOR THE GENERAL POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE At least 40 of the credits attained must be at level 11. FOR THE GENERAL POSTGRADUATE~~ the required volume and level of credits.

- 57.65 PASS marks are defined in the “PASS” section (A1 to PS) of “Recording of Course Assessment Results within EUCLID”  
[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment\\_Results.html](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/Staff/FAQ/Assessment_Results.html)

### Regulation 64 Status of decisions

Decisions by a Board of Examiners, once certified in writing, are final. In exceptional circumstances a Convener of the Board of Examiners can reconvene the Board to review a decision.

#### Application of the regulation

- 64.1 A Board of Examiners may, at the request of any of its members or member of the Special Circumstances Committee, review a decision if significant information relevant to that decision, which was unavailable at the time the decision was made, comes to light, or if any error having a material bearing on that decision, or an error in the written certification of that decision, has been made. A member of the Board may request a review but it is the Convener who must review the decision in the light of any new significant information or error ~~brought to light, and it~~ therefore ~~it is~~ the Convener, and not a member of the Board, who decides whether to reconvene the Board. ~~Where the significant information presented would constitute special circumstances under the Special Circumstances Policy, the Board of Examiners should only consider this information where it believes that there is a good reason why the student did not make the information available in advance of the Board's original decision. The Convener must only reconvene the Board if there is a good reason as to why the new significant information or error were not available at the time of the original decision.~~
- 64.2 If the Board is satisfied that there are grounds for varying the decision, the Board shall report its decision to Student Systems
- 64.3 Where an error is discovered in the assessment or marking of any examination or any component of an examination or in the calculation, recording or notification of the result of any examination or any component thereof or in the classification or result of any degree or in any process connected with any of these matters, the University shall correct that error and amend its records to show the correct result or classification and that whether or not the result or classification has been published or otherwise notified to the student. The University shall notify the student



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of the corrected result or classification as soon as practicable and shall also correct any reference or statement which may have been provided by the University whether to the student or to a third party. Where such an error affects degree award or classification, the School should contact the relevant College and Academic Services before notifying the student of any change. Having been notified of the corrected result or classification the student shall return to the University any documentation which may have been issued to the student notifying the original result or classification which has been corrected. The student shall have no claim against the University for any loss or damage which may have been incurred by the student as a result of any error which may have been made.

- 64.4 In proved cases of substantial and significant copying, plagiarism or other fraud, the Senatus has the power to reduce the classification of, or to revoke, any degree it has already awarded, and to require the degree, diploma or certificate scroll to be returned.
- 64.5 Any member of Senatus may request Senatus to refer for investigation any matter concerning examinations.

### **Regulation 71      Significant disruption: where only partial results are available to Boards**

The Curriculum and Student Progression Committee must confirm that significant disruption has occurred before the provisions of the significant disruption regulations come into effect. In periods of significant disruption, Boards may need to take decisions on the basis of partial or unreliable information. Boards must maintain the principle that students may only be awarded a pass and a mark / grade for a course, or a progression or award decision, where there is sufficient evidence of performance against relevant learning outcomes. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of a student should proceed to determine marks and grades for courses, and progression and award decisions, as usual. Boards in possession of all information necessary to proceed with the assessment of only some students should proceed to determine marks and grades, and progression and award decisions, for those students.

The below Application to the regulation provides information about the principles which Boards will apply when dealing with missing or unreliable results, and some of the actions they may take to address this. In line with TAR 70, Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may approve additional concessions to the regulations to enable Boards to take decisions regarding students with incomplete or unreliable profiles of assessment marks or course results due to disruption.

#### **Application of the regulation**



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- 71.1 Where Boards have sufficient evidence to make decisions then the decision will be made and will stand, unless subsequent information becomes available which it would be in the student's academic interest for the Board to consider.
- 71.2 Situations may arise in which assessment results are unavailable for particular elements of assessment for all students or for only some students. Such elements of assessment may become available after the disruption is over.
- 71.3 Within the limits described below, ~~and where the outcomes are beyond reasonable doubt~~, Boards are empowered to make decisions in the absence of assessment results which are expected to become available at a later date.
- 71.4 At the start of the meeting to determine course outcomes, the Board of Examiners ~~or Progression Board~~ must agree on any specific elements of assessment without whose marks they cannot proceed to determine a student's result for the course ~~or progression decision~~. Before making such a decision, the Board should consider carefully whether there is sufficient other information already available to allow it to take a view on such elements of assessment. If it is not possible to determine a result or decision then the Board will reconvene when information is available.
- 71.5 Where a very high proportion of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is possible that the Board may decide it is able to determine a student's marks and grades for the course. The Board must be satisfied that, in its academic judgement, the mark and grade assigned is correct ~~and the decision beyond reasonable doubt (i.e. the Board has confidence, and that the outcome will not need to be changed when further assessment results become available)~~.
- 71.6 ~~As a guide, w~~where results for less than four-fifths (by weighting) of the assessment ~~credit results for a course~~ are available for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will be able to determine a mark or grade for the course for that individual. However, if at least half of the assessment results are available, then the Board may decide it is able to confirm a pass ~~or progression outcome~~ for the student. If unable to reach a decision, even on a pass ~~or progression outcome~~, the Board should record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and grade.
- 71.7 Where less than half of the assessment results are available for a course for an individual student, it is unlikely that the Board will have sufficient information to reach any decision, even on a pass ~~or progression outcome~~, and the Board should may need to record that insufficient information on which to make a decision was available at that time. When further results become available the Board will need to reconvene to determine the appropriate mark and; grade ~~and progression decision~~.

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71.8 No Board should return a fail decision in a situation where any unavailable assessment results will become available at a later date, unless it is absolutely clear that even passes at 100% in the unavailable assessments would not be sufficient to turn a fail into a pass.

71.9 Boards of Examiners responsible for progression and award decisions may be required to make decisions on these matters where students have incomplete or unreliable profiles of course results. This may occur where students have yet to receive final results for some courses; or where students have been awarded a pass but not a mark or grade for some courses; or where marks for some courses are not regarded as a reliable indicator of students' ability due to disruption. In some circumstances, Boards may be in a position to address this using existing provisions of these regulations, such as the award of credit on aggregate for Honours and postgraduate taught students. Boards may also consider excluding missing or adversely affected course results when making calculations regarding credit on aggregate, progression, award, Honours degree classification, and the award of Merit and Distinction on postgraduate taught degrees. Boards may also wish to take account of the impact of disruption for students who are in the borderline for progression or award purposes.

71.~~109~~ Once all assessment results are available, Boards should reconvene at the earliest possible opportunity to determine outstanding marks, grades, and progression and award decisions and to review the status of any decisions where significant information is now available.

~~304~~ May 2019~~8~~

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

**Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations  
for Research Degrees 2019/20**

**Executive Summary**

Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20. The Committee is invited to discuss these, particularly giving consideration to resubmission of MSc by Research dissertation, which would be a change to current practice. The Senate Researcher Experience Committee supported the proposed changes at its meeting in January 2019. Key changes are included on pages 3 and 4 of the paper.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the Committee's priority of "good housekeeping" in updating and maintaining the regulatory framework.

**Action requested**

The Committee is invited to discuss and approve the draft assessment regulations for academic year 2019/20.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will communicate any changes to 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.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications for staff time associated with resubmission of MSc by Research dissertations. It is not anticipated that this will be overly burdensome, given that the number of students who meet the criteria for resubmission is likely to be small, and the fact that these students will be entitled to only one further supervisory meeting. Once resubmitted dissertations have been marked, they can be considered at an existing Board of Examiners meeting.

**2. Risk assessment**

There is a limited risk should the University decide from 2019/20 to offer students the opportunity to resubmit MSc by Research dissertations or research projects where the student has marginally failed at the first attempt. Current or previous MSc by Research students may potentially feel aggrieved that they were not offered this opportunity. However, the practical implications of offering resubmission to students from previous cohorts on request would be prohibitive. There is, therefore, an inevitable "cliff edge" involved in the introduction of such a policy regarding resubmission. However, the stated benefits to future students of adopting this revised approach should mean that this remains both worthwhile and defensible.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The proposed changes should not raise any implications for equality and diversity.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

**Originator of the paper**

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

16 May 2019

## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20

The annual assessment regulations review seeks to ensure regulations are consistent with policy and practice. The review is not intended to be detailed nor to make major changes that would affect policy or practice. Changes are considered where necessary due to changes in policy or practice, or where an error or lack of clarity has been identified within the regulations.

Academic Services asked Colleges to let us know whether there were any potential changes required to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations for 2019/20. In addition, Academic Services discussed a number of issues with colleagues in Colleges and Schools. Most of the changes relevant to postgraduate research, listed below, are not considered controversial. The Committee is invited to discuss these, particularly consideration of resubmission of MSc by Research dissertation, which would be a change to practice.

### Key changes

<p><b>22, 23 and 24 PhD, PhD by Research Publications and MPhil examiner recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Amended</b> to clarify that students failing to meet requirements following resubmission may be considered for an exit award. Current regulations suggest that failure to meet the requirements set means students are not entitled to any award. It seems reasonable that they may still be considered for an exit award.</p>
<p><b>22, 23 and 24 PhD, PhD by Research Publications and MPhil examiner recommendations and 25 Thesis resubmissions</b></p>	<p><b>Amended</b> to clarify which options represent “resubmission”; Current regulations state that students may not resubmit the thesis more than once, but are not explicit which options constitute resubmission. Options d, e and h are resubmissions; options b and g are not.</p>
<p><b>51 and 54, MSc by Research degrees</b></p>	<p><b>New</b> Proposal supported by Researcher Experience Committee. Consider resubmission of <b>MSc by Research dissertations</b>, in line with new Postgraduate Taught Masters dissertation regulation (approved by CSPC in May 2018). Current regulation 54 MSc by Research degree revisions states that students cannot resubmit their research project or dissertation. The Taught Assessment regulations now permit Masters students to</p>

	resubmit where they have achieved a marginal fail (45 – 49%) on first attempt or have been affected by Special Circumstances.
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## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19/20



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### Regulation 21 Oral examination

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.

#### Application of the regulation

- 21.1 The expectation is that the oral examination will be held within three months of submission of the thesis.
- 21.2 The oral examination may be used to establish a student's knowledge of the field of their research, to establish the extent of any collaboration and to confirm that the work is the student's own. Through the oral examination, the examiners are assessing jointly whether the thesis and the student's defence of it satisfy the requirements and regulations for the award of the degree. **Requirements that specific research degree programmes have for oral assessment are set out in Section D-**
- 21.3 Where there is a non-examining chair, they will chair and attend for the duration of the oral. Where a non-examining chair has not been appointed the Internal Examiner will chair the oral. (See regulation 3.)
- 21.4 Supervisors may attend the oral examination, with consent of the student and examiners, but will not participate in or comment during the oral examination. Supervisors must leave the examination room with the student and do not participate in the examiners' discussion and decision on recommendations.
- 21.5 The (oral) examination procedure of practice-led PhDs can include exhibitions, performances and other events, elements and processes.
- 21.6 The professional doctorate oral examination may cover any part of the degree programme.
- 21.7 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners may, if they have agreed a recommendation to make to the College Postgraduate Committee, indicate their recommendation to the student. The examiners must stress, however, that their recommendation is not final but will form the basis of the Part II report (see regulations 22-24). Receipt of the Part II report by the student from the College constitutes formal notification of the decision and beginning of any additional period of study set by the examiners.

## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19/20



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### Regulation 22 PhD by Research and other Doctorates: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses, as identified by the examiners, must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis needs work above and beyond editorial corrections or minor weaknesses in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, and this work may require further supervision. However, the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner(s) (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The student ought therefore to

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be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or

- (f) **Award MPhil.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements; but the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil; or
- (g) **Award MPhil following Minor Corrections.** The thesis is substantially deficient in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree of MPhil except for stated minor corrections in the thesis. The student should be invited to carry out the specified minor corrections as indicated by the examiners. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (h) **Substantial Work on Thesis Needed before Resubmission and oral examination for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the doctoral degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the thesis may satisfy the requirements for the degree of MPhil if stated deficiencies in the thesis are remedied. Accordingly, the student should be invited to resubmit the thesis in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners for the degree of MPhil. The revisions should be completed within a further period which must not exceed 12 months; or
- (i) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements or the requirements of the MPhil. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (j) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree requirements.

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### Application of the regulation

- 22.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once [in line with 22 \(d\), \(e\) and \(h\)](#).
- 22.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under 22(b) to (h) then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 22.3 A student presenting a thesis under Regulation 22 (h) may not subsequently be permitted to resubmit the thesis under Regulation 24 (e).
- 22.4 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 22.5 Where a student is offered the award of a different degree under (f), (g) or (i) above then the original word limits for the offered degree are set aside.
- 22.6 Where the examiners' recommendation is (j), the College will provide the student with a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or nominee will be available to discuss the outcome with the student, should the student request this.

[22.7 Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under \(d\), \(e\) or \(h\) may be considered for an exit award.](#)

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### Regulation 23 PhD by Research Publications: examiner recommendation

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award PhD/Doctorate.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the doctoral degree as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. [Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review.](#) In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without further supervision and without undertaking any further original research. The corrections to the thesis must be completed within three months and are subject to certification by the Internal



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Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. [Examiners may only request corrections to the critical review.](#) The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. [Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review.](#) The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College. In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for PhD by Research Publications.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. [Examiners may only request revisions to the critical review.](#) The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

**Application of the regulation**

23.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once [in line with 23 \(d\) and \(e\)](#).

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- 23.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 23 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 23.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.

**Regulation 24 MPhil: examiner recommendation**

After the oral examination, the examiners must make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee:

- (a) **Award MPhil.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree of MPhil as laid down in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (see [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)) as appropriate. No further changes can be made to the thesis after examination; or
- (b) **Minor Corrections Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree except that editorial corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these without supervision and without undertaking any further original research. These corrections to the thesis must be completed within a specified period of not more than three months and are, subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or
- (c) **Additional Oral Examination Needed.** The thesis satisfies the requirements for the degree, or satisfies the requirements except for stated minor weaknesses, but the student's oral defence of the thesis has been inadequate in specified respects. The student is required to undergo further assessment, written, oral or practical, and make any corrections to the thesis within a specified period of not more than four months. The degree is awarded subject to the student achieving a satisfactory standard in the further oral examination and subject to certification of the corrections by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests); or
- (d) **Additional Work on Thesis Needed - No Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis needs significant work in order to meet one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy the requirements. The revised thesis must be completed within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, and which must not exceed six months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months with permission from the College.

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In these cases College may also recategorise the recommendation to (e) – see below. The thesis is subject to certification by the Internal Examiner(s), and by the External Examiner (where the examiner so requests), before the degree is awarded; or

- (e) **Substantial Work on Thesis and Oral Re-Examination Needed – Resubmission for MPhil.** The thesis is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the degree, but the student appears capable of revising the thesis to satisfy them. The student ought therefore to be invited to resubmit the thesis for oral examination in a substantially revised form as indicated by the examiners within a further specified period of study, which is set by the examiners, which must not exceed 12 months. Exceptionally, this period may be extended to a maximum of 24 months with permission from the College; or
- (f) **Award MSc by Research.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the MPhil and cannot be revised to satisfy these requirements. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of MSc by Research; or
- (g) **Fail.** The thesis is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and cannot be revised to satisfy these or any other research degree.

**Application of the regulation**

- 24.1 Students cannot resubmit the thesis more than once [in line with 24 \(d\) and \(e\)](#).
- 24.2 If the student does not meet the requirements set under Regulation 24 then they have not complied with all assessment requirements (see Regulation 9), which will result in a fail.
- 24.3 The College Office is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a written statement of any revisions to be made to the thesis. The supervisor must confirm with the student their understanding of any revisions to be made.
- 24.4 [Students failing to meet requirements following resubmission under \(d\) or \(e\) may be considered for an exit award.](#)
- 24.5 Where the student is offered the award of an MPhil as an exit degree, having originally submitted for a doctorate, the MPhil word count will be set aside.

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**Regulation 25      Thesis resubmissions**

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Where the examiners decide that resubmission of a thesis is required, they must write a detailed statement of the aspects which require revision. The resubmitted thesis is judged only against this written statement. A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis.

### Application of the regulation

- 25.1 No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis passed as satisfactory at the first assessment can be introduced at a later stage. The written statement and the aspects of the thesis which require revision must be approved by the College Postgraduate Committee and cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that Committee.
- 25.2 A student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit their thesis. Thereafter, at most, they may make only minor corrections.
- 25.3 In the event of resubmission, the examiners will re-assess the thesis and hold a second oral examination.
- 25.4 If resubmission is recommended, only one copy of the original thesis should be returned to the student. The other should be retained by the Internal Examiner to facilitate checking of revisions when the thesis is resubmitted.

### Regulation 51 MSc by Research degrees: examiner recommendation

The examiners may recommend:

- (a) **Award Pass with Distinction in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 52; or
- (b) **Award Pass with Merit in MSc by Research.** See Regulation 53; or
- (c) **Award MSc by Research.** The research project or dissertation satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree as laid down in the University's [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#) as appropriate and that the degree should be awarded; or
- (d) Offer resubmission for MSc by Research. The dissertation or research project satisfies the requirements for the degree except that minor corrections are required or stated minor weaknesses as identified by the examiners must be remedied. In the opinion of the examiners, the student will be able to remedy these with minimal supervision and without undertaking any further original research; or

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**(e) Award exit award.** The research project or dissertation is substantially inadequate in one or more of the requirements for the MSc by Research. However, the work is of sufficient quality to merit the award of postgraduate diploma or certificate; or

**(fe) Fail.** The research project or dissertation is substantially deficient in respect of all or any of the requirements for the degree and does not meet the requirements for any award.

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### Application of the regulation

51.1 For those MSc by Research degrees assessed by a Board of Examiners within a School, the Board makes a single recommendation for each student directly to the Senatus.

### Regulation 52 MSc by Research degrees: distinction

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with distinction. Different criteria for the award of distinction may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Distinction.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded a distinction if they have attained a mark of at least 70% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 70% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.



## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19/20

Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with distinction, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

### Application of the regulation

52.1 ~~Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of distinction. For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for distinction based on their first attempt.~~

52.2 The postgraduate common marking scheme can be found at:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme)

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### Regulation 53 MSc by Research degrees: merit

MSc by Research degrees may be awarded with merit. Different criteria for the award of merit may be used depending on the volume of credit allocated to the research project or dissertation.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth 120 credits or more:

- (a) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation; or
- (b) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded; or
- (c) Where a mark has not been awarded for the research project or dissertation, the Examiners may recommend that the student be awarded the MSc by Research with Merit.

Where the research project or dissertation is worth less than 120 credits:

- (d) Where a mark has been awarded for the research project or dissertation and other courses taken as part of the degree, a student may be awarded the degree with merit if they have attained a mark of at least 60% on the postgraduate assessment common marking scheme for the research project or dissertation, and an average of at least 60% for all other components for which a mark has been awarded.

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Where an MSc by Research may be awarded with merit, Schools must inform students in advance which criteria apply to their programme.

**Application of the regulation**

- 53.1 ~~Where a student has been permitted to resubmit their dissertation or research project following a marginal fail at the first attempt in line with Regulation 54, they are not eligible for the award of merit. For degree programmes that permit resubmission of the research project or dissertation, a student may only qualify for merit based on their first attempt.~~

## Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees Academic Year 2018/19/20



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### Regulation 54 MSc by Research degrees: resubmission of the research project or dissertation revisions

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Where the Board of Examiners has offered resubmission in line with Regulation 51 (d), students are entitled to one resubmission of the research project or dissertation. Students may also be offered the opportunity to resubmit the research project or dissertation where a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

Resubmission of the research project or dissertation with revisions is not permitted in the case of MSc by Research degree programmes unless a special case regarding an individual student's circumstances has been approved by the College.

#### Application of the regulation

- 54.1 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to submit a revised version within one month of approval of corrections and/or recommendation of award. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.
- 54.1 The relevant Board of Examiners will provide a student permitted to submit a revised dissertation or research project with a statement, which outlines the deficiencies in their original submission. The student is also entitled to receive further written advice from their dissertation or research project supervisor on one occasion before resubmission.
- 54.2 The Board of Examiners will advise the student of the deadline for submission of their revised dissertation or research project, which will be three months from the date of the student receiving notification of their original result.
- 54.3 Where a student declines the opportunity to resubmit the dissertation or research project, or fails to submit by the stated deadline, the Board of Examiners will treat the mark the student received for their first attempt as final and the Board of Examiners will consider the student for a relevant exit award.
- 54.4 If the Board of Examiners agrees that the revised dissertation or research project meets the requirements for a pass at MSc by Research level, the student will be awarded the MSc by Research degree. Where a mark is recorded for the dissertation or research project, the recorded mark for the revised dissertation or research project will be capped at 50%. **Where no mark is recorded for the dissertation or research project, the revised dissertation may be awarded a pass or fail only, and will not be eligible for merit or distinction.**
- 54.5 Where students on MSc by Research programmes are required to deposit their research project or dissertation in the University library, they may be permitted to

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[submit a revised version within one month of recommendation of award, but the revised version will not be subject to reassessment. A student cannot graduate until they have submitted the final version of their research project or dissertation to the College Postgraduate Office.](#)

**1 June 201~~9~~<sup>8</sup>**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

30 May 2019

## **Student Discipline Committee Membership 2019/20**

### **Executive Summary**

CSPC is asked to approve new staff and student members of the Student Discipline Committee from 1 August 2019. The Student Discipline Committee consists of staff members of the University and matriculated students. Student Discipline Committee members have a period of office of three years, with members eligible for re-appointment provided that no member serves for more than six years.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Having fair and transparent mechanisms for handling allegations of student misconduct is important to maintaining a positive academic community at the University.

### **Action requested**

For approval

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The information will be conveyed directly to new members and available on the Academic Services website at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/discipline-committee](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/discipline-committee)

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications in terms of time commitment for the staff and students involved but these are manageable alongside Committee members' employment or studies.

**2. Risk assessment** No risks have been identified.

**3. Equality and Diversity** Equality and diversity implications have been considered with regard to membership of the Committee.

**4. Freedom of information** Open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Ms Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services, May 2019

## **Student Discipline Committee Membership 2019/20**

New proposed members from 1 August 2019 are in bold below, for the approval of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

### **Staff**

- Professor Paul du Plessis (Convener)
- Mrs Lisa Brannan
- Ms Sarah McAllister
- Dr Claire Phillips
- Dr David Kluth
- Mrs Gill Aitken
- **Faten Adam**
- **Alice Heatley**
- **Dr Chris Mowat**
- **Jenny Hoy**
- **Lucy Gaunt**

### **Students**

- Alice Patig
- Joy Vamvakari
- Cameron Perumal
- Sue Chapman
- Thomas Evans
- **Heather McAdam**
- **Martha Reilly**
- **Ambra Minoli**
- **Marco Antonio Garcia Mendez**
- **Emily Andrews**
- **Mu'Azzamah Ahmad**
- **Alejandro Esteves**

### **Lead Secretary**

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

May 2019



The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

**Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2019/20**

**Executive Summary**

This paper contains the membership of the Student Undergraduate and Postgraduate Appeal Committees, and the Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee, for Academic Year 2019/20.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Fair and robust appeal processes are vital to ensuring student and staff confidence in the University's academic standards.

**Action requested**

CSPC are asked to approve the membership of the Appeal Committees and Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

N/A

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

There are resource implications in terms of staff time for those appointed to the Committees, but these are manageable alongside their existing roles.

**2. Risk assessment**

No risks have been identified.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

Equality and diversity implications have been considered with regard to membership of the Committees.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open paper

**Key words**

**Appeal, Fitness to Practise**

**Originator of the paper**

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Policy Officer

May 2019

## **Student Appeal Committee Membership Academic Year 19/20**

### ***College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences -***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Gary West (Convener)  
Professor Alexis Grohmann  
Mr Alan C Brown  
Dr Esther Mijers  
Dr Alison Jack  
Dr Jonny Murray  
Dr Sarah MacPherson  
Dr Paul Norris  
Dr Daniel Carr

#### Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor John Amis  
Professor Simon Kirby  
Dr Roberto Rossi  
Dr Colin Chandler  
Dr Emily Taylor  
Dr Laura Bradley  
Dr Tim Milnes  
Dr Richard Jones  
Dr Angus Bancroft  
Dr Andrew Hancock

### ***College of Science and Engineering –***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Dr Caroline Nichol  
Dr Chris Mowat  
Dr Jennifer Skilling  
Dr Max Ruffert  
Dr Heather McQueen  
Mr Stephen Warrington

#### Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Judy Hardy (Convener)  
Dr Paul Taylor  
Dr Julian Hall  
Dr Prashant Valluri

### ***College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine –***

#### Undergraduate Student Appeal Committee

Dr Fanny Kristmundsdottir (Vice Convener)  
Dr Geoff Pearson  
Dr Claire Phillips  
Dr Simon Riley

Postgraduate Student Appeal Committee

Professor Cathy Abbott (Vice Convener)

Professor Ruth Andrew

Dr Kim Picozzi

Professor Adriano Rossi

**Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee Membership Academic Year 19/20**

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Ms Emma Greville-Williams (Law)

Professor Tonks Fawcett (Health in Social Science)

Dr Simon Beames (Education)

Professor Kay Tisdall (Education, Community and Society)

Dr Gary Clapton (Social Work)

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Professor James Garden (School of Clinical Sciences)

Professor David Argyle (R(D)SVS)

Dr Jen Foley (School of Clinical Sciences)

Professor Bruce McGorum (R(D)SVS)

Professor Moira Whyte (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine)

H/02/27/02

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

**Senate Themes for 2019/20 Meetings****Executive Summary**

The Presentation and Discussion section of the Senate meetings is open to all members of staff and poses an opportunity to consider and take part in discussion on a key strategic theme.

In each session, presentations are made on a high level academic matter, intended to generate discussion. The session takes place at the beginning of Senate meetings and runs for 90 minutes.

The following themes have been covered in Presentation and Discussion sections in the past two years:

2018/19

- **Teaching and Academic Careers**  
Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal
- **The Research Excellence Framework**  
Professor Jonathan Seckl, Vice-Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy
- **Widening Participation**  
Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal

2017/18

- **The Future of Distance Learning**  
Melissa Highton, Assistant Principal Online Learning and Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services
- **Edinburgh in the City: Partnering to Support Inclusion**  
Professor Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal, Community Relations
- **Student Employability**  
Shelagh Green, Director of Careers and Employability

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Leadership in Learning and Research

**Action requested**

The Committee is invited to make suggestions for themes for the Presentation and Discussion sections for Senate in 2019/20.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Suggested themes will be passed to the Principal, who will decide the presentation and discussion themes in 2019/20.

**Resource/Risk/Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None

**2. Risk assessment**

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis

**3. Equality and Diversity**

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake an equality and diversity assessment

**4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Originator of the paper**

Theresa Sheppard, Academic Services.

2 May 2019

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

30 May 2019

## **Performance Sport Policy**

### **Executive Summary**

The Performance Sport Policy has been reviewed and no changes are proposed.

The Director of Sport & Exercise, the Head of Performance Sport, and the Colleges have been consulted and the consensus is that the current policy provides the high level definitions and flexibility needed to enable Schools to resolve issues according to local pedagogical practice.

However, the review process also highlighted the need for more clarity and guidance on issues such as: the requirements of different funding agencies; the scope to go beyond the two weeks absence limit; what is considered 'representative'; who students should inform and who makes the decisions locally; and the linkages with the Elite Athlete Admissions Policy.

Therefore, it is proposed that Academic Services will consult with the Colleges (in particular the Deans of Students) and other key stakeholders to produce accompanying guidance and examples of how the Policy has been applied across the University.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Aligns with the strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

### **Action requested**

For approval.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Academic Services will contact the Colleges and relevant stakeholders across the University.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None. No changes are proposed to current practice.

**2. Risk assessment**

None. No changes are proposed to current practice.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

No changes are proposed and therefore the current equality impact assessment remains in place.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services



# Performance Sport Policy

## Purpose of Policy

The Performance Sport Policy provides flexibility to students so that they may excel in both their chosen sport and their academic studies, and provides a context for the University to make decisions on flexibility requested due to participation in significant national or international sporting events.

## Overview

The policy sets out flexibilities on matters relating to attendance, assessment and progression for students who are performing at national and international level in their chosen sport.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to all students, and to staff making decisions on requests stemming from performance sport matters. The policy is within the remit of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

## Contact Officer

Brian Connolly

Academic Policy Officer

[b.connolly@ed.ac.uk](mailto:b.connolly@ed.ac.uk)

## Document control

Dates	Approved: 28.4.11	Starts: 1.8.11	Equality impact assessment 10.12.14	Amendments: 22.8.12, 4.6.15	Next Review: 2018/19
Approving authority	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee				
Consultation undertaken	Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, following a request from Quality Assurance Committee				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	n/a				
n/a	UK Quality Code				
Policies superseded by this policy	n/a				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Performance sport, sport event absences, elite athlete				



# Performance Sport Policy

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- 1 The University is committed to providing flexibility to students so that they may excel in both their chosen sport and their academic studies.
- 2 Representation must be at international level, or at national championship level. If further clarification is needed on national championship level, the relevant College Office will decide, drawing on advice from the University's Director of Sport and Exercise.  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/sport-exercise/performance>
- 3 Requests for absences or changes to assessment arrangements to allow representation at other levels will not usually be granted. Absences for training sessions are not usually considered "representative".
- 4 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they promptly report to their Personal Tutor, Postgraduate Director or Research Supervisor any sporting commitment that might affect their attendance or assessment.
- 5 Where a student is representing their nation in their chosen sport, any impact that this might have on attendance and assessment will be dealt with initially at School level. Any agreed adjustments to attendance should not compromise the ability of the student to reach a satisfactory level of attendance on their programme of study. The usual expectation is that the single amount or cumulative total of absence from a full-time programme should not exceed two weeks in any one semester. For periods greater than this, change to part-time study or Authorised Interruption of Study may be applied for under the *Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study*. <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>
- 6 Any agreed adjustments affecting assessment should be dealt with by the use of extension to deadlines and will be undertaken with reference to the relevant Assessment Regulations. Students who believe that extenuating circumstances exist which prevent them from sitting an examination in the scheduled time or venue should contact their Personal Tutor, Postgraduate Director or Research Supervisor. Their case is considered by the relevant College Dean and Student Administration in consultation with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.
- 7 In addition to the flexibility described above, the following options may be available, depending on the nature of the programme and the status of the student:
  - a) Switching between full-time and part-time modes of study, e.g. to allow a student to achieve a balance between preparation for, and participation in, a major sporting event and progress on their programme of study; and
  - b) Taking leave of absence for a specified period, e.g. where a student is preparing for a major sporting event and this preparation cannot be undertaken whilst attending the University.
- 8 Where it is proposed that a student might switch between modes of study or take leave of absence, this must be agreed with the relevant College Undergraduate or Postgraduate Dean.

4 June 2015

## REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

22 March 2019

### 1 Artificial Intelligence & Data Ethics Advisory Board

The Vice-Principal High Performance Computing provided an overview of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Data Ethics Advisory Board, intended to:

- establish an ethical framework, comprising clear guiding principles and robust processes for data governance and use;
- assist existing University ethics bodies to improve their competence in dealing with AI and data use issues;
- monitor compliance by the University and its partners with the ethical framework, and with any other relevant processes and regulations;
- encourage a culture that is aware of the ethical and societal implications, informs and contributes to public debate, and promotes responsible research and innovation; and,
- provide strategic advice on how the University can be a global leader in the ethical development and use of AI and data science.

The Committee raised the following points: how the Board would interact with School-level ethics committees, with the Board established to consider new ethical problems and not duplicate existing work; building a repository of answers to frequently asked questions from staff and students, noting that the Board is not resourced as yet; progress with the consultation on monitoring study space usage and that an arms-length body including external members may be useful for oversight of some aspects of University research in this area. A further update was requested in due course.

### 2 Core Systems Update

The Deputy Chief Information Officer presented an update on the Core Systems procurement programme to replace HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement systems. A winning bidder has been agreed within the planned timescale, with due diligence workshops with subject matter experts underway and a final contact award expected in April. Members asked if any lessons learned from the process to date have been identified, with the logistical challenge of organising 156 due diligence workshops over a 9 week period the key learning point. It was noted that the HR and Finance strands of the Service Excellence Programmes were established before the Core Systems procurement to aid the development of systems requirements.

### 3 Information Services Group Plan 2019-22

Key elements of the Information Services Group (ISG) Plan for 2019-22 were reviewed. The Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning provided context on the University's medium term planning, the uncertain external environment and the intention to increase contributions from across the University budget areas for reinvestment in key priorities. The Chief Information Officer noted pressures on the ISG budget from the increased contribution requested and increased costs of

provision of many services, including software licensing increases, replacement of an obsolescent programming language used in many University applications and higher employer USS pension contributions.

The Committee discussed:

- Ensuring that any changes in centrally-provided services do not lead to an increased proliferation of locally-provided services in mitigation, with an already highly-developed level of Information Technology expenditure compared to peer institutions;
- The potential for consolidating IT expenditure centrally to generate cost savings;
- Generating cost savings while minimising any potential effect on the student experience;
- The implementation of a post approval process with Chief Information Officer sign-off for all ISG staff recruitment was welcomed; and,
- A glossary of acronyms would be helpful for committee members.

#### **4 Information Security Update**

A regular update on Information Security risk management activity was reviewed. The proposed purchase of password manager software to provide enhanced protection before an upgrade of the University's authentication service (EASE) was discussed – with queries on whether the company or the University would hold responsibility for assisting staff and students experiencing problems with the service, how the service would accommodate individuals with dual staff and student credentials and managing those moving between staff, student and alumni categories.

#### **5 Plan S Update**

An update on the initiative from predominantly European funding agencies to accelerate the transition to full and immediate open access to research publications was reviewed. It was noted that, while many universities have raised strong concerns on the implementation date of 1 January 2020 and consequent short time period to prepare, an early 2020 implementation date remains favoured by the coalition of funders. Universities are continuing to consult with the coalition of funders. The University of Edinburgh's consultation response was supportive in principle but with a number of specific changes requested. A further update was requested for the next meeting.

#### **6 Academic Engagement with Collections**

A report on the depth and breadth of academic engagement with the Centre for Research Collections was considered. Programmes to enhance student employability were welcomed, including student placements, with further work requested on encouraging student placements with University suppliers.

#### **7 Projects and Ongoing Activities Update**

The lecture recording update was discussed, with 85% of centrally allocated teaching rooms (over 300 in total) now enabled for lecture recording. It is proposed for the next phase will focus on equipping conference areas used for large public lectures and similar events rather than the remaining small teaching rooms used for discussion-based seminars that are less suitable for recording. It was noted that students used to lecture recording in the early years of an undergraduate degree should be made aware that this may not continue in seminars at honours level. Masters level students on courses taught in smaller rooms may expect to have teaching in these rooms recorded and smaller rooms which have lecture recording equipment installed can be booked. The Committee welcomed the extent of lecture recording taking place, one of the highest in the Russell Group, with the figures to be kept under review and any examined in detail for any anomalies.