

**SENATE**

**Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 10 May 2023**

**Present:** Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors, Brady, Ces, Craster, Evans, R Green, T Green, Hanna, Haynes, Lindstedt, Matar, Meeran, Mestel, Spivey, Xu; Drs Bluck, Costa-Pereira, Craig, Field, Fobelets, Rutschmann, Tennant; Mr Lupton, Mr Tebbutt, Mr Zheng, Ms Bannister, Ms Wong, Ms Yao Mr Ashton (Secretary), Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

In attendance: Professor Jason Riley for Professor Brandon;

**Apologies:** Professors Brandon, Craster, Kingsbury, Lindstedt. Matar, Weber; Dr Malhotra

**2727 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 1 March 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**2728 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted as above.

**2729 Matters Arising**

There were no matters not covered by the agenda.

**2730 Chair's Action**

There was no Chair's Action to report.

**2731 Provost's Business**

Received: a verbal report from the Provost.

Reported: (1) Strategy Consultation – The President has launched the first phase of consultation on a new strategy for the College. Early discussions had included supporting work across multiple campuses and building interdisciplinarity at scale to enhance delivery, for example, across areas such as climate, the environment and sustainability to do more together and enhance the activity. Discussions also included how to build the College's global presence to enhance alumni and donor engagement. All staff were encouraged to engage with these discussions

(2) Industrial Action – The College had been been advised that the University and College Union (UCU) would be undertaking a Marking and Assessment boycott from 17 May. Messages had been sent to all staff setting out the protocols around that action to ensure that any pay deductions were applied fairly and consistently across the College.

(3) Provost's Visiting Professor Programme – This was established to improve the diversity of our community by bringing to Imperial leading academics who will contribute to the community through scholarship, teaching and programming aligned with their research. Four new appointments had been made for October 2023 from a very high

calibre of over 100 applications. Full information on the appointments is available on the website: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/leadership-and-strategy/provost/pvp-programme/provosts-visiting-professors/>

## 2732 Disruption to assessment processes

Received: A Paper from the Academic Registrar (**Paper Senate 2022/14**)

Reported: (1) That there had been significant disruption to the assessment processes over the past few years and that it had been identified that it would be helpful to agree an approach for managing situations where the College's delivery of assessment was disrupted and how the impact of this on students could be mitigated. It was acknowledged that there was a need to balance pragmatism against the need to preserve academic standards and also to meet the requirements of the sectors regulator. The principles for the policy had been derived from those established to underpin the response to previous disruption.

(2) That the paper was mainly focussed on managing undergraduate outcomes, but it was thought that the principles would apply equally to postgraduate taught programmes. It was considered that Exam Boards would be best placed to understand the impact of any disruption on their programmes and further guidance would be provided to Exam Boards on how to apply the principles. It was also noted that the paper was presented on the assumption that students had been able to attempt the assessment but that they may have some marks unavailable at the time of the Board meeting.

(3) That the paper considered different approaches for dealing with continuing students and proposed that they could be able to progress with unconfirmed module marks up to a maximum of 30 ECTS. For final year students, Boards should consider whether the programme learning outcomes had been met and whether students range of marks across their programme meant a classification could be determined and whether that would need to be provisional. It was noted that there were some systems issues that would have to be addressed and resolved to support any Senate decision.

(4) That concern had been expressed in terms of students being able to demonstrate they had met the requirements for professional body accreditation. Russell Group institutions had written to PSRBs to seek their views on how to manage missing marks. Those who had responded had pointed to accreditation being based on successful achievement of learning outcomes, rather than credits.

(5) That the Exam Board guidance would be updated to cover any decisions taken by Senate to ensure there was clarity over what Boards could do and, for example, on using Chair's action to confirm results as and when marks became available.

Considered in discussion: (6) That there was some discomfort in applying principles developed during a global event to local disruption and that it was important not to inflate degree outcomes for this academic year. However, there was agreement that the College should mitigate any impact to support students to their next level of study or into employment without detriment to them where the College was unable to deliver assessment outcomes.

(7) That in terms of the proposals for allowing students to progress with up to 30ECTS worth of module marks missing, the majority of members were comfortable with this proposal on the grounds that students would have had to have taken the assessment and so the mark would become available. However, it was clear that Boards would need to be able to exercise some discretion and look at a student's overall profile before confirming any progression decisions, particularly where the profile indicated that the student might not be able to retrieve module failures in the following year or be asked to repeat the year at a late stage. This could have a significant financial impact for some students.

(8) That there was support for providing final year students with a provisional classification wherever possible. It was agreed that any provision classification should not be lowered but that they could go up once the final marks were available. As such, Boards would need to exercise caution when making provisional decisions and be clear about where any gaps in available marks or inability to deliver, for example vivas, meant a provisional classification could not be agreed at this point. Members hoped departments would be able to prioritise final year students wherever possible to lessen the impact on their progression to further study or to employment. However, Board will need to carefully record decisions they take to facilitate record keeping about provisional marks and to assist with any discussions with students over the action they have taken.

(9) That there would be a distinction between modules where it was clear that the student had passed but the mark had not been confirmed and those where it was unknown if the student had passed. It was agreed that the knowledge of the programmes in the department and the Exam Board would be crucial in determining the best course of action when looking at individual student profiles.

**Agreed:** Senate approved the proposals for managing progression decisions. In terms of degree classifications, Senate agreed that all avenues should be explored within a department to get marks; that caution needed to be exercised in determining provision classifications where only allowing that classification to stay the same or go up, and that a draft cover note for a provisional transcript should be produced for students to present to employers and or other educational institutions to ensure they can take the next steps in their careers.

### 2733 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**

Received: Reports from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) (**Paper Senate 2022/15 & 16**) from the meetings of 15 March 2023 and 26 April 2023.

Reported: (1) That there was one item for Senate approval – the updated Degree Outcomes Statement which had been updated to include completion data from the 2021-22 academic year and relevant extracts from the College’s Teaching Excellence Framework submission.

**Agreed:** Senate approved the updated Degree Outcomes Statement.

(2) That in addition, QAEC had considered:

- (a) The modality of Research Degree final thesis vivas to support the option of a remote, hybrid or in-person examinations.
- (b) An update to the definitions in the Academic Misconduct Policy had been approved with immediate effect to accommodate the proliferation of natural language processing AI models and to streamline the process where a student had admitted to an academic misconduct offence.
- (c) A proposal from the Imperial College Business School for a new approach to grading. QAEC had agreed that modelling of assessment data from previous years should be undertaken to establish the impact of the proposal on overall outcomes for students.
- (d) The reports from undergraduate and postgraduate taught external examiners. The reports demonstrated some areas where improvements could be made including departmental administration processes and QAEC noted concerns from examiners across the board over the assessment load on students.
- (e) An updated procedure for the appointment of examiners for research degrees had been approved which included reference to the My Imperial platform and provided further guidance on nomination, approval and consideration of conflicts of interest.

### 2734 **Update on Condition B3: Student Outcomes**

Received and noted: A note from the Strategic Planning Division (**Paper Senate/2022/17**)

**2735 Approach to Access and Participation Plans 2025-29**

Received and noted: A note from the Strategic Planning Division (**Paper Senate/2022/18**)

**2736 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 28 June 2023

All meetings start at 15.00hrs